Opinion Piece - The Peril of Hasty Triumphalism and Osama bin Laden's Death

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On May 1, 2011 the headlines of a large number of newspapers and TV channels around the world were saying "justice has been done". Those were the words used by the US President Barack Obama to announce to the world the killing of Osama bin Laden, the number one terrorist on the US most-wanted list.

Exactly eight years earlier, on May 1, 2003, another US President, George W. Bush gave a famous speech declaring the end of major combat operations in Iraq. President Bush delivered the speech on the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln under a banner titled "Mission Accomplished".

Hasty triumphalism turned out to be profoundly misleading in the case of Iraq. It may be wise not to make the same mistake regarding the fight against international terrorism in general, and against Al-Qaeda in particular.

The killing of the Arab Sheik Osama bin Laden obviously represents an extremely important achievement in the global effort against international terrorism. First and foremost, it puts an end to one of the major criticisms to the US military intervention in Afghanistan. "Osama bin Laden was why the United States went to war in Afghanistan" correctly writes the Washington Post[1]. The disturbing fact that bin Laden was still free and alive would have prevented the United States to consider the Afghan War a complete success, no matter the possible significant results in other areas, such as, for example, the democratic stabilization of the country. Secondly, the death of the leader of the terrorist organization responsible for the September 11th attacks bears with it a certain sense of justice and retribution for those directly or indirectly affected by such attacks.

Osama's demise may also result in a morale boost for the United States. A positive shake after a decade during which the conflict in Afghanistan has dragged on and on without substantial improvements. In addition, it generates a widespread sense of unity at a time of harsh partisan division within US politics. As reported by The New York Times, the US administration "drew praise from unlikely quarters", even from Republicans such as former Vice President Dick

Cheney, New York's former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, and a likely challenger for the 2012 presidential election Donald J. Trump[2]. As far as electoral politics are concerned, the killing of the Arab Sheik represents a great accomplishment for President Obama. And although it will not make disappear other, mostly economic, challenges lying ahead, it will probably increase Obama's chances of re-election for a second term next year.

However, there are several reasons to be skeptical about the far-reaching effects of Osama's death on the global effort against international terrorism. As pointed out by several studies[3], Al Qaeda has developed into a loose and decentralized network of independent cells, with no clear hierarchical chain of command. After 9/11 bin Laden, in fact, has mostly been acting as a source of inspiration for other terrorists, which have been independently planning and carrying out their plots, as it apparently was the case in the March 11th 2003 attacks in Madrid. Therefore, cutting the head of an organization which has no head may have little or no significant effects on the ability of such organization to strike again in the future.

Moreover, the killing of Osama bin Laden may have the unintended consequence of making him a martyr and to increase the appeal of his figure and his message. According to the Al Qassam website, which is closely associated with the Islamic movement Hamas, Ismail Haniya, the Palestinian Prime Minister of the Gaza government, strongly condemned Osama's assassination and mourned him as an Arab holy warrior[4]. A better solution would have probably been to capture the Sheik, give him a fair trial and imprison him for crimes he had already claimed to be responsible for. That would have depicted Bin Laden as a criminal and not as a martyr.

Finally, by eliminating Osama bin Laden the United States addressed only one, although highly important, *symptom* of international terrorism. In fighting terrorism the distinction between symptoms and underlying causes is critical. Experts generally agree that both elements of the terrorist threat should be dealt with[5]. Individual terrorists, terrorist organizations, sponsor states and host states are all examples of symptoms of terrorism. The underlying causes, instead, could be defined as the reasons why people make the decision to turn to the strategy of terrorism. A policy of counter-terrorism strictly focused on the cure of the symptoms may be effective in the short term but not in the long one. Indeed, if the underlying causes are dismissed the terrorist threat would be stopped until a new generation of terrorists will start to fight for the same reasons. A more effective response, therefore, should deal also with such underlying causes, as for example with the enabling environment from which the terrorists draw support and recruit new members.

All that considered, President Obama's satisfaction in announcing the death of Osama bin Laden and the subsequent joyous and relieved response of the American people is both understandable and legitimate. However, as in the past, hasty triumphalism could prove deceptive, in so far as it could lead the United States to believe that the global effort against international terrorism is close to an end.

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Notes:

[1] K. Tumulty and P. Kane, (May 3, 2011) 'Bin Laden's death may give Obama new authority on Afghan war'/ The Washington Post.
[2] J. Zeleny and J Rutenberg, (May 2, 2011) 'Obama Finds Praise, Even From Republicans'/ The New York Times.
[3] National Commission On Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States, (2004), '9/11 Commission final report'; J. Stern, (2003), 'The Protean Enemy'/ Foreign Affairs/ (82:4)/ p.27-44; The Economist Staff, (May 2, 2011) 'The Evolution of Al-Qaeda'/ The Economist.
[4] Al Qassam Staff, (May 2, 2011) 'Hamas condemns killing of Osama Bin Laden'/ Al Qassam Online.
[5] E. Berman and D.D. Laitin, (2008) 'Religion, terrorism and public goods: testing the club model'/ Journal of Public Economics/ (92:10-11) p. 1942-1967; A.K. Cronin., (2003) 'Behind the curve'/ International Security/ (27:3) p.30-58.

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The Paris Agreement Revisited: Diplomatic Triumphalism or Denial of Climate Justice?

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Abstract

The 2015 Paris COP 21, after the failure of the 2009 Copenhagen COP, raised many expectations regarding the elaboration of the post-Kyoto legal instrument to lead the global fight against climate change. At the sunset of the summit, world leaders and climate negotiators, relayed by mainstream Medias, presented the results of the Paris climate discussions as an important success for the global climate community. A success contested by climate justice and just transition defenders. Given the foundation role the Paris agreement plays for subsequent global, national and sub-national climate policies on one side and, on the other side, the continuous growing global demands for climate justice and just transition, this article investigates the conciliatory possibilities put in place by the agreement to advance those demands. To reach such goals, the article focuses on the retrospective critical reading of the agreement in the light of human-centered climate perspectives such as climate justice and just transition, without neglecting other aspects related to the very nature of the agreement, and the enhanced commodification of nature and resulting carbon trading. This analysis of the agreement through climate justice lenses will be instrumental in confirming or disproving the following hypothesis: From the climate justice and just transition perspectives, the success of the Paris regime will not pass through the implementation of the Paris agreement itself, but thought corrective mechanisms that could be put in place to correct the loopholes of the agreement. The initiative of putting such post-Paris corrective mechanisms in place is expected to be one of the key priorities of the international community.

Keywords

Climate Justice, Climate Politics, Just Transition, Loss and Damage, Paris Agreement

1. Introduction: Paris Agreement, an Undisputable Diplomatic Success

From November 30th to December 12th 2015, world leaders and countries delegations gathered in Paris, France, for the 21st session of the conference of the parties to the UNFCCC. Following the drastic failure of the 2009 conference in Copenhagen, and the 2011 conference in Durban that mandated the COP 21 to put in place a legal binding post-Kyoto instrument to fight global warming, negotiators of the Paris conference had the mission of putting such instrument in place. As such, initially expected to end on the 11th, the conference finally took an additional day in order to give negotiators the possibility of agreeing on the last details of the agreement before presenting it to the world.

Made of a preamble of 140 points going from page 1 to 19, and an operational part containing 29 articles and going from page 20 to 31, the document was unanimously accepted by all COP 21 negotiators, after a thorough discussion on its content and a meticulous choice of terms to be included. According to article 20 paragraph 1, the "agreement shall be open for signature and subject to ratification, acceptance or approval by States and regional economic integration organizations that are parties to the convention. It shall be open for signature at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 22 April 2016 to 21 April 2017"[1]. The agreement, due to enter into force in 2020 [1], aims at "enhancing the implementation of the convention, including its objective to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change" ([2], Article 2).

Through this long-awaited instrument, the international community intends to pursue its goal of limiting global GHG emissions to a level that can help avoid global climate catastrophe and not reach the point of no-return. It equally intends to put in place policies and mechanisms to better cope with the current adverse effects of climate change, and to address the question of climate finance, loss and damage and the global climate governance architecture among others. Such instrument was qualified as a great success by political leaders and mainstream Medias. In fact, as the then French President Francois Hollande summed it up: "In Paris, there have been many revolutions over the centuries. Today it is the most beautiful and the most peaceful revolution that has just been accomplished—a revolution for climate change" ([3], p. 1). Those claiming the success of the Paris climate event focused on the fact that it was the first global climate treaty to be accepted unanimously by all parties. In other words, the "Paris

[1]During the official ceremony to open the agreement for signature at the Headquarters of the UN in New York, 175 parties signed it, and 15 States deposited their instrument of ratification. Of the 175 parties, there were 174 countries and the European Union (only Regional Organization of Economic integration party to the UNFCCC). One year later, by the end of 2016, 197 parties had signed the agreement. Of the 197 parties, 136 have already deposited their instruments of ratification. The "agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016, thirty days after the date on which at least 55 Parties to the convention accounting in total for at least an estimated 55% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Depositary." (UNFCCC, 2016). As of January 2022, 193 Parties out of 197 Parties to the UNFCCC have ratified the agreement (more details at https://cop23.unfccc.int/process/the-paris-agreement/status-of-ratification).

agreement was hailed worldwide as amongst the most significant developments of the history of the global response to climate change" ([4], p. 1). However, on their own side, climate justice defenders view the same summit and the resulting agreement as a failure from an environmental perspective, and a catastrophe for climate justice and just transition. And, five years after its adoption, the agreement continues to be considered a climate justice failure and calls to go beyond Paris continue to flourish [5] [6] [7] [8]. It is on the basis such a contested global climate instrument that the international fight against climate change is currently standing, will continue to be developed and implemented in the coming years and possibly decades. Therefore, taking into consideration such importance of the Paris agreement for the future of climate governance, this article aims at analyzing its content from an anthropo-centered perspective, with a focus on climate justice and just transition (JT). The objective of such analysis, it should be noted, is to determine the loopholes of the current global climate governance architecture. Knowing those loopholes is instrumental in understanding the growing contestation of the global climate governance system by climate justice activists and youths around the world, and in exploring alternatives to that contested system. In order to reach its objective, this article intends to address the following question: Faced with growing calls for climate justice and JT around the world, how did negotiators of the Paris agreement integrate issues of justice in their final deal? To answer that question, this article proceeds through a critical reading of the agreement in the light of evaluation indicators such as climate justice and Just Transition, without neglecting other aspects related to the very nature of the agreement, and the enhanced commodification of nature and its resulting carbon trading.

A closer look at the agreement tends to expose a number of loopholes. For example, one of the most important contradictions is the 1.5˚C target set by the agreement. Even though this goal was set, the agreement does not actually design a pathway on how to achieve it. Instead, that goal is in direct contradiction with the countries' Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC)[2] previously submitted to the secretariat of the COP, and which were conceived to be a key element to consider in building the architecture of the COP 21 treaty. In fact, "while more than 150 INDCs from 180 countries, accounting for more than 90 percent of global emissions, have been submitted, current pledges and INDCs are estimated to contain warming only to 2.4˚C or 2.7˚C" ([9], p. 3). From a similar perspective, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) affirms that:

> There is a worrying gap between the collective ambitions on the one hand, and the aggregate effect of the individual contributions on the other. As-

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[2]In preparation of the Paris COP 21, countries agreed to clearly outline and render public what post-2020 climate actions they intend to take under a new international agreement. These contributions were determined by each country, taking into consideration its national priorities, circumstances and capabilities, and were submitted to the secretariat of the UNFCCC prior to the beginning of the COP 21.

cribing to the world a collective objective of keeping global warming below 1.5˚C does not make sense if the individual contributions lead us to 3˚C. Bridging this gap must be an absolute priority for countries in the coming years, notably by tackling emissions sources which are not covered by the Paris agreement, like those coming from international transport [10].

Equally, the agreement "did not deliver the specific rules that will govern the monitoring, reporting and verification of emissions and national implementation of those pledges and policies" ([11], p. 21). As such, by failing to put in place clear pathways to achieve tangible results, Paris ended up putting forward more empty promises and false solutions [12]. In other words, the agreement does not state that "here is the current rate of global emissions, here is the rate at which each country is generating emissions, here is a distribution of legally binding definite sums of emissions for each country which will ensure that emissions do not exceed a threshold, and which will guarantee that emissions actually reduce" ([13], p. 944). Going from this same critical perspective, and to better unveil the loopholes of the Paris agreement, this article, using the critical analysis method, will approach the agreement from four fundamental angles: Its contestable legal nature, its relation to market-based mechanisms, its views with regard to climate justice and its vision of JT.

2. Methodological Considerations

This paper, presented in the form of a narrative article, uses the critical analysis methodology approach to evaluate the Paris agreement corpus. The critical reading approach I use primarily explores uses of climate justice, just transition and human right-related concepts in the agreement. The statistical approach explores the recurrence in the use of those concepts in the text. In other words, I first explore the text to see if those concepts or other related concepts are used, then I see how many times they are used. This comes from the belief that the number of appearances, to an extent, reveals the importance given to those concepts and realities by authors of the agreement. The main source of this article is the Paris agreement. Secondary sources deriving from scientific and grey literature are used as supplements to support the critical analysis of the main source. Taking into account the critiques addressed to the narrative approach in relation its "desire to interpret across personal accounts in order to investigate and represent the storylines and broader societal narratives which informed them" ([14], p. 2) and, fully aware of the critiques that can be addressed to my methodological approach in terms of limited objectivity [15], I back my position up with standpoint and strong objectivity approaches. In this respect, it is important to clarify that I do not understand objectivity in the sense of neutrality. Beside being practically impossible, the neutrality ideal provides no resistance to the production of systematically distorted results of research [16]. Moreover, "the conventional notion of objectivity that links it to the neutrality ideal appears too weak to do what it sets out to do" ([17], p. 346). Based on the conviction that

the personal implication and experience of the researcher can provide him with essential information on how the object of study functions [15] [18], I consider objectivity not in the sense of neutrality, but of detachment, distanciation and self-criticism of my own subjectivity. In the methodological approach that I adopt, the social location of the researcher is therefore closely linked to the epistemic position that leads his analysis. This is particularly important because, in the research context where the position of the marginalized offers possibilities for a strong objective science, social locations, also understood in the sense of social status, offer the potential to be more epistemically reliable than others [19]. Such social status, as Harding [16] argues, offers an incredibly effective opportunity for production of sound knowledge about marginalized groups. In the context of this article, the socio-epistemic position I take to analyze the Paris agreement, is that of climate justice and JT defenders, those marginalized who have been put at the periphery of climate decision-making processes.

3. Paris Agreement: Legal Considerations

One of the main points we can question about the Paris agreement is its very nature. The question here is to know if the agreement, as expected, is legally binding or not. This question is complicated to address, as points of view are divergent depending on whether analysts support the agreement or not. According to the European Commission, "at the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015, 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal" [1]. This was in fulfillment of the engagement parties took in 2011 in Durban, "to launch a process to develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the convention applicable to all parties" ([20], Article 1). The originality of the Paris agreement, according to some authors, is that it adopts an innovative legal approach that does not require the vote of the American Senate to be ratified by the USA which was the main opponent to the Paris outcome being legally binding [21] [22]. From this perspective, even though the agreement cannot be aligned to traditional treaty-types like the Kyoto Protocol, its reliance on the convention gives it a legal character. Relying on the understanding of a treaty as defined by the international law, the authors clarify their position in the following words:

> In public international law, a treaty is defined as meaning "an international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law". The Paris Agreement was certainly concluded between states and in written form, but is it also governed by international law? Since the agreement was concluded at an international conference "in pursuit of the objectives of the Convention" and since it uses the bodies and procedures developed in the context of the Convention (undoubtedly an international treaty) it may safely be concluded that it is governed by international law. The Paris Agreement is thus a (dependent) treaty under international law. It is dependent on the UNFCCC because only Parties to the

Convention may ratify and because it cannot stand alone since many clauses refer to the respective procedures and bodies of the UNFCCC ([21], p. 13).

Nevertheless, if for those authors there is no doubt about the legal binding nature of the accord, others are more tempered in their position and prefer to speak of the Paris agreement as one having both binding and non-binding provisions. For example, for Jones Day ([9], p. 3), "the binding provisions are mostly procedural and include commitments to 1) submit an INDC, 2) submit an updated INDC every five years, 3) demonstrate a progression in subsequent INDCs, 4) pursue domestic measures to achieve INDCs, and 5) submit emissions inventories and information necessary to achieve INDCs." Considered from this perspective, the full legal nature of the agreement can seriously be questioned. Was the purpose of the agreement to put in place procedures to be followed, or to build adaptation, mitigation, finance, loss and damage mechanisms that could slow down climate change at the global level, while enhancing the resilience capacities of world ecosystems, biodiversity and populations under changing climate? Considered from this second perspective, the non-binding nature of the agreement can easily be pointed out. In fact, even though the Paris agreement deals with all the important above-mentioned aspects of the global fight against climate change, from the legal binding perspective it is a "potentially weak and essentially voluntary agreement" ([13], p. 945). In other words, "there are no means for enforcement. Article 15 on implementation and compliance establishes an expert committee that will be 'non-adversarial and non-punitive', which means that it has no teeth and can do nothing about non-compliance" ([23], p. 930). To confirm this point, we can report to the following illustrative anecdote concerning the use of the word "shall" or "should" in the final version of the agreement:

> US lawyers detected a (legally binding) "shall" instead of a (entirely voluntary) "should" in the Article 4.4 referring to developed countries taking the lead in economy-wide emission reduction targets. The reinsertion of the convention wording "should" delayed the closing plenary by several hours. It was communicated to the closing plenary as a technical/translation error due to late night working hours [24].

This apparently anecdotic fact demonstrates how the US delegation did everything within their reach to avoid granting to the text any legal force which, in return, would have forced the American administration to require the vote of the senate before ratifying it. Taking this anecdotic fact, I thus argue that, since nobody reacted to the supremacy of the US in this matter, the final text was adopted with no legal binding force and the operationalization of fighting mechanisms was left to countries. This then left to countries the uncontested power to freely decide on their level of contribution to global emissions reduction, according to their national contexts, capacities and political will, without any in-

ternationally set emissions target, as it was the case under the Kyoto protocol, nor any legally binding enforcement mechanism. So, in order to secure the adherence of the US, and of the greatest numbers of parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), negotiators proceeded by "abandoning attempts to create a legally binding system, and instead adopting the voluntary Paris agreement" ([7], p. 84). Having succeeded to "force" the other parties to the negotiations to strip the agreement from such legal binding disposition the US signed the agreement; a signature that will be revoked less than two years later by president Trump. The election of Joe Biden raised a wave of hope among defenders of the climate cause [25], as he decided to rejoin the agreement. Moreover, upon rejoining the Paris agreement, Biden's administration "submitted a relatively ambitious NDC [National Determined Contribution] promising a 50% - 52% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 from a 2005 baseline, alongside goals to create a 'carbon pollution-free power sector by 2025' and 'net greenhouse gas emission economy by no later than 2050'" ([7], pp. 88-89). However I argue, in this article, that even though Joe Biden rejoining the Paris agreement is a success story for climate diplomacy, it is not necessary a good new for climate justice or JT, since the agreement does not put in place mechanisms to secure climate justice and JT. Moreover, this signing-withdrawal-resigning cycle of global climate agreements is not new in the recent history of global climate governance. In 2001, under the leadership of president George W. Bush, the US withdrew from the Kyoto protocol that was signed under president Bill Clinton on November 12, 1998 [26]. In April 2016, the US signed the Paris agreement under the leadership of president Barrack Obama, and on June 1, 2017, president Donald Trump officially took a stand that the US will be withdrawing from the Paris agreement. A formal notice of withdrawal was served to the UN Secretariat by the US administration on November 4, 2019, and took effect on November 4, 2020, in accordance with article 28 of the Paris agreement, that stipulates that parties can only withdraw after three years, and their withdrawal takes effect 12 month after they have notified the UN secretariat. Therefore, "the Paris Agreement is the second global climate change pact that the United States joined under a Democrat and abandoned under a Republican" [27]. Taking into consideration the fact that the Paris Agreement, together with the Kyoto protocol are the only two reinforcing additional global agreement under the UNFCCC, we can therefore state that the US has never given a great importance to global climate agreements for a substantial amount of time. As Beggin Riley [26] reports, "Bush, like Trump, was also a climate change skeptic", and president Bush, during his 2000 presidential campaign, stated: "The Kyoto Treaty would affect our economy in a negative way," and "we do not know how much our climate could or will change in the future. We do not know how fast change will occur, or even how some of our actions could impact it". Just to say, beside their shared climate sceptic inclinations, both presidents Bush and Trump, on withdrawing the US from the global cli-

mate agreements, based their arguments on the protection of the US economy and the desire to avoid the rise of energy prices [26]. From those above observations, I argue that what is at stake here is not the urgent need to address global climate change and the resulting need for climate justice, JT and just recovery. What is important is the preservation and protection of the US economy.

On the other side, it should be stressed, the very Paris agreement does not put in place any guarantee to substantially reduce global emissions [28]. Relying on such instrument to keep global temperatures under 2°C, and preferably 1.5°C as the agreement states, becomes really problematic and, to an extent, a simple utopia for two reasons: 1) The aggregate of all the INDCs submitted by parties, and on which the agreement lies, goes far beyond the 2 degrees C target. Instead, it puts us on "track for a world that is 2.7 - 3.7 degrees C warmer (median chance), depending on modeling assumptions" [29]. 2) As Gudynas observes, there is often a certain decoupling between parties' international commitments and their national policies and strategies. To clarify this point, he goes from the contradictions between Bolivia's international discourses and pledges for the protection of the right of Mother Earth, and its national

> Ineffective environmental policies, weak enforcement, lack of political leadership, and the disinterest of urban majorities toward the ecological situation in remote corners of the country […], [we can conclude that] Agreements like the one reached in Paris are still very weak to solve this decoupling, because it rests on voluntary measures at the national level, and does not impose fundamental questioning on the core ideas of development ([30], p. 939).

In other words, even when countries take commitments at the international level, there is no guarantee that they will implement them at the national level. The example of the Kyoto protocol is quite illustrative at this point. Such legal binding global climate instrument did not help to reduce global GHG emissions. Instead, during its implementation period, the world witnessed an increase in global emissions. In this regard, data provided by the German Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature conservation, Building and Nuclear Security [31] show that, despite the market-oriented mechanisms and legally binding safeguards put in place under the Kyoto protocol, global GHG emissions, by 2010, had risen by around 29% compared to the 1990 levels during the first commitment period of the protocol (2008-2012). The 2015 data show an average rise of 2.5%, implying an increase of 65% above 1990 levels because of the economic growth in both China and India [32]. Based on that, I argue that, if under the Kyoto protocol that was legally binding, we witnessed an increase of global GHG instead of the intended reduction, we can logically expect that, under the Paris agreement, which is not legally binding, we might witness even greater emissions levels. This argument is reinforced by other researchers who equally argue that, apart from the temporary decline in greenhouse gas emissions due to the global economic fallout caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, emissions continue to increase glo-

bally, with carbon dioxide concentrations reaching 420 parts per million (ppm) in 2020, in contrast to the pre-industrial level of 280 ppm [6] [33] [34]. Based on those observations I argue in this article that, from its very nature and from its very beginning, the Paris agreement was designed to fail from a climate perspective, unless corrective decisions are taken and corrective measures are put in place during its implementation phase.

4. Carbon Trading: Nature on the Shelves

One of the important innovations of the Kyoto protocol was the consecration of international market-based mechanisms as dominant approaches in fighting global warming. Those mechanisms, also known as flexible mechanisms, were three in the protocol and later saw the development of another mechanism that, even though not integrated in the protocol, became widely implemented and integrated within the UNFCCC habits and vocabulary, and known as REDD. As such, until now the global fight against climate change was dominated by four market-oriented mechanisms that have all proven to be ineffective in properly tackling global warming at the global level. The Paris agreement was therefore expected to put in place mechanisms other than the market that could help fight global warming. Obviously, the expression non-market approaches appears five times in the agreement and parties are encouraged to strive to use them. On the contrary, the agreement acknowledges that markets are needed to get countries on a low emissions development pathway and enhance ambition to keep warming to well below 2°C, by clearly recognizing the importance of tools such as carbon pricing. By so doing, it continues to channel global emissions reduction initiatives towards the market as initiated by the Kyoto protocol. According to Eva Filzmoser, director at Carbon Market Watch, in a press statement following the closing of the COP 21,

> The Paris agreement contains several provisions related to carbon pricing and markets. Countries can use and transfer "mitigation outcomes" to other countries, which opens the door to the linking of Emissions Trading Systems. The accounting rules for such transfers will be developed in the coming years and will include guidance on how to avoid the "hot air" trading of bogus pollution permits, including the avoidance of doubled-counted emission reductions. The agreement also obliges countries to promote environmental integrity and to pursue domestic climate measures to achieve their targets, thereby limiting the amount of international carbon credits that can be used[3].

For those who were expecting COP 21 to put an end to the global market-oriented climate regime, the Paris agreement came as a great disappointment. In fact, not only it did not consecrate the end of carbon trading, it instead re-affirmed it, and went further by laying the groundwork for a new mar-

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[3]For more details on this press statement, consult
http://us3.campaignarchive1.com/?u=2da01ffed1cef841636213017&id=477e6832a9&e=6f693981d9.

ket-based mechanism by establishing "a new mechanism to succeed the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism, which generates tradable emission offsets. Rules for the new mechanism are to be adopted at the first meeting of parties after the agreement takes force" ([3], p. 3). As the Centre for Climate and Energy Solution continues developing its argument, even though the agreement did all the necessary efforts to avoid any direct reference to the use of the word "market" and "Kyoto Units" (except when it had to talk of non-market based approaches), it nevertheless recognized that parties may use ITMOs to implement their INDCs, on a voluntary basis. Equally, as Fuhr *et al.* pointed out, the agreement used several other concepts that refer indirectly to market-based approaches as a way forward; According to their analysis of the text:

> The concept of market-based approaches is anchored in the form of multiple synonyms found throughout the entire text. Expressions such as "co-operative approaches", "internationally transferred mitigation outcomes", "enhanced" this and that—appearing no less than 50 times throughout the Paris agreement—all refer implicitly to market approaches. Another euphemism liberally used to convey the idea of markets without mentioning them outright is the word "opportunity/ies" which appears around 13 times, making it clear from its contextual placement that the Paris agreement creates a big opening for companies to come in [24].

With that implicit recognition in general, and the encouragement to use the ITMOs in particular, the agreement created a new class of carbon assets and put forward the idea of a new mechanism that will help create and monetize the next generation of carbon credits, including those achieved through policy action [35]. With such continuous focus on the market to solve the climate crisis, the agreement gives little importance to matters related to human rights in general and climate justice in particular.

5. Climate Justice in the Agreement

In the preamble on the agreement we can read the following statement:

> The Parties to this agreement […] Noting the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and noting the importance for some of the concept of "climate justice", when taking action to address climate change […] Have agreed [to put in place the operational part of the Paris agreement] ([2], Article 20).

This is the only paragraph that clearly mentions the concept of climate justice in the agreement. Nevertheless, beside that, another expression such as "public participation and public access to information", which to an extent refers to one dimension of justice (mostly the participatory dimension), is used three times in the text. Of the three times, two are in the preamble and one in article 2. Another statement that reminds of the idea of justice in the agreement is the acknowl-

edgement of the importance of human rights in the following terms:

> Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity ([2], Article 1) ([2], Article 20).

When considered closely, each use of these categories related to climate justice and human rights has no legal force in the agreement. First of all, the agreement only takes note of the importance of climate justice, and it is necessary to underline that the mentioning of climate justice in the text is preceded by the expression importance "for some", meaning that climate justice is not a general matter and should not be considered as such when taking climate initiatives. Climate justice, in this context, is a matter concerning a category of people whose voice can be heard, or ignored, like that of any group when considering climate change. Such restrictive way of qualifying climate justice has huge political and legal implications. Climate change, from the human and social point of view, is basically a problem of justice: justice for nature through the sustainable use of natural resources, and justice for all humans in the management of global warming. That is why climate justice cannot be considered as a matter only for some people. In this regards, "we need to […] open our eyes to how countless 'others' have suffered the true costs of the global ecological crisis, and struggled for survival" ([36], p. 146). By not complying with the principles of climate justice, there is a great risk that the global fight against climate change will not go the right way. Also, when talking of public participation in climate decision-making processes, three elements are worth mentioning. In its first usage of the concept, the agreement only invites the COP to explore ways of enhancing it, while in the second usage it only affirms the importance of public participation. The third and last usage appears in Article 2 of the agreement as a call and as an encouragement to the parties involved. In other words, the agreement does not do justice to non-state and non-sovereign actors by enhancing measures to secure their full participation to decision-making processes. Instead, it leaves everything to neoliberal state actors struggling to secure their self-absorbed interests as well as those of polluting corporations. Based on that, Victor Menotti from the International Forum on Globalization, reacting after the release of the agreement, concluded that "the Paris agreement will be known as the Polluters' Great Escape since it weakens rules on the rich countries and puts the world on a pathway to 3˚C warming"[4]. Going in the same line Nick Dearden, the director of Global Justice Now declared in a press release immediately after the closing of COP 21:

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[4]For further details, refer to
http://oneworld.org/2015/12/12/too-weak-too-late-says-climate-justice-campaigners/.

The Paris negotiators are caught up in a frenzy of self-congratulation about 1.5 degrees being included in the agreement, but the reality is that the reductions on the table are still locking us into 3 degrees of global warming. This will have catastrophic impacts on some of the most vulnerable countries and communities. And yet the deal seems to be shifting more responsibility on those countries who are least responsible for the problem, and the finance that has been agreed on is just a fraction of what is broadly agreed is necessary for those countries to cope with the impacts of climate catastrophe. The bullying and arm twisting of rich countries, combined with the pressure to agree to a deal at all costs, has ensured that the agreement will prevent poor countries from seeking redress for the devastating impacts of a crisis that has been thrust upon them [37].

Such shift of responsibility, endorsed by the Paris agreement, consecrated a new form of global climate injustice, an injustice conventionally built within the UNFCCC and that will be the foundation of global climate politics in the upcoming years.

The second perspective that reveals the unjust nature of the agreement is its disguised institutionalization of climate injustice through the non-liability with regard to loss and damage. In fact, discussions on the loss and damage mechanism started becoming important within the UNFCCC in 2010 COP 16 in Cancun. Negotiations initiated in Cancun led to the establishment of the International Mechanism for loss and damage at the Warsaw COP 19 in 2013, and an executive committee was put in place to further develop and ensure its implementation [38]. Even though the emergence of the debate is quite recent, some authors trace the origin of the loss and damage back to 1991, when the group of Small Island States started calling for the establishment of an international insurance mechanism to compensate the victims of sea level rise [38] [39] [40]. It should be recalled that the notion of loss and damage refers to the adverse effects of climate change that surpass people's adaptive capacity with regard to global warming impacts [41] [42]. The loss and damage impacts may among others be related to weather-related natural hazards, sea-level rise; increasing temperatures; ocean acidification; glacial retreat and related impacts; salinization; land and forest degradation; loss of biodiversity; and desertification [20] [42]. This mechanism is the third pillar, beside adaptation and mitigation that the international community has put in place to fight against global warming [43]. In other words, since the mitigation mechanism addresses the root-cause of climate change by focusing on the reduction of GHG emissions, and adaptation deals with mechanisms that can reduce the impacts of already occurred changes on nature, economies and humans among others, loss and damage is transversal to both and is concerned with learning to live with the irreversible effects of global warming. The Paris deal is the first international agreement to officially integrate loss and damage as a stand-alone mechanism to tackle climate change [38], even though such "recognition of loss and damage as a part of the Paris agreement on

the one hand and the exclusion of liability and compensation on the other were the crunch issues that dominated the negotiations on this issue from the very beginning" ([21], p. 27).

In fact, the agreement integrates the loss and damage resulting from anthropogenic emissions (mostly from developed countries) but immediately excludes the liability and compensation based on that recognition for countries that participated the least to the crisis and that are most exposed to loss and damage. Taking into consideration such contradictory situation, I argue that loss and damage, as considered by the Paris agreement, cannot be seen as a success from a climate justice perspective. In fact, the introduction of the very concept of loss and damage in the climate deal reminds us of the responsibility of polluters, while the evocation of non-liability renders them irresponsive of their actions. Simply put, it goes thus: We acknowledge that global warming causes loss and damage to humanity, and we recognize that fossil companies and rich countries are historically responsible of global warming, and are still not ready to divest from fossil fuel. However, we do not want their responsibility to be engaged in attempting to resolve the crisis. That is why, from my perspective, I conceive loss and damage as a disguised acknowledgement of the failure of global climate diplomacy, and the inclusion of non-liability and non-compensation in the agreement as an institutionalization of global climate injustice within the UNFCCC.

6. Just Transition (JT): A Simulated Presence

One of the most important expectations was that the Paris agreement should definitely turn the page of fossil fuel and engage the international community on the path to renewable energies and JT to low carbon economy. The concept of JT appears only once in the agreement, in the following statement of the preamble: "The Parties to this agreement […] taking into account the imperatives of a Just Transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities […] have agreed [to put in place the operational part of the Paris agreement]." The limited importance of the concept of JT, as well as that of respect for human rights in the rest of the text, results from the fact that too many governments refused to commit to them in the operational sections of the agreement [44]. Nevertheless, despite such reluctance of governments and especially their refusal to mention them in the operational part of the agreement, some people see the only mention done in the preamble as a proof of engagement in the path of JT. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) for example, in its post-COP 21 declaration, the agreement highlights in particular "the imperative of a Just Transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities" [45]. The ILO continues its argument by quoting its General Director, Guy Ryder, who gives more weight to that official position by declaring: "The world has come a long way in realizing

that acting on climate change and promoting job creation and social inclusion are intertwined challenges of the 21st century, and ones that we must confront together if we are to realize the aspirations of social justice" [45]. At this level, it is important to consider the declarations of the UN Agency and the UN diplomat from a critical perspective. First, the paragraph of the agreement on which they ground their arguments is just a statement made by negotiators and found in the preamble. Secondly, the operational part of the agreement does not make any reference to JT and no directives are given concerning the implementation of such transition, the respect of human rights in general and workers' rights in particular. That is why Teresa Anderson, Policy Officer at ActionAid International concludes:

> The deal fails to deliver the rules and tools to ensure that climate change doesn't spiral out of control. Many in Paris seem to have forgotten the very people that this climate agreement was supposed to protect. The deal won't deliver support to help farmers in developing countries whose crops are failing as a result to climate impacts. It does not ensure that food security is protected, and it could even drive farmers off their land, by allowing dubious climate offsetting strategies [46][5].

As Anderson says, the Paris deal was not a particularly good news for Global South farmers. By failing to ensure that the deal will guarantee an appropriate reduction in global GHG and lead to the stabilization of global climate, negotiators contributed to condemn Global South peasants whose agricultural activities and productivity mostly rely on rain-fed systems, and therefore very vulnerable when there are variabilities in precipitation patterns. For example, "climate change is expected to impact crop production in Africa through changes in temperature and the quantity and temporal distribution of water supply" [47], and the reduction of cultivable areas due to the destruction of ecosystems and the rise in sea level [48] [49]. Moreover, the Paris agreement failed to mention agriculture, or to put in place mechanisms to ensure safe and productive farming. Such omission by the agreement is surprising, given that Article 4.1(e) of the Convention explicitly calls all parties to cooperate to "develop and elaborate appropriate and integrated plans for coastal zone management, water resources and agriculture and for the protection and rehabilitation of areas, particularly in Africa, affected by drought and desertification, as well as floods" [50]. I therefore argue that such omission is not only a threat to agriculture practices and productivity, it is also a threat to peasant's means of substance and survival, and a threat to their basic human right to a safe environment as defined by the first principle of the Stockholm Declaration [51].

Equally, ETUC goes in the same line in its post-Paris statement in the following words:

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[5]For further details, refer to:
http://oneworld.org/2015/12/12/too-weak-too-late-says-climate-justice-campaigners/.

The Paris agreement has failed to secure a clear commitment from the Parties that they will design and implement their climate policies with full respect for human rights and promoting a just transition for the workforce as well as decent and quality jobs. The reference inter alia to human rights, to gender equality, to intergenerational equity, and to just transition and decent work in the preamble of the text is indeed a significant acknowledgment of the importance of these principles in the context of climate action, but is not enough to ensure the wide public support that long term climate action will require. Tackling climate change requires a change of society, and this must be done in cooperation with people, not at the expense of their rights [10].

Finally, instead of officially consecrating the end of fossil fuel, the Paris agreement gives a great importance to techno-fixes as suitable solutions. For example, the terms technology/technological appear 63 times in the agreement, both in the preamble and in the operational part of the text. The multiple and repetitive use of those concepts, to an extent, demonstrates the importance given to techno-fixes by negotiators of the agreement. Furthermore, Article 10 clearly points out the importance of technology for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions, and establishes a technological framework to provide overarching guidance for the work of the Technology Mechanism of the convention. By providing this opening, the convention gives more flexibility both to the private and public sector to reply and invest in techno-fixes mechanisms as solutions to climate change [52]. This optimism and the importance given to techno-science appears to be the only option the agreement gives since, as Gigounas *et al.* rightly conclude:

The agreement creates no direct restrictions on the extraction, release, or use of fossil fuels. Even in countries where the agreement would automatically constitute a source of national law, the provisions are not drafted to create direct obligations on energy companies or to impose liability for fossil fuel-based energy operation. Conversely, the agreement allows legislators to decide how to achieve its fundamental aims. The approaches parties may take are therefore unpredictable, and the energy industry would need to observe policy changes closely to prepare for new legislative regimes [52].

The importance attached to techno-fixes demonstrates the reluctance of the international community in fully engaging itself in the path of transition to a low carbon economy. Instead, false solutions continue to be put forward. The insistence on techno-fixes is problematic for three main reasons: First, it opens the road for corporates' investments in the development of hypothetical techniques and technologies to keep on patching the wounds created by global warming rather than looking for long-lasting solutions. In other words technological solutions such as geoengineering or carbon capture and storage among others, are "primarily concerned with maintaining business as usual regardless of hu-

man-induced climate change or any other environmental problem" ([23], p. 929). Secondly, the carbon capture and storage and other technological solutions are still largely underdeveloped and untested [13] [53]. Thus, relying on such approaches implies that the already deteriorating nature will be used as a testing ground, with the possibility of creating other irreversible dangerous scenarios. Third, in encouraging techno-fixes solutions, global leaders did not consider the transversal negative effects they could have on other sectors. Here, we can consider the negative effects that massive investments in negative emissions technologies such as the "Bio-Energy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS), an expansion of trees and crops that extract carbon dioxide alongside the injection of carbon dioxide into geological formations" ([53], p. 3), will have on agriculture and food security. Such technology requires the use of large surfaces, and the lands to be used will either be grabbed from local communities and individuals, or obtained after deforestation or degradation of forest areas that are home to many Indigenous Peoples and communities among others, therefore creating situations of more social and climate injustices, and enhanced inequalities. That is why Buxton concludes that the

> Determination to constantly look for illusory techno-fixes and sustain capital expansion at all costs, is why despite the "show" at Paris, the real action on climate change is more often to be seen in military and corporate strategies that seek to manage climate change consequences rather than tackle its underlying causes ([53], p. 3).

7. Conclusions

From the above analysis, we can draw four fundamental conclusions:

- The Paris agreement, from all indications, was a great and uncontestable success from a diplomatic point of view. In fact, unlike the other previous global agreements, the Paris accord won the adherence of all states present right from the very beginning, and all participating parties signed it.
- The Paris agreement does not put in place any strong mechanism to secure the implementation of climate justice measures. Instead, it restricts its importance to "some", and goes ahead to institutionalize global climate injustice through the proclamation of non-liability with regards to loss and damage.
- The Paris agreement, even though it wishes the advent of JT, does not put in place any mechanism to render such transition possible. As such, our environment, workers, their livelihood and their communities' destinies are still abandoned into the hands of neoliberal capitalists solely motivated by the race for unlimited profits.
- The Paris agreement, following the tradition initiated at the global level by the Kyoto protocol [54], puts in place a mechanism to facilitate the commodification of nature and the resulting carbon trading, instead of creating a pathway for a market-free nature. The Paris-instituted Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcome (ITMO), coupled to the non-abrogated market

mechanisms of the Kyoto regime and the largely implemented REDD+ mechanism will continue to introduce nature into the market and create possibilities of shifted GHG emissions rather than properly cutting them down.

The above conclusions, as I have argued in this article, simply reveal one thing: By failing to comply with fundamental dimensions of climate justice and JT the Paris agreement portrays an image of a simple instrument used by the neoliberal capitalist system to further commodify and marketize nature, rather than solving the climate crisis. Such failure of the agreement is a call to reflect on this 2019 declaration of Greta Thunberg accusing world leaders engaged in climate fight in the following term: "We are in the beginning of a mass extension and all you can speak about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth. How dare! […] How dare you continue to look away, and come here saying that you are doing enough, when the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight" [55]. The Paris agreement omission to open ways to climate justice and JT, and its continuous reliance on the market and techno-fixes approaches is an indication that, as Thunberg [5] again rightly puts it, "we are still in a state of complete denial, as we waste our time, creating new loopholes with empty words and creative accounting". In other words, the future of global climate politics will hold to its integration of principles of climate justice and JT, and a human-centered rather than market and hypothetic techno-fixes orientation, and that is exactly what the Paris agreement failed to do.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Triumphalism and the Inconvenient Truth:
Correcting National Overconfidence in a Rising Power

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Abstract

Do people in a rising authoritarian power with pervasive propaganda and information control overestimate their country's reputation, power, and influence in the world? Previous research on national overconfidence and grand self-imagery generally examines perceptions of hard power rather than soft power, and it focuses on the state or leadership level rather than the mass level. I show, with a survey conducted in 2020 and a pre-registered two-wave survey experiment in 2021, that the Chinese public overwhelmingly overestimates China's global reputation and soft power relative to benchmark public opinion polls on China conducted around the world, even during a crisis. Importantly, informing Chinese citizens of China's actual international image lowers their evaluations of the country and its governing system and moderates their expectations for its external success. These effects from simple information interventions are not fleeting, and they indicate that triumphalism and overconfidence can be meaningfully mitigated.

Introduction

Does the public in a rising authoritarian power overestimate their country's reputation, power, and influence in the world? Previous studies have shown that people often have overly positive conceptions of their own countries' contributions to world history (*1, 2*), perhaps partly due to national or collective narcissism (*3, 4*). But there has been little research on misperceptions about a country's *current* global standing. In an authoritarian setting with pervasive propaganda about the country's achievements and censorship of negative information, it is possible that the public's perception of their country's performances in various areas may be significantly inflated. If the country is also ascending on the world stage, the population is likely even more influenced by narratives glorifying the country's reputation and influence, leading to triumphalism and overconfidence.

Consider China's global image and its self-image. A Pew Research Center survey conducted in the summer of 2020 in 14 advanced economies found that a majority in each country had an unfavorable view of China, with a median of 73% (*5*). This was partly driven by negative opinions on China's handling of the COVID-19 outbreak, but it also reflected a recent negative trend of global public opinion on China (*6*). But such unfavorable news is rarely reported in China's mainstream media. Instead, state media was replete with headlines like "Wuhan once again awes foreign media" (*7*) and "American media marvels at Qingdao's testing of eight million people in three days" (*8*) around the time Pew's survey results were released. These narratives are not just temporary efforts to boost morale during a pandemic. They are part of a larger and persistent propaganda campaign touting the awesomeness of the country, perhaps best represented by the 2018 documentary film *Amazing China* (*厉害了，我的国*), China's top grossing documentary of all time (*9*). Chinese social media is similarly full of stories hyping China's influence and attraction, including content produced by popular Western influencers catering to Chinese audiences (*10, 11*). It is not surprising then that nationalistic grandiosity, complacency, and calls for "breakthrough" in the international arena pervade the Chinese society, paralleling China's combative, "wolf warrior" official diplomacy (*12, 13*).

Overconfidence and inflated national self-images may have significant harmful consequences. First, they can lead to bravado and chauvinism, which can damage a country's international image, cause suspicions, and create an inimical environment for its development. Indeed, China's overreach in recent years has led to significant international pushbacks (*14, 15*), including widespread and bipartisan support for hardline policies toward China among the general public of the United States (*16*). Moreover, studies in international relations and political economy have long argued that overconfidence and grandiose self-imagery, as well as others' suspicions of one's intentions, can intensify conflicts and even cause war (*17-20*). One state's misperception can also induce another well-informed state to initiate a conflict in order to demonstrate that it is more powerful than the other party realizes (*21*).

But the previous literature on national overconfidence and misperceptions generally examines perceptions of a country's military or hard power rather than its soft power (*22, 23*), which is critical when countries compete for influence in the world. In addition, it focuses on misperceptions at the state or leadership level rather than the mass level. We do not know if and to what extent incorrect beliefs about a country's standing in the world can exist among the public. Such popular misperceptions are not just important in themselves but may also overlap

and reinforce elite misperceptions (*24*), or create audience costs for the state (*25, 26*). Most importantly, previous research on overconfidence, narcissism, and grand self-imagery, including the literature on personal overconfidence (*27, 28*), has generally neglected to study whether such misbeliefs can be corrected.

I study China's national overconfidence by focusing on the Chinese public's perception of the country's image, reputation, and attraction around the world, i.e., its soft power. The main study, which will be presented first below, is a two-wave, pre-registered survey experiment conducted in spring 2021, a relatively normal time period in China. An additional survey in spring 2020, when China was deep in the coronavirus crisis, can show whether the Chinese public's perceptions may vary by context.

In both studies I asked the respondents to guess the results of some recent and reputable public opinion polls on China conducted around the world, such as the median percentage of positive views in the aforementioned Pew survey, to measure their national self-images. In the 2021 two-wave survey experiment, I informed the treatment group of the actual results of the public opinion polls to see how information correction would affect the respondents' evaluation of China and its governing system and their expectations for China's success on the world stage. Over two weeks later, I recontacted the respondents for a follow-up survey to see if the treatment had retained its effects and meaningfully mitigated triumphalism and self-aggrandizement.

The results provide micro-level evidence about national overconfidence in a rising power, even during a crisis, and suggest an important source of nationalism in China is factual misunderstandings about the world. They contribute to the study of political knowledge and misinformation by highlighting the importance of information and beliefs about other people's opinions. Perhaps most importantly, the finding that overconfidence can be corrected and triumphalism mitigated, a first in the literature as far as I am aware, is not just of theoretical interest but also has significant policy implications.

The Main Study: Correcting Overconfidence

Wave-A

The main two-wave survey experiment spanned March and April of 2021. Respondents were recruited through a well-established market survey company, and they completed the survey anonymously on Qualtrics. A total of 2,545 respondents participated in Wave-A, and the sample achieved broad demographic representation and was comparable to the Chinese internet population in most dimensions but with oversampling of the college-educated (Table S1), typical for online surveys in China (*29, 30*). This is not necessarily a drawback, since if the better educated and informed are overconfident and have an inflated national self-image, other people are likely similar. As over one billion Chinese people are now online (*31*), an online sample is also appropriate for gauging public sentiments in China.

The survey asked respondents the following six questions about their perceptions of China's image in the world: (A) the median percentage of people in 14 advanced economies with positive views of China; (B) the median percentage of people in African countries who think China's economic and political influence on their country is positive; (C) the percentage of

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Southeast Asian academic researchers, government officials, and other public opinion leaders who have confidence in China's contribution to global peace, prosperity, and governance; (D) the median percentage of people in countries around the world who approve of Chinese leadership's job performance; (E) the percentage of Taiwanese people supporting reunification with Mainland China; (F) the percentage of Hong Kong residents with favorable views of the Mainland Chinese government.

The number of representative and high-quality public opinion polls on attitudes toward China is limited, and my research was restricted to using what was available. Nevertheless, the image questions covered diverse regions, both geographically and political economy wise. For each image question, I asked the respondents to write their own answers (between 0% and 100%). The concept of median was explained both prior to these questions and within the relevant questions. In addition, for public opinion poll questions with neutral choices, the study's respondents were so informed.

Figure 1 shows how the respondents answered the six image questions, with the red lines indicating correct answers from the relevant public opinion polls and the gray lines indicating the median answers among the respondents. The results show that, while China's image around the world is generally unfavorable, the Chinese public is generally unaware of the situation. On each question, the median answer was significantly higher than the correct answer, indicating that the (vast) majority of respondents overestimated China's reputation on that question. The differences between the reality and the median perceptions were as large as more than 50 percentage points in the cases of the Southeast Asia and Taiwan questions.

A reasonable measure of the respondents' overall degree of overestimating China's reputation is their net number of overestimating answers (# of overestimates - # of underestimates). By this measure, 96.6% of the respondents overestimated China's reputation in the world, i.e., they had a positive net number of overestimates. In fact, 65.4% of the respondents manifested inflated national self-images in all six questions. Weighting the sample by China's general internet population data on gender, age group, education, and party membership (Table S1 in the Supplementary Information) slightly changes the two percentages to 96.4% and 62.3%, respectively.

Figure S1 shows the relationship between personal characteristics and degree of national self-image inflation in the 2021 study. The results are not identical to those of the 2020 study below (Figure S10), but in both studies, people who use foreign media as an information source and who have visited foreign developed countries overestimate China's reputation less. While this relationship is correlational rather than causal, it is consistent with previous research showing that exposure to critical information from foreign sources makes people more pessimistic about China (32). For reasons beyond the scope of this research, in both studies females are more confident about China's global image and soft power, a result that differs from previous studies that suggest males are more confident about their prospect of success (33).

Following the image questions, the respondents were randomly assigned to a control group (N=1286) and a treatment group (N=1259); almost all covariates were well balanced (Table S2). Subjects in the treatment group were reminded of their own answer for each question and then informed of the actual result from the relevant public opinion poll.
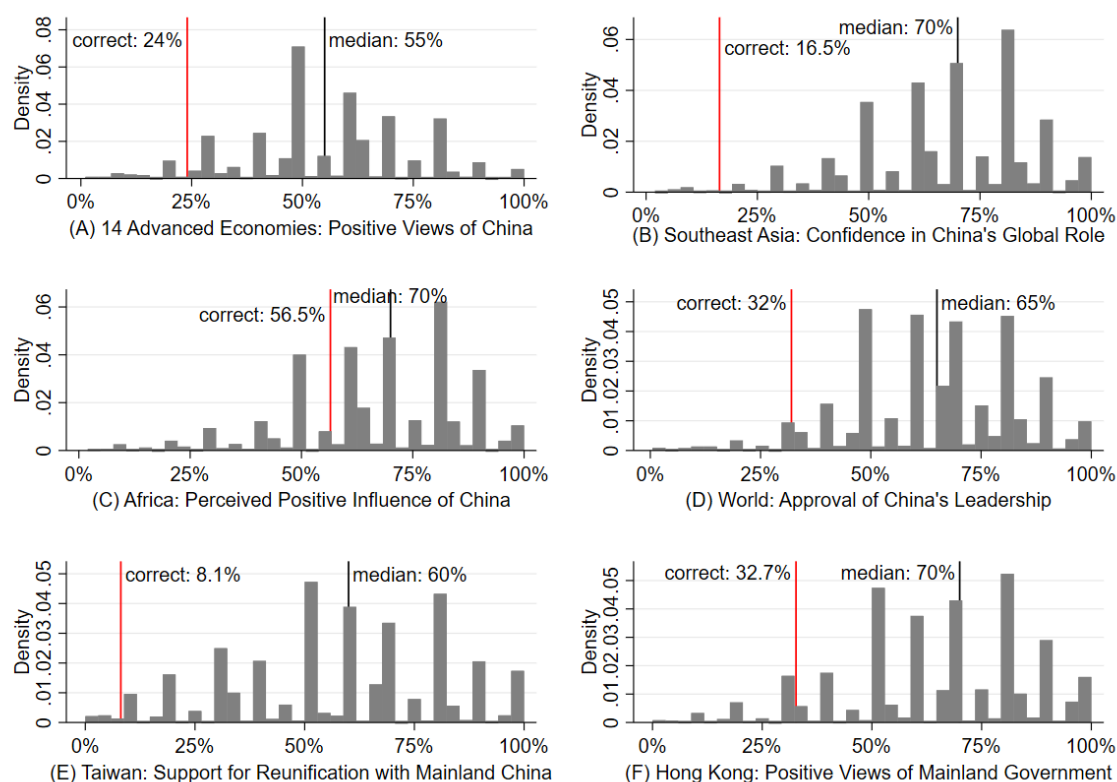
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Fig. 1 China's Global Image and Its Self-Image (2021). These are the distributions of the respondents' answers about China's image in the 2021 study, which referenced the following public opinion polls: (A) the Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey by the Pew Research Center; (B) the 2019-2020 Afro-Barometer Survey; (C) the 2021 State of Southeast Asia Survey by the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute; (D) Gallup's *Rating World Leaders*: 2020 Report; (E) the Public's View of Cross-Strait Relations Survey by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, November 2020; (F) the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute Poll, January 2021.

Two types of correction effects are relevant for the study: (1) the effects on participants' factual beliefs about China's global reputation and image, which was best left for Wave B, after some time had elapsed, rather than immediately after the participants learned of the correct answers; (2) effects on political attitudes, which could be examined in both Wave A and Wave B. As outlined in the pre-analysis plan (filed at AsPredicted.org), my main research question on the treatment's effects on political attitudes is whether correcting inflated national self-images affected participants' evaluations of their country, including (A) evaluation of its overall and domestic situations, including support for its governing system, and (B) expectation for the country's external success. Therefore all respondents answered a series of questions in the two areas after the information treatment.

Figure 2 presents the results of all pre-registered main analyses, using the pre-registered covariates. Informing the respondents of China's actual global image lowered their evaluations of China's current overall situation, the country's future prospects, its current political system, and the so called "China Model" (i.e., China's political and economic systems), and it reduced

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their trust in government. The size of the effect on aggregate overall/domestic evaluation was about 5 percentage points. Correcting inflated national self-images also reduced the respondents' expectations for the success of the Belt and Road Initiative, China's signature international infrastructure initiative; the influence of the "Community of Common Destiny" concept, China's major foreign policy goal; the international community's praise of China's handling of Covid-19; the prospect of Taiwan's peaceful reunification with Mainland China in the foreseeable future; and the success of China's political framework for Hong Kong. The effect size on the aggregate external expectation was about 6.5 percentage points.
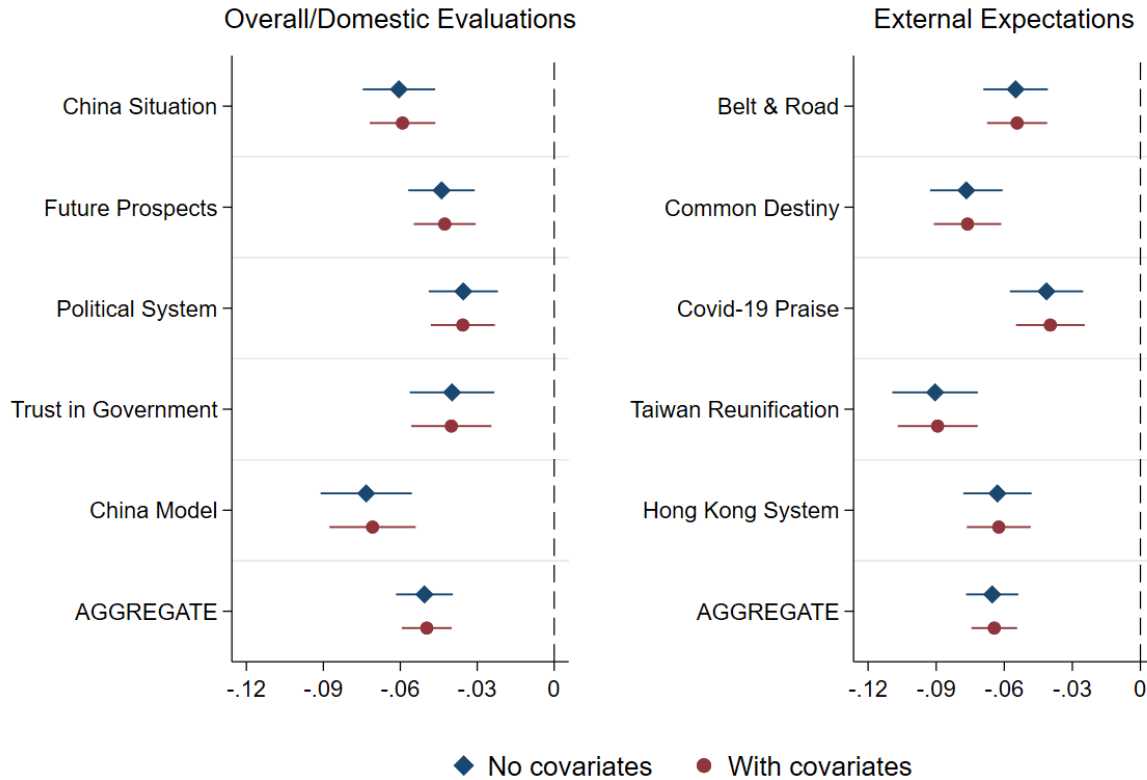

Fig. 2 Main Treatment Effects of Correcting Inflated National Self-Images. Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. See the text for explanation of each outcome variable. AGGREGATE refers to a simple additive index. Covariates include standard demographic variables, information sources, and overseas visit experiences. The dependent variables are rescaled to range between 0 and 1 for easy interpretation. See Tables S3 and S4 for numerical results.

Figures S2 and S3 show that respondents who overestimated China's reputation on all six questions (the "extremists") did not resist information treatment or display a backfire reaction. The treatment effects on them are actually slightly larger than on non-extremists. The treatment effects also did not vary with regard to education (Figure S4). The treatment had somewhat larger effects on respondents younger than 35 on overall/domestic evaluations, but the effects on older respondents were also significant. Therefore, the lack of close representativeness of

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the sample on education and to some extent age did not pose challenges to the generalizability of the findings to the general Chinese public, at least the internet population.

Besides these main analyses, I also conducted a set of pre-registered secondary analyses on the treatment's effects on the respondents' policy and political preferences, such as using military force in foreign affairs, the Covid-19 origin investigation, and support for democracy. These questions were asked after the country evaluation questions discussed above. The treatment effects on policy and political preferences were largely null, although the coefficient for supporting China's "wolf-warrior" diplomacy was significant and negative (Figure S5). The contrast between the significant and null results indicate that the treatment effects on assessment of the country's domestic and international situations discussed earlier are genuine, although they do not immediately translate into revised policy preferences. At the same time, some of the policy preference questions were "harder" than simply assessing the general situation of a country, which might have contributed to the non-effects.

Wave B

Previous research has shown that communication effects are often transient and quickly dissipates (*34-37*). To see if the Wave A treatment had somewhat durable effects (and to see if it changed participants' factual beliefs about China's global image), two weeks after a respondent's Wave A participation, they were re-contacted (multiple times in the following 10 days if needed) for a follow-up survey, as was pre-registered. The median response time was 15 days after participating in the first wave, and 82% of the respondents participated in Wave B within three weeks. Wave B participants were roughly equally drawn from the two Wave A groups, with most demographic and other covariates also well balanced (Table S5). There were somewhat higher shares of females, older people, and better educated people participating in Wave B than in Wave A, but, crucially, the Wave A treatment status, Wave A national self-image, income, life satisfaction, political interest, party affiliation, overseas visit, and most media source variables do not predict participation in the Wave B survey (Table S6).

In the Wave B survey the respondents first re-answered the six image questions from Wave A, and then answered two new questions about China's reputation abroad: favorable views of China in Latin America and global confidence in China's Covid-19 vaccines. The top panel of Figure 3 shows that, for the six original image questions, those treated in Wave A overestimated China's reputation by 12.9 percentage points per question, while those in the control group of Wave A overestimated it by 34.5 percentage points. The middle and bottom panels of Figure 3 shows that those treated in Wave A were less sanguine about China's image in Latin America and global confidence in Chinese vaccines. The differences were all significant (Figure S6). Therefore, over two weeks later, information corrections in Wave A not only still had effects on the respondents' perceptions in the six original image questions, but they were effective in changing the respondents' general national self-image. The treatment effect on perceptions of global confidence on Chinese vaccines was somewhat smaller than on the other questions, likely due to extensive propaganda in China about the superiority of Chinese vaccines and how they are hotly pursued abroad (*34*). The durability of the effects suggests that exposing Chinese citizens to information that Mainland China's global image, even among other Chinese societies, is significantly worse than they thought is a striking experience and likely leads to

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effortful processing. Such deliberate and online and online (rather than memory-based) processing thus has lasting influence (*37, 39, 40*).

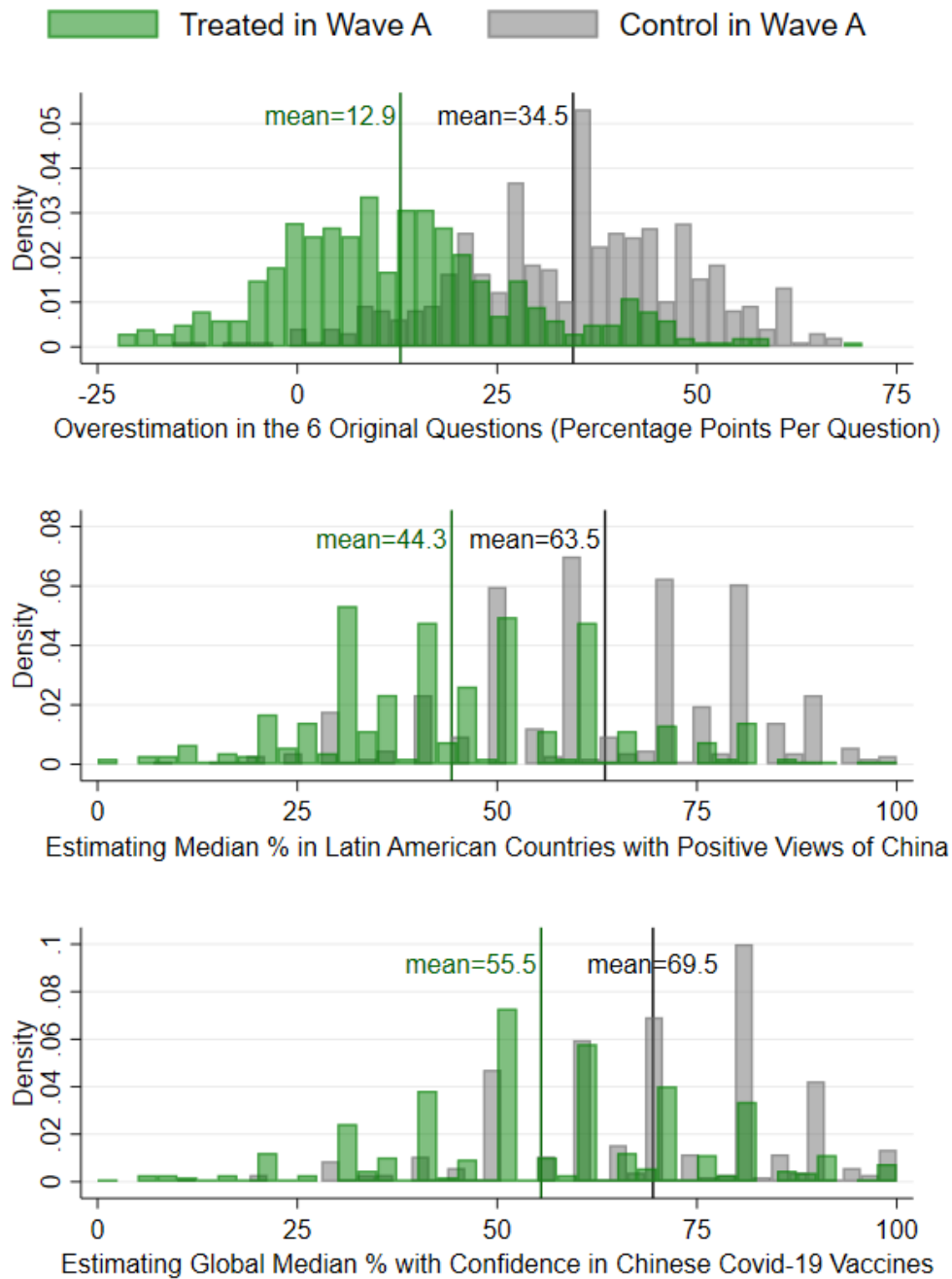**Fig. 3 Re-Estimating China's Global Images in Wave B of 2021**. Wave B respondents' new answers to the six original image questions in Wave A (top panel) and answers to two new questions (middle and bottom panels).

Next, I asked the respondents the same political evaluations questions from Wave A, and Figure 4 shows that the treatment effects on political evaluations also endured after over two weeks,

at least for those respondents who participated in both waves. For aggregate overall/domestic evaluations, the size of treatment effect on these respondents remained at 4.9 percentage points in Wave B (down slightly from 5.6 in Wave A, see Figure S7), and for aggregate external expectations it was 5.9 percentage points (down moderately from 7.3 in Wave A), using models with covariates. For policy and political preference questions, however, the Wave A treatment, again, did not produce significant or stable effects in Wave B (Figure S8).

In addition, the Wave B survey asked three new political attitudes questions: whether China is on the right track (overall evaluation), whether China should compete with the U.S. as the top global power (foreign policy), and support for a statement about freedom of speech that became well-known in China following the Covid-19 outbreak: "A healthy society should not have only one voice" (domestic policy). Respondents treated in Wave A were less likely to agree that China was on the right track, but the treatment had no effect on the other two questions (Figure S9), consistent with the findings in Wave A about the differential effects on evaluations of China as a country and on political and policy preferences.
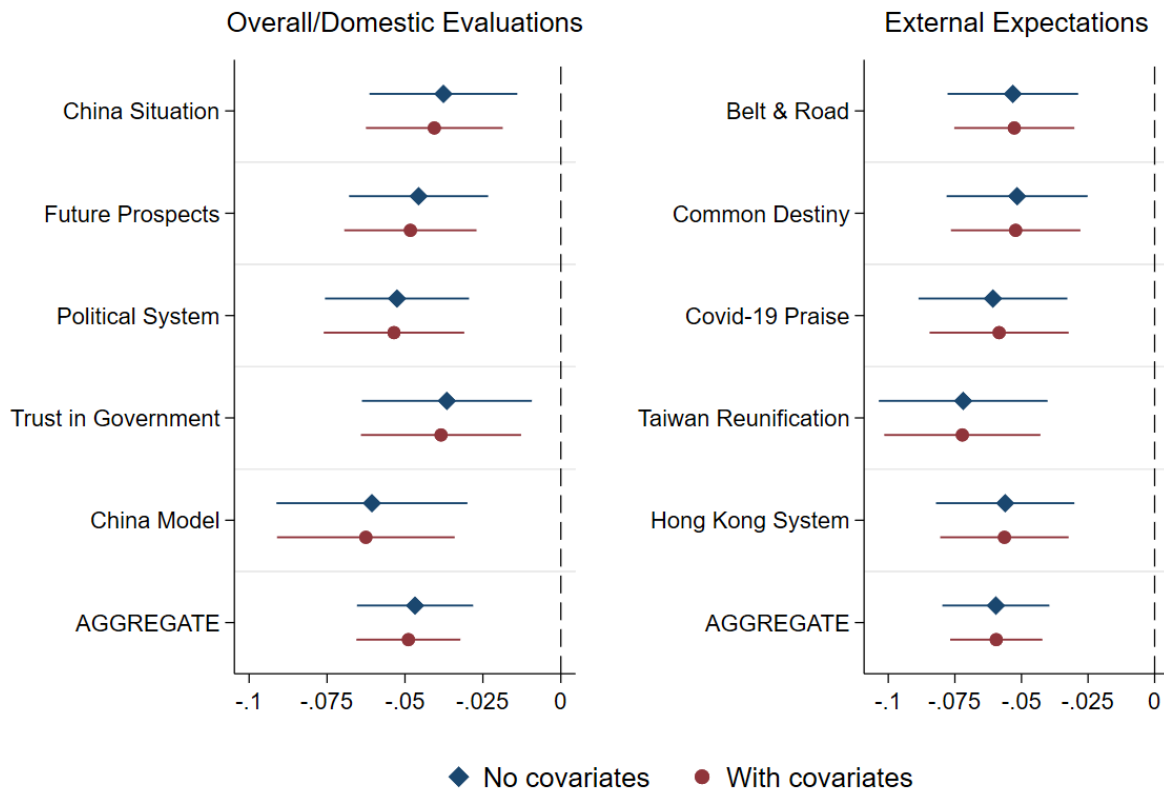
Fig. 4 Effects of Wave A Treatment on Attitudes in Wave B. Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals.

Finally, I asked the respondents the following question: "What do you think is the first thing that Americans think about when they think about China?" A February 2021 Pew survey of the U.S. adult population that asked respondents what was the first thing that came to mind when they thought about China found that human rights topped the list (*41*). I use the top six items in

Pew's poll results (excluding the residual category of "generally negative adjectives") as choices and randomized their order in the Wave B survey. Table 1 shows that being treated in Wave A significantly increased the respondents' probability of naming human rights as the first thing that Americans think about. The result indicates that being informed about China's global images made the respondents more aware of what people in other countries think about China, i.e., there is a convergence of awareness to some extent.

Table 1: "What do you think is the first thing that Americans think about when they think about China?"

	Human Rights	Political System	Threat	Bilateral Relations	Covid-19
Treated in Wave A	0.724* (0.287)	-0.078 (0.304)	0.156 (0.283)	-0.054 (0.254)	0.196 (0.252)

Notes: Multinomial logistic regression estimates with robust standard errors in parentheses. Economy is the omitted baseline category. Covariates not shown. * $p < 0.05$.

A Complementary Study: Overconfidence During a Crisis

While the main study in 2021 was conducted when life in China had largely resumed normality from the Covid-19 pandemic, here I report results of a complementary study conducted in March 2020, when central China's Wuhan was still under lockdown and considered the global coronavirus epicenter. This study can thus show if the Chinese public had different national self-images when the country was deep in a major crisis that was beginning to sweep the entire world. A total of 2,330 respondents participated in the study; they were similarly recruited as for the 2021 study, with the demographics also being similar (Table S7). (The 2020 study's respondents were excluded from the recruitment pool of the 2021 study).

The 2020 study also asked six national image questions based on public opinion polls available at the time. They included the same questions on Hong Kong, Taiwan, and world leadership approval as in the 2021 study (although the correct answers differed somewhat between the two years). The other three questions were: (1) the median percentage of people in the U.S., Canada, and Western European countries with positive views of China; (2) the median percentage of people in Asian, sub-Saharan African, and Latin American countries with positive views of China; and (3) the then-current average user rating of the documentary *Amazing China* on IMDb, a major international movie review site. Different from the 2021 study, six choices from low to high were provided for each question, with the correct answer embedded as one of the choices.

Figure 5 shows how the respondents answered the six image questions, with the numbers in red indicating correct answers. Similar to the 2021 study, on each question most respondents overestimated China's reputation, sometimes to a striking degree. To take a typical example, following the widely reported Hong Kong unrest in 2019, about 22.6% of Hong Kong residents had positive opinions of Mainland China's government in January 2020, but the median answer among my respondents was 56.6%. This misperception might be partly driven by a popular

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discourse on the Mainland stating that there was a "silent majority" in Hong Kong supporting the Hong Kong and Mainland governments (*42*).

Much as in the 2021 study, 97.5% of the respondents overestimated China's reputation as measured by their net number of overestimating answers, and 60.9% of the respondents overestimated it on all six questions. Weighting the sample by China's general internet population data slightly changes the two percentages to 98.0% and 64.3%, respectively. In other words, the Chinese public's overconfidence is manifest even under a national emergency threat. The fact that people's national self-image is not correlated with the nation's actual performance is also in line with some earlier findings about personal overconfidence (*28, 33*).
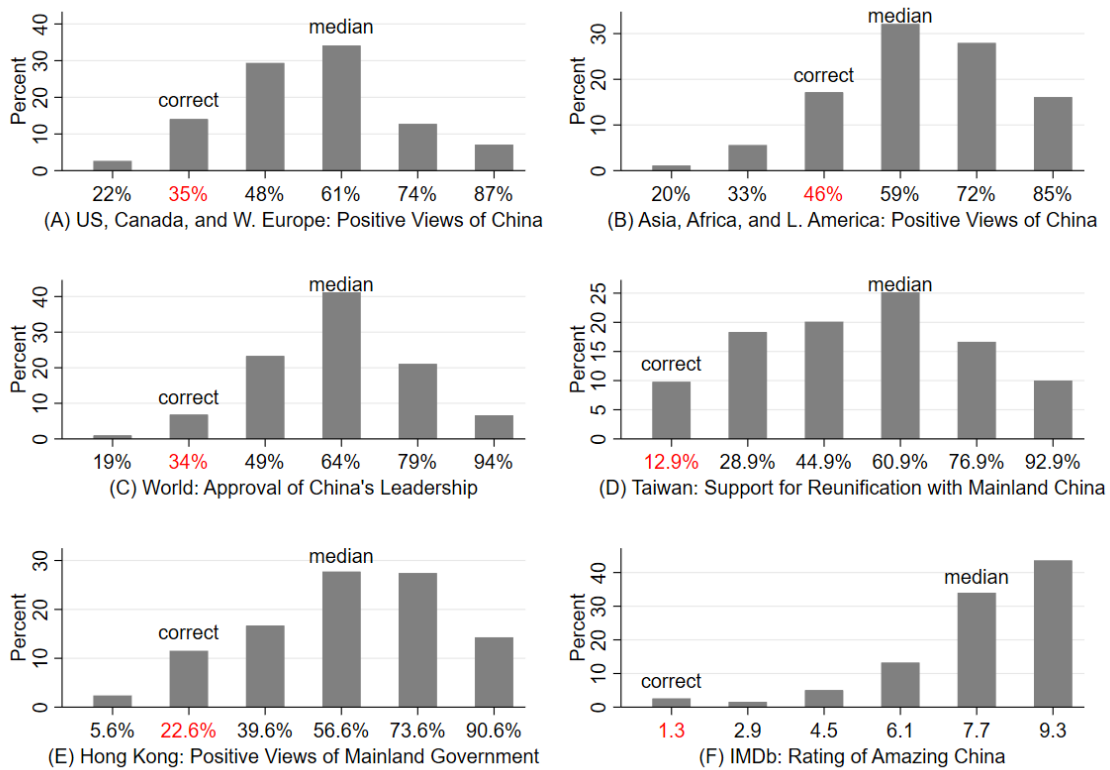

Fig. 5 China's Global Image and Its Self-Image (2020). These are the distributions of the respondents' answers about China's image in the 2020 study, which referenced the following sources: (A and B) the 2019 Global Attitudes Survey by Pew Research Center; (C) Gallup's *Rating World Leaders*: 2019 Report; (D) the 2019 Cross-Strait Relations and National Security Opinion Survey by Chengchi University; (E) the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute Poll, January 2020; and (F) the IMDb website, March 2020.

Discussion

The two broad-based surveys indicate that the Chinese public overwhelmingly overestimates China's soft power and reputation in the world, providing micro-level evidence about how national overconfidence and grandiose self-imagery can exist at the mass level. At the same

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time, people are receptive to information corrections, which mitigate the degree of triumphalism and self-aggrandizement, and the effects are at least somewhat durable. How to facilitate exposure to accurate information at scale is beyond the scope of this paper, but the findings show the possibility of effective information intervention.

Is national overconfidence and self-image inflation restricted to a rising authoritarian power, or is it a more universal phenomenon? The prevalence of national narcissism and motivated reasoning suggests that the phenomenon can be quite general. But this research's information treatment results, even among respondents with extreme self-image inflation, indicate that the lack of access to information is a critical reason behind the issue, and therefore it can be particularly pronounced in an authoritarian power with pervasive information control. That the Chinese public similarly overestimates China's global reputation when the country was hit with a crisis also suggests that national self-image has as much to do with propaganda as with performance. Future research can investigate the phenomenon in more countries and compare more and less open information environments. Beyond soft power and reputation, future research can also examine misperceptions about a country's hard power and material prosperity.

Previous studies have shown that individuals' assessment of their own country can be influenced by knowledge of other countries' performances (*29, 43*). This research shows that how people in other nations think about one's own country also affects political attitudes, i.e., opinion formation is interactive, and awareness can converge to some extent with sufficient information flow. More generally, this research expands the scope of the literature on political knowledge and misinformation (*44-50*), which has focused on knowledge and (mis)information about (typically domestic) political actors, institutions, and social and policy facts, by highlighting the importance of knowledge about other people's opinion (see also *51, 52*). Similarly, the literature on propaganda has focused on political messages that are directly about a regime's merits or actions (*53-55*), rather than other nations' opinions of one's own nation. The findings further suggest that propaganda is a double-edged sword: inflated national self-image can increase regime support, but excessively raised expectations are hard to meet and will lead to letdowns when people are exposed to more accurate information.

This research focuses on mass perceptions rather than elite perceptions not just because the latter are difficult to directly access in an authoritarian setting. When citizen opinions on foreign affairs are shaped by leader/elite preferences and further reinforce the latter in a closed information feedback loop, elite opinion likely overlaps with mass opinion significantly. China's ongoing "wolf-warrior" diplomacy and the prevalent triumphalist sentiments among Chinese intellectuals are cases in point (*13, 56*). Elite opinions on foreign policies are sometimes even more hawkish than ordinary people in China (*24*). Further, a proud and overconfident society may impose a significant audience cost that confines the state to uncompromising positions in international affairs (*25, 26*).

Such overconfidence and closed information feedback loop do not bode well for a country's continued rise. The Chinese society commonly regards China as a traditional superpower and believes it is in the process of regaining that position (*57*). Inflated national ego has hastened the country's departure from the Deng Xiaoping era's foreign policy principle of "keeping a low profile and biding time" and, consequently, has led to overreach in global affairs and to international pushback (*14, 15*). At the turn of the century China's low profile, despite its rapid economic growth, made some analysts wonder if China would blindside the West (*58*).

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Ironically, the country's premature pronouncement of its ascendancy and superiority of late has blinded the nation itself and given rise to an adverse international environment, jeopardizing its goal of rejuvenation.

Materials and Methods

Study Protocol

In both the main and complementary studies, I asked the respondents to guess the results of some reputable public opinion polls on China conducted around the world and released within the past year. For example, one of the questions in the 2021 main study asked:

> *Pew, a well-known international public opinion polling organization, conducted nationally representative polls in 14 advanced economies in summer 2020. What do you think is the median percentage of people in these countries with positive views of China? (That is, if we arrange these 14 countries from high to low according to their levels of positive views of China, what is the average of the middle two countries?) The 14 countries are: ...*

For public opinion poll questions with neutral choices, such as the question on Taiwanese attitudes toward reunification with Mainland China and the question on Hong Kong residents' attitudes toward the Mainland government, the respondents were so informed.

Since some of the questions about China's global image asked about the median, an explanation of the concept was provided in the beginning section of both the 2021 (Wave A) and 2020 studies, prior to the image questions, and then again within the relevant questions. Respondents also passed a simple pre-treatment attention check question before they could proceed with the survey. No attention check question was used in the 2021 Wave B survey.

In the 2021 main study, the respondents were asked to write a percentage themselves between 0% and 100% for each of the image questions. To make sure there was no confusion about what to write, the % symbol was provided in the questions, so respondents only needed to write the numbers before the % symbol. At the experimental treatment stage, to increase the probability that respondents indeed received the treatment, the correct answers were repeated for the treated respondents and shown in red.

Specifically, the corrections go as follows (in the case of the Pew question asked above):

> *A moment ago, you guessed that the median percentage of people with positive views of China in the 14 advanced economies that Pew surveyed in summer 2020 was (the respondent's answer). The actual result according to the Pew survey was 24%. Yes, the median percentage of people with positive views of China in the 14 advanced economies was 24%.*

For outcome questions in the 2021 survey experiment, questions about overall/domestic evaluations and external expectations were asked before policy/political preference questions,

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since the first two sets of questions are the pre-registered primary research questions. Overall/domestic and external questions themselves were mixed together.

In the 2020 study, respondents were asked to select one of six given choices for each of the questions on China's image, with the correct answer embedded as one of choices. The question on Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America does not include Australia, even though Pew's survey report groups it together with other Asian countries as Asia-Pacific, since Australia is typically regarded by the Chinese public as being conceptually closer to the West than to Asia. The correct answer for this question, embedded among the choices, is consistent with the question wording. (Including Australia will in fact increase the gap between the respondents' median answer and the correct answer for that question.)

Recruitment

Respondents were recruited through a market survey company that has been used in other published studies of Chinese public opinion and were then directed to complete the surveys anonymously on Qualtrics. Prior to the 2021 two-wave study, the survey company estimated that the recontact rate for Wave B would be around 60 percent based on their previous experiences. After Wave B began, however, access to the Qualtrics survey platform was severely disrupted in China; at one point, Qualtrics even thought their website had been entirely blocked (*59*). Participants in the survey company's online panel also had a higher than usual turnover rate (*60*). As a result, the recontact rate was lower than expected, and I had to increase the total number of Wave A participants to 2545, slightly higher than the planned number in the pre-registration (2400). In the end, 899 respondents participated in the Wave B survey, roughly evenly split between those who had been assigned to the control group (N=466) and the treatment group (N=433) in Wave A.

The studies were deemed exempt by the Institutional Review Board of the author's institution. The 2021 main study was pre-registered at AsPredicted prior to data collection.

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Supplementary Materials for

Triumphalism and the Inconvenient Truth: Correcting National Overconfidence in a Rising Power

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1

Supplementary Material 1. Question Wording of Outcome Variables in the 2021 Main Study

1. Overall and Domestic Evaluations:

   A. *China Situation*: On a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied), how do you feel about the overall situation in China today?
   B. *Future Prospects*: On a scale from 1 (very pessimistic) to 7 (very optimistic), how do you feel about China's future prospects in 10 years?
   C. *Political System*: On a scale from 1 (very inappropriate) to 7 (very appropriate), how appropriate do you think China's current political system is for the country?
   D. *Trust in Government*: How much of the time do you think you can trust the government to do what is right? (Choices: just about always, most of the time, some of the time, rarely)
   E. *China Model*: China's political and economic systems are sometimes referred to as the "China Model." To what extent do you think the China model offers something useful for other countries? (Choices: a great extent, a fair extent, not so much, none)

2. External Expectations:

   A. *Belt & Road*: How optimistic do you feel about the success of the "Belt and Road" initiative in the world? (Choices: optimistic, somewhat optimistic, neutral, not too optimistic, not optimistic).
   B. *Common Destiny*: How influential do you think the concept of "Community of Common Destiny," proposed by China in recent years, has been in the world? (Choices: influential, somewhat influential, just average, not too influential, not influential)
   C. *Covid-19 Praise*: Regarding the current coronavirus outbreak, do you think mainstream international opinions on China are mainly praise or criticisms? (Choices: mainly praise, more praise than criticisms, half and half, more criticism than praise, mainly criticisms).
   D. *Taiwan Reunification*: How optimistic do you feel about the prospect of peaceful reunification of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in the foreseeable future? (Choices: optimistic, somewhat optimistic, neither optimistic nor pessimistic, somewhat pessimistic, pessimistic)
   E. *Hong Kong System*: Are you confident about the success of China's institutional arrangement for Hong Kong? (Choices: confident, somewhat confident, just average, not very confident, not confident)

3. Policy and Political Preferences:

A. *Wolf Warrior Diplomacy*: In recent years China has sometimes been criticized for aggressive "wolf-warrior diplomacy." In response, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson recently said: "If the goal is to assure China's sovereignty, security, and development interests, and to maintain the country's honor and global fairness and justice, what's wrong with 'wolf-warrior diplomacy'?" Do you think "wolf-warrior diplomacy" is needed by China or is it too aggressive? (Choices: needed, somewhat needed, hard to say, somewhat too aggressive, too aggressive)

B. *Use Military*: Do you think China should use more or less military force to achieve its diplomatic goals and national interests? (Choices: significantly more, somewhat more, maintain the status quo, somewhat less, significantly less)

C. *Covid Domestic Investigation*: With regard to the origin of the Covid-19 virus, do you think China should focus on investigations within China or push for investigations in other countries? (Choices: focus on investigations within China; both in and outside China, but more on investigations within China; half and half; both in and outside China, but more on investigations outside China; focus on pushing for investigations outside China)

D. *Leadership Turnover*: Do you think that China needs to promote the national leadership's orderly transition? (Choices: needed, somewhat needed, hard to say, not too needed, not needed)

E. *Support for Democracy* (averaged over the following two questions): Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
   a. "It is unhealthy for a country's fate to rest on the prestige of one or two people." (Choices: agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree)
   b. "Democracy may have its problems, but it is still the best available political system." (Choices: agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree)

4. New questions about China's global popularity (Wave B):

   A. *Positive Views of China in Latin America*: Latinobarometer is a well-known polling organization that conducts nationally representative surveys in Latin America. Suppose they conducted a survey in Latin America now about the percentage of people in each country who have favorable views of China. What do you think the median percentage would be? ___% (please write a number between 0 and 100)

   B. *Global Confidence in Chinese Vaccines*: Suppose there were a survey in all countries of the world about whether people are confident in China's Covid-19 vaccines. What do you think would be the median percentage of people confident in China's vaccines? ___% (please write a number between 0 and 100)

5. Additional Political Attitudes Questions (Wave B):

3

A. *Right Track*: Do you feel things in this country are generally on the right track, or do you feel things have gotten on the wrong track? (Choices: generally on the right track, somewhat on the right track, hard to say, somewhat on the wrong track, generally on the wrong track)

B. *Top Power*: Do you think China should increase its efforts to vie with the U.S. for the position of the world's No. 1 power in the foreseeable future? (Choices: yes, kind of yes, hard to say, kind of no, no)

C. *One Voice*: Do you agree that "a healthy society should not have just one voice"? (Choices: agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree)

6. What Americans think about China (Wave B):

   What do you think is the first thing that Americans think about when they think about China? (Choices: human rights, political system, threat, bilateral relations, Covid-19, economy)

Supplementary Material 2. Figures

Fig. S1. Correlates of National Self-Image in the 2021 Study
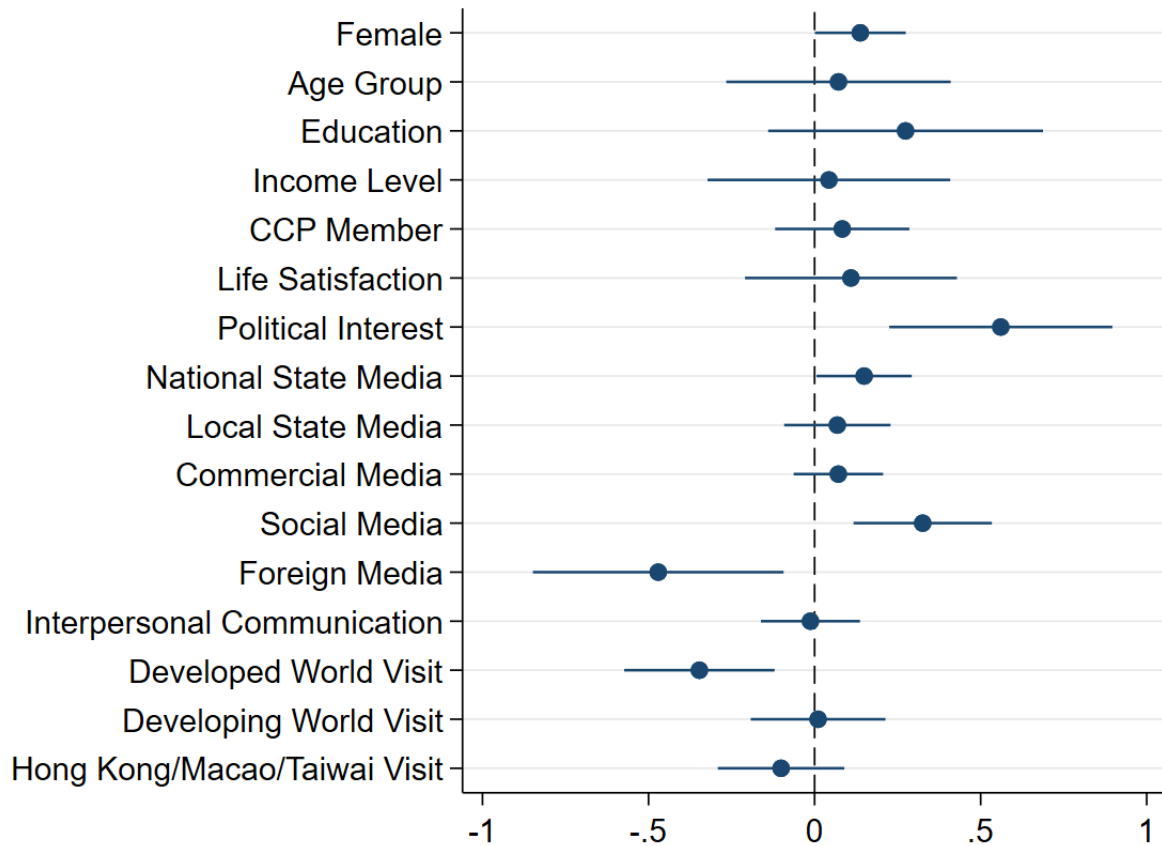
Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. The dependent variable is the net number of questions in which a respondent overestimated China's popularity in the world (# of overestimates - # of underestimates). Each media variable refers to whether a respondent uses that type of media as a major information source. Each overseas visit variable refers to whether a respondent has had that type of visit. All independent variables are re-scaled to range from 0 to 1 for easy interpretation of the results.

5

Fig. S2. Treatment Effects on Overall/Domestic Evaluations of Extremists and Non-Extremists
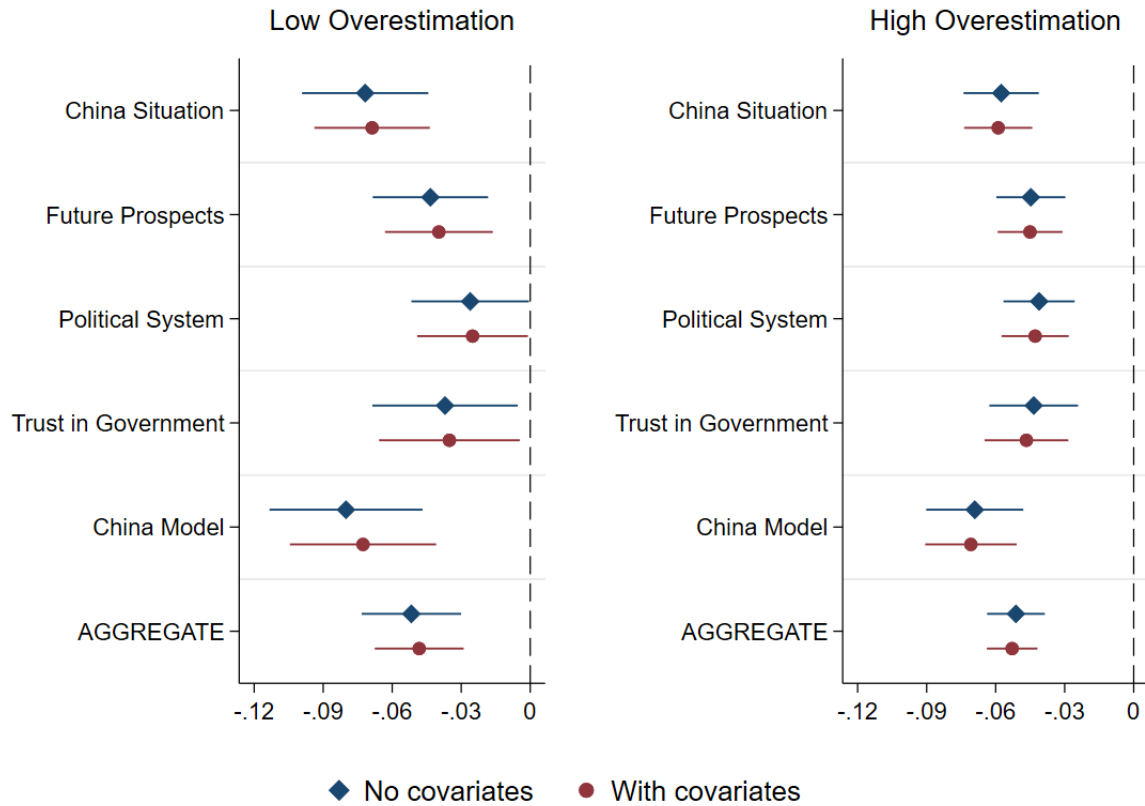
Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. High overestimation refers to respondents who overestimated China's popularity in all six image questions, which constituted 65.4% of the respondents. Low overestimation refers to respondents whose numbers of overestimating answers were between one and five. The dependent variables are rescaled to range between 0 and 1 for easy interpretation.

6

Fig. S3. Treatment Effects on External Expectations of Extremists and Non-Extremists
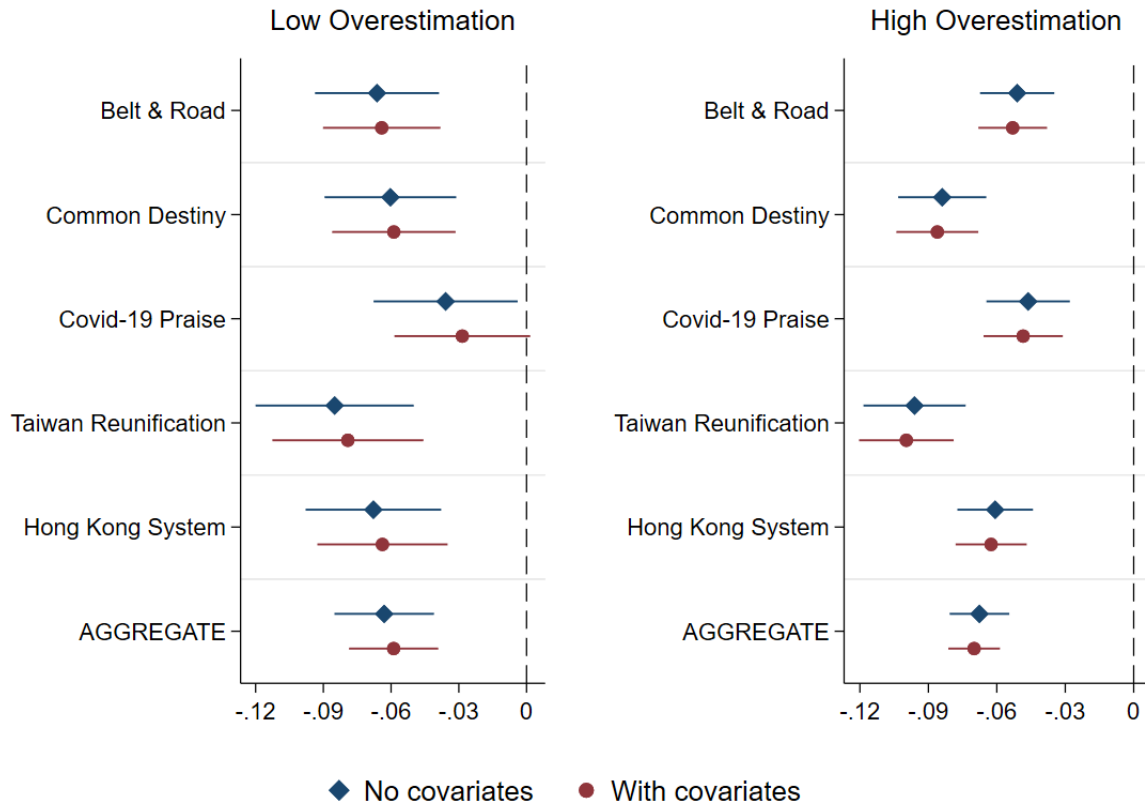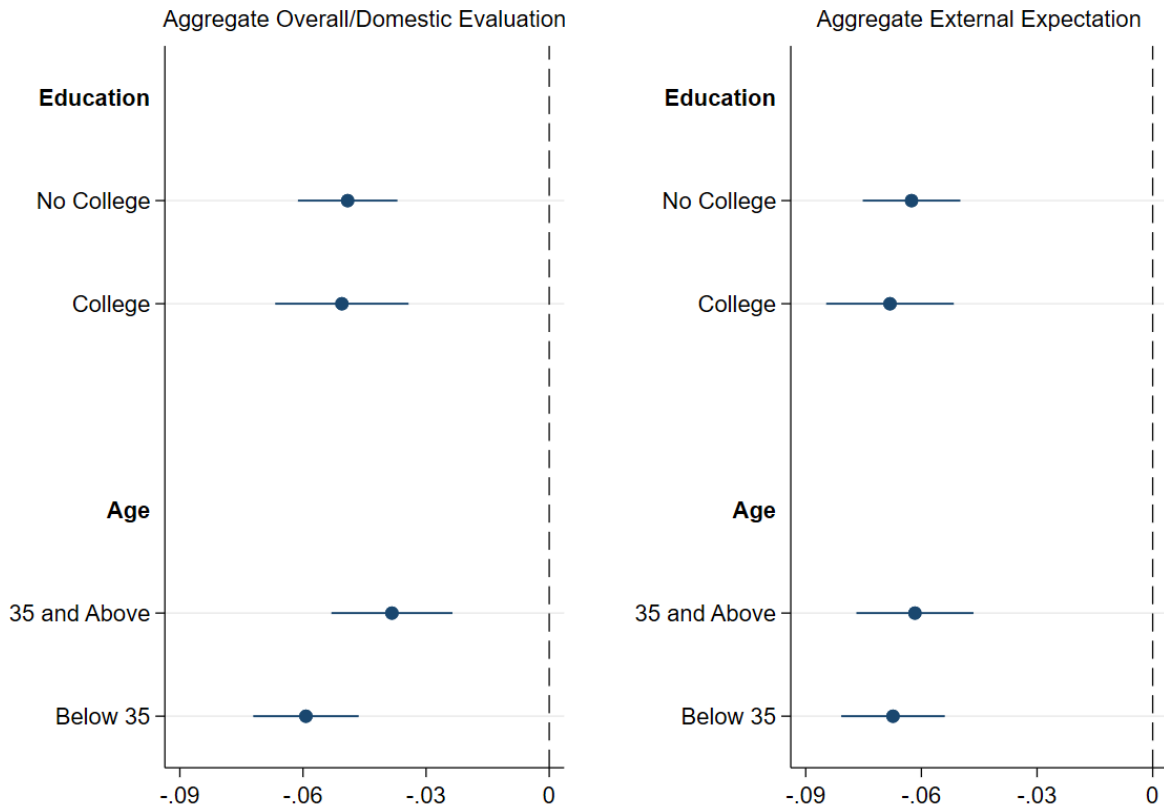

Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. High overestimation refers to respondents who overestimated China's popularity in all six image questions, which constituted 65.4% of the respondents. Low overestimation refers to respondents whose numbers of overestimating answers were between one and five. The dependent variables are rescaled to range between 0 and 1 for easy interpretation.

Fig. S4. Heterogeneous Analysis of the Main Treatment Effects

Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals in models with full covariates and interactions of the treatment with dummies indicating four-year college education and age below 35. The thresholds are chosen based on median values of the respective variables.

8

Fig. S5. Secondary Analysis: Treatment Effects on Policy and Political Preferences
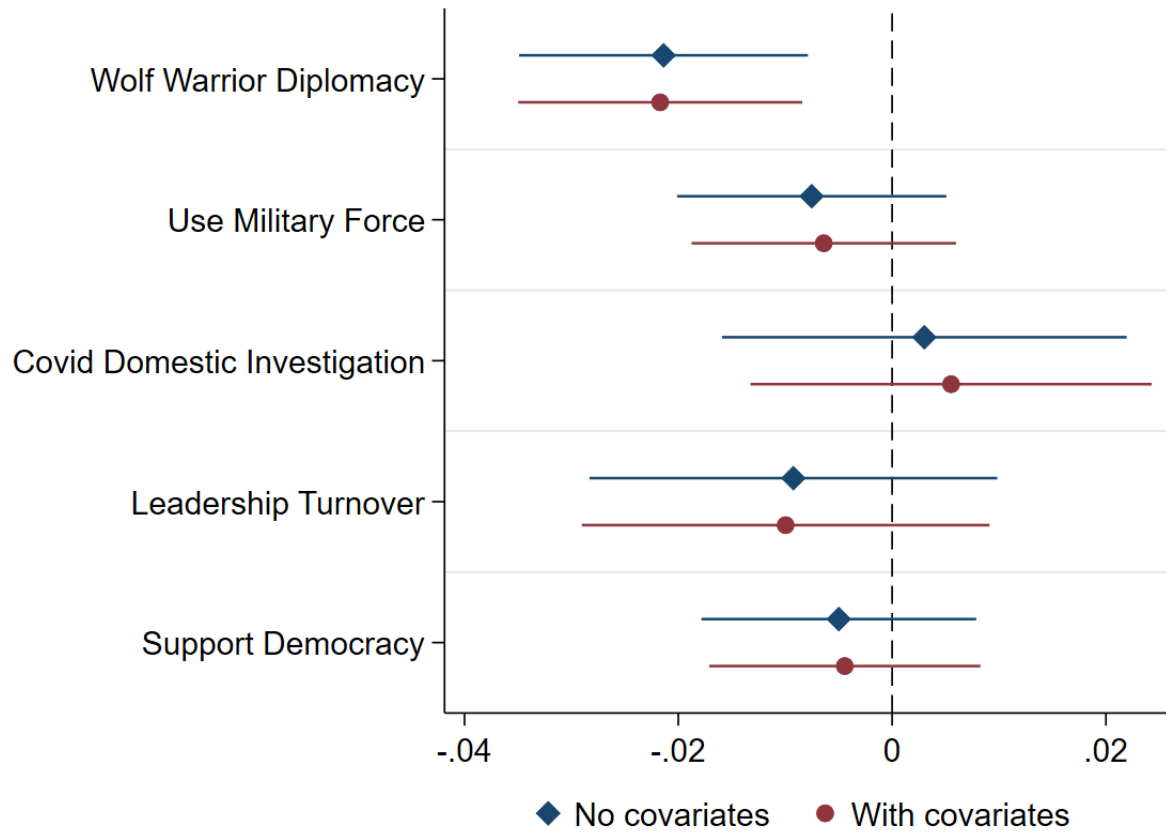
Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. The outcome variables respectively refer to support for China's "wolf-warrior" style combative diplomacy, support for increasing the use of military in dealing with foreign affairs, support for focusing on investigating Covid's potential domestic origin rather than its possible international origin, support for regular national leadership turnovers, and support for democracy as a preferred political system. All variables rescaled to range from 0 to 1 for easy interpretation of the results.

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Fig. S6. Effects of Wave A Treatment on Wave B Estimates of China's Global Image
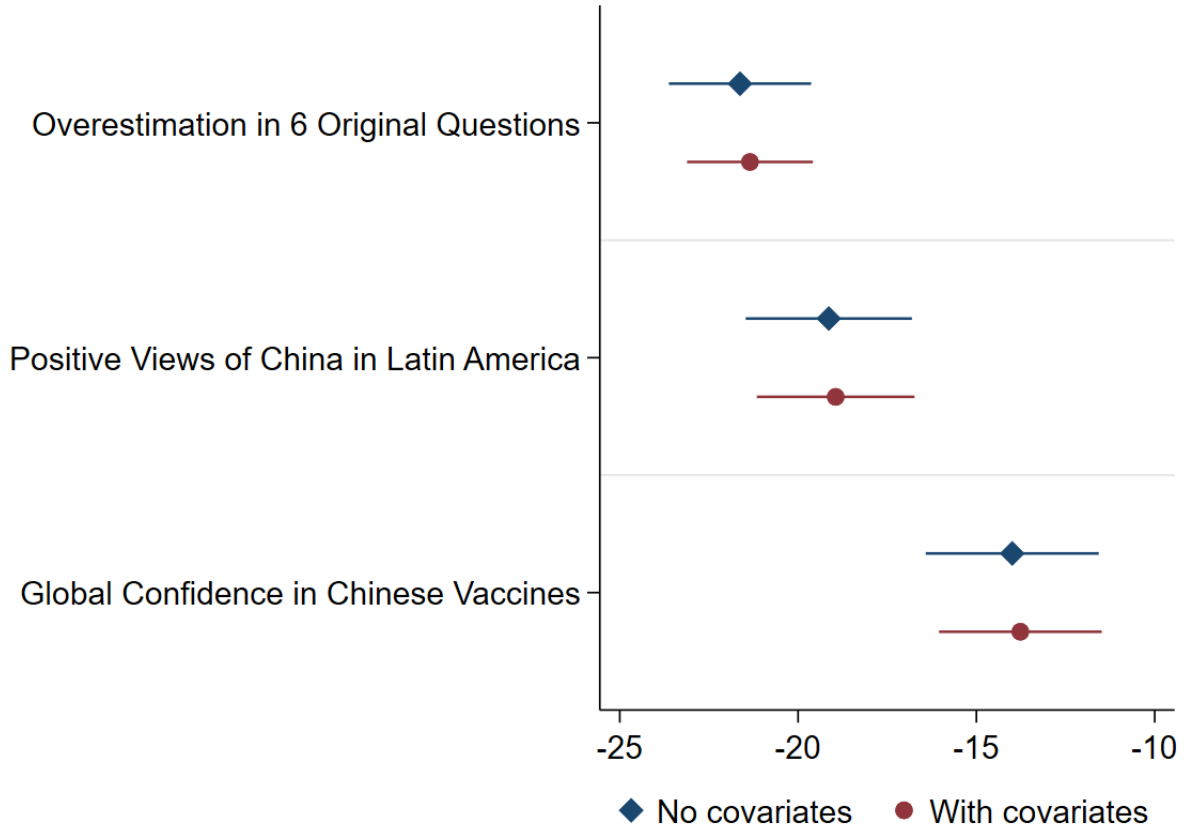
Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. The x-axis indicates percentage points. "Positive Views of China in Latin America" and "Global Confidence in Chinese Vaccines" refer to the respondents' estimates.

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Fig. S7. Main Treatment Effects in Wave A for Respondents Who Participated in Both Waves

Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. These are the main treatment effects in Wave A for respondents who participated in both Waves A and B.

Fig. S8A. Effects of Wave A Treatment on Policy and Political Preferences in Wave B
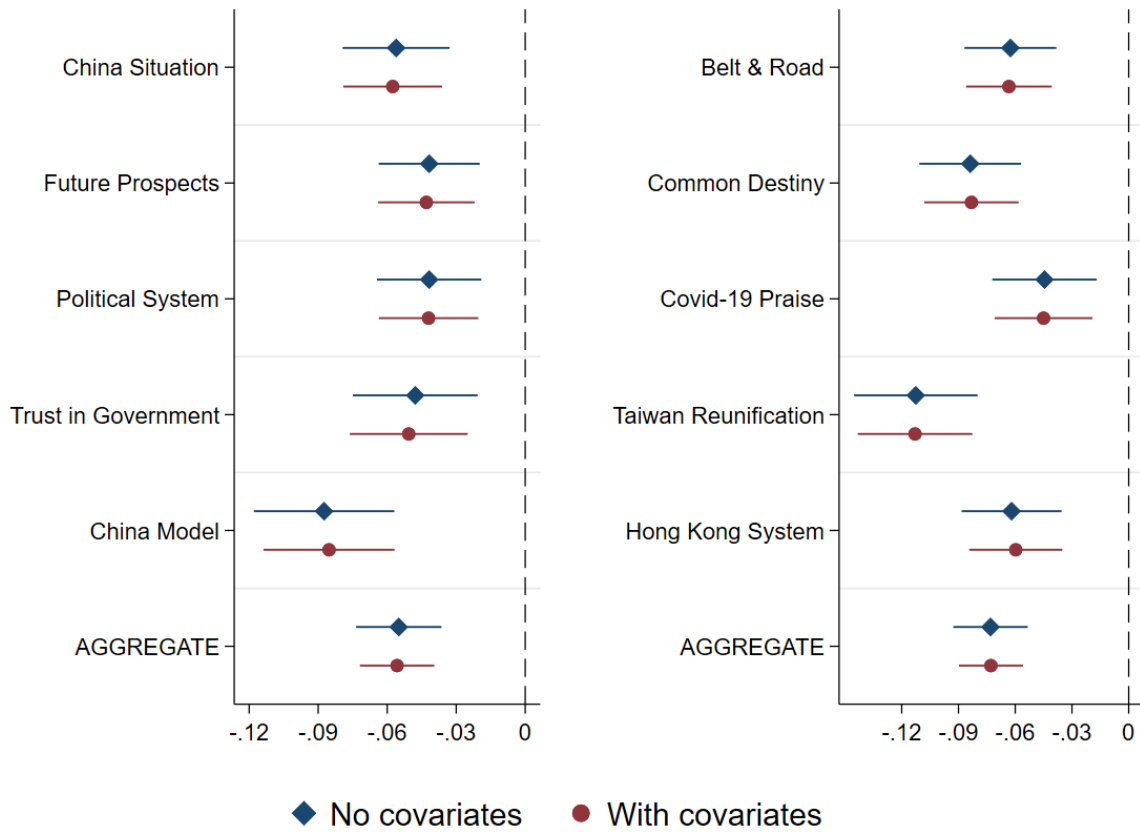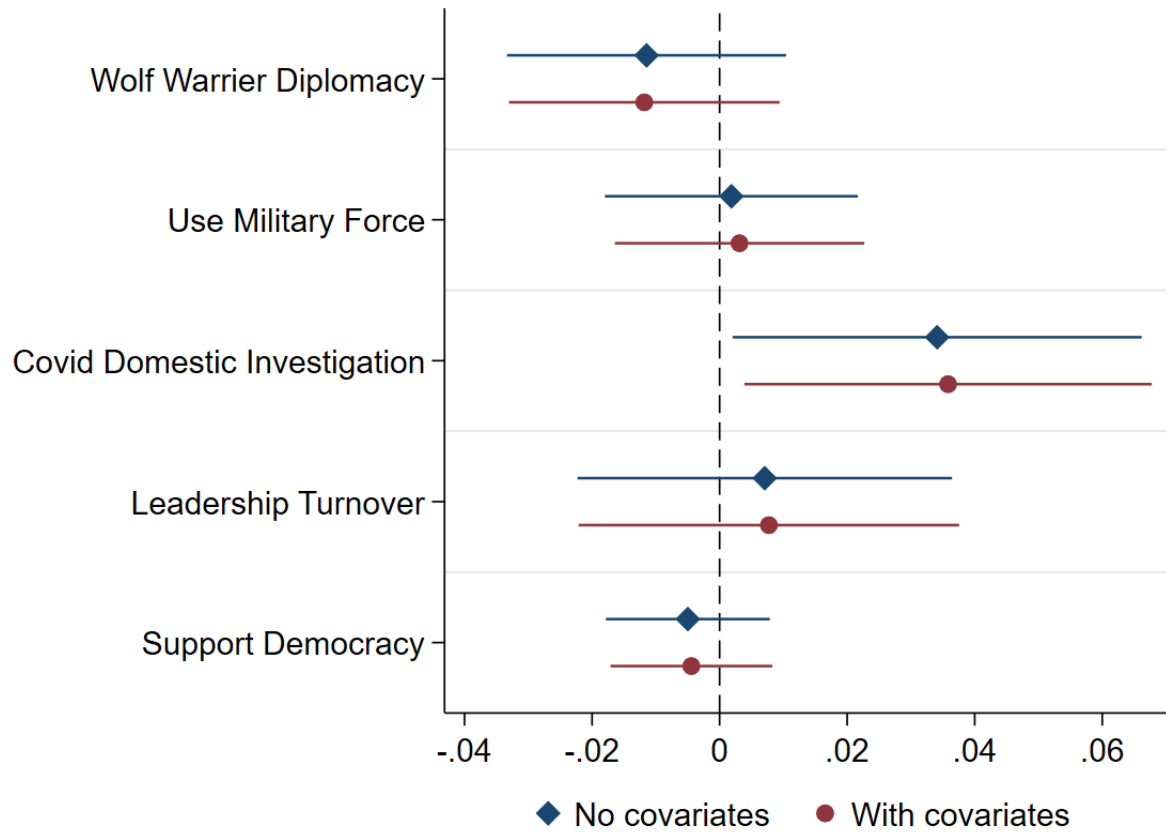

Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. The outcome variables respectively refer to support for China's "wolf-warrior" style combative diplomacy, support for increasing the use of military in dealing with foreign affairs, support for focusing on investigating Covid's potential domestic origin rather than its possible international origin, support for regular national leadership turnovers, and support for democracy as a preferred political system. Variables are rescaled to range from 0 to 1 for easy interpretation of the results.

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Fig. S8B. Treatment Effects on Policy and Political Preferences in Wave A for Respondents Who Participated in Both Waves
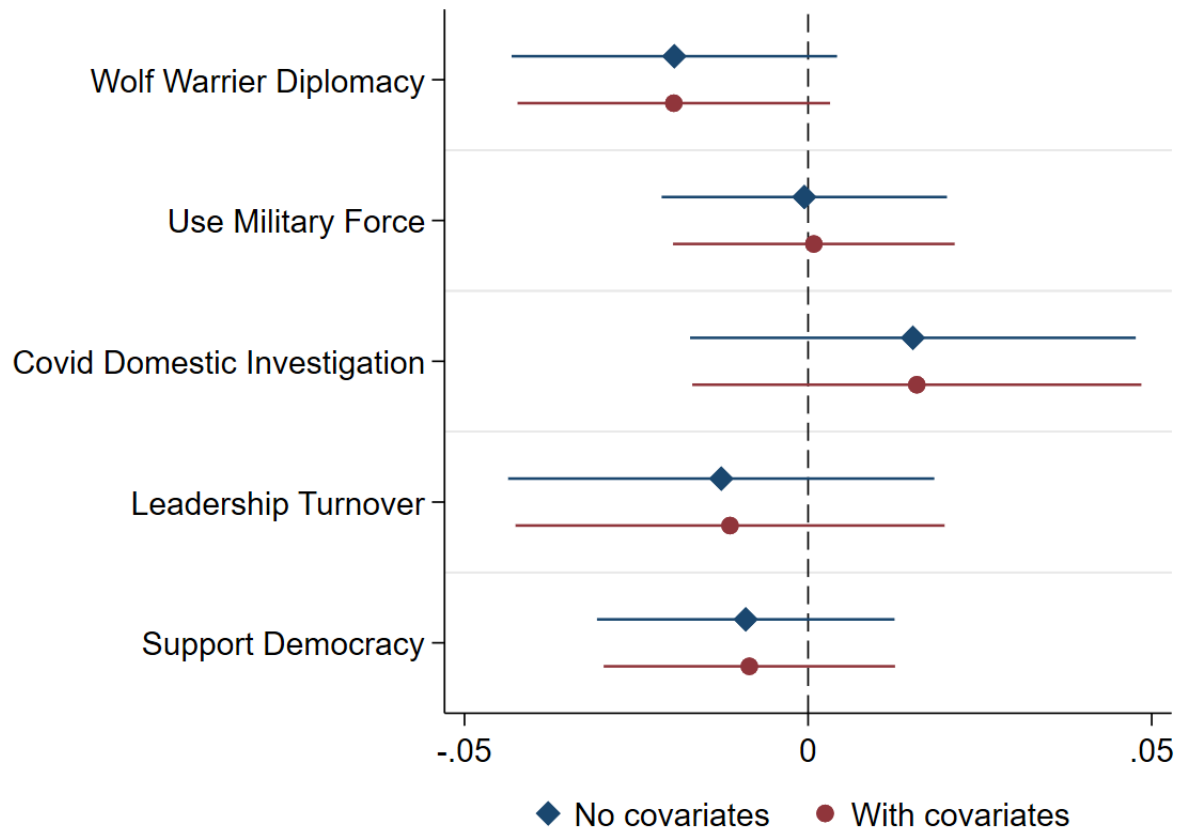
Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. These are the treatment effects on policy and political preferences in Wave A for respondents who participated in both Waves A and B.

Fig. S9. Effects of Wave A Treatment on New Policy and Political Preference Questions in Wave B
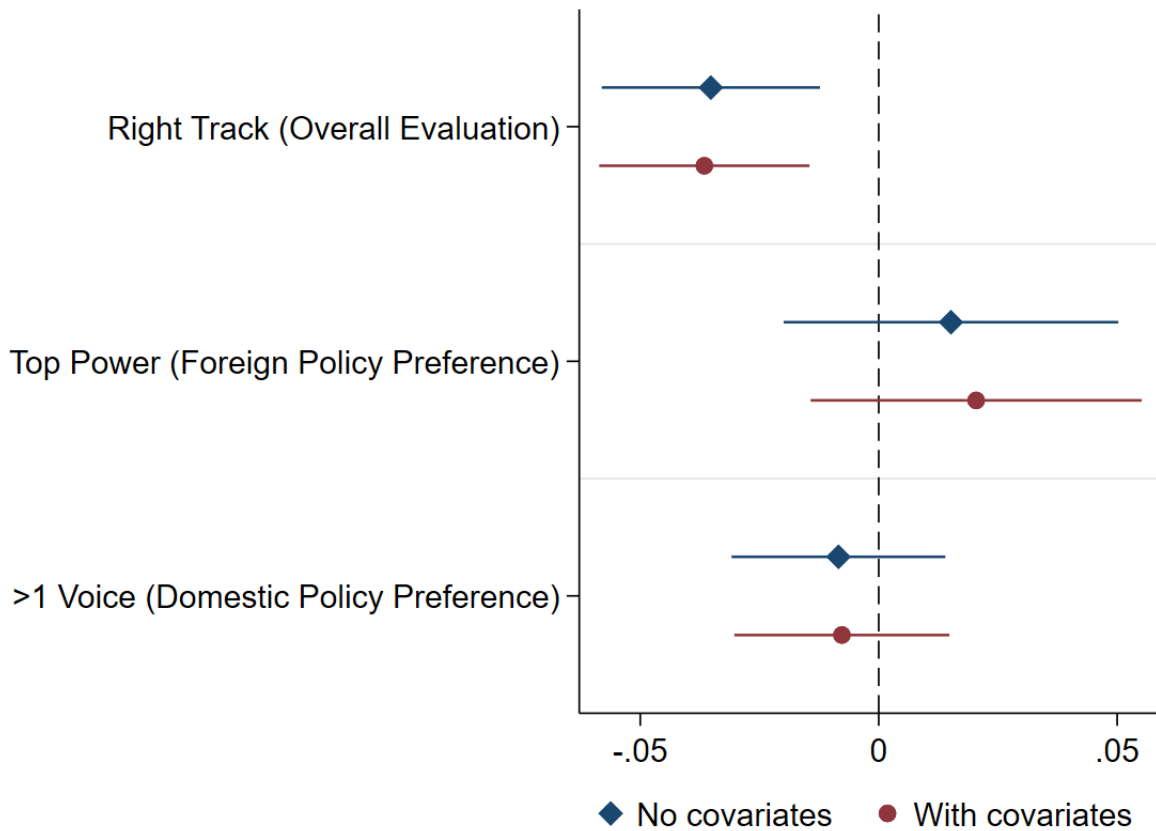
Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. The outcome questions respectively refer to whether China is on the right track, whether China should increase its efforts to compete with the U.S. as the top global power, and support for the statement that "a healthy society should not have only one voice." Variables are rescaled to range from 0 to 1 for easy interpretation of the results.

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Fig. S10. Correlates of National Self-Image in the 2020 Study
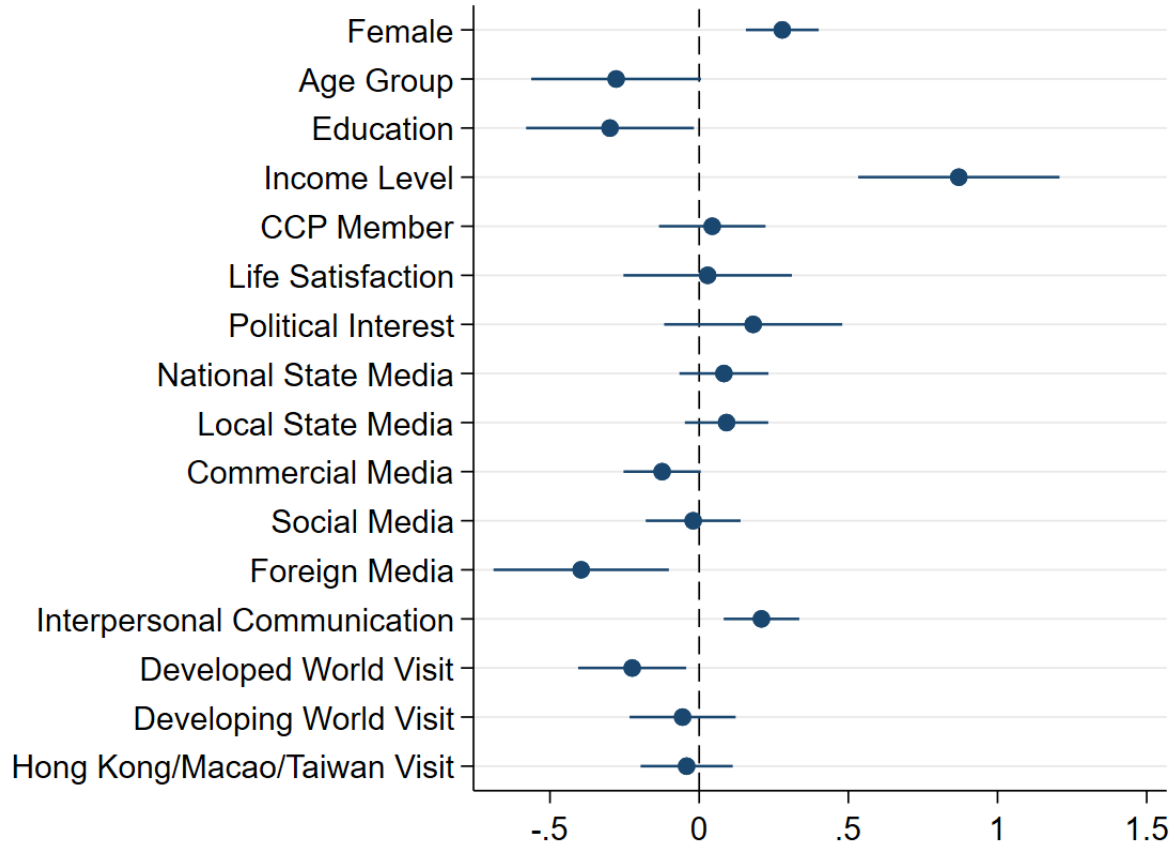
Regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. The dependent variable is the net number of questions in which a respondent overestimated China's popularity in the world (# of overestimates - # of underestimates). Each media variable refers to whether a respondent uses that type of media as a major information source. Each overseas visit variable refers to whether a respondent has had that type of visit. All independent variables are re-scaled to range from 0 to 1 for easy interpretation of the results.

Supplementary Material 3: Tables

Table S1. Demographics of the 2021 Study Participants and Chinese Internet Users

	Demographics	Study Participants	2018 CFPS (Internet Active Adults)	CNNIC
Gender	Female	50.1%	48.7%	
	Male	49.9%	51.3%	
Age	≤ 19	0.3%	4.5%	
	20-29	38.2%	29.5%	
	30-39	30.8%	27.7%	
	40-49	22.6%	19.0%	
	50-59	7.5%	12.2%	
	≥ 60	0.8%	7.0%	
Education	≤ Primary school	1.1%	13.5%	
	Junior high school	6.1%	34.6%	
	Senior high school	15.1%	22.8%	
	3-year college	44.6%	14.6%	
	≥ 4-year college	33.2%	14.5%	
CCP Member	Yes	13.8%	11.7%	
	No	86.2%	88.3%	
Region	Eastern China	52.2%		48.8%
	Central China	26.8%		27.6%
	Western China	21.1%		23.6%
Occupation	Self-employed	27.4%		16.9%
	Student	10.2%		21.0%
	Corporate office worker	20.7%		7.8%
	Corporate management	7.5%		3.2%
	Government employee	3.3%		2.3%
	Government officials	0.4%		0.4%
	Professional	12.4%		8.2%
	Manufacturing worker	3.5%		3.9%
	Service worker	5.1%		6.3%
	Migrant worker	1.2%		12.7%
	Farmer	0.6%		8.0%
	Unemployed	6.3%		2.7%
	Retired	1.5%		6.5%

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Notes: To compare the demographics of the study's participants with China's general internet population, I use data from the internet-active adult sub-sample of the most recent China Family Panel Studies (CFPS, 2018), a biennial nationally representative survey, as well as the most recent reports on Chinese internet users from the China Internet Network Information Center at the time of my study (CNNIC, 2019-20). For CFPS I use its "resampled sample" (subsample=1), which is nationally representative by design (see CFPS User's Manual, 3rd Edition, http://isss. pku.edu.cn/cfps/docs/20200315092524928116.pdf). I also only include respondents aged 18 and above from CFPS in order to make the data comparable to my study. "Internet active" respondents are those for whom the importance of the internet as an information source (qu802) is 4 or 5 on a scale from 1 to 5. The variable in CFPS used for education is "cfps2018sch," and CCP Member = Yes if "party" or "qn4001" is 1. China's 7th Census is not used since it does not provide information on internet use or detailed age breakdown. Because CNNIC surveys include children, while my survey only includes adults, I use CFPS as the main benchmark and CNNIC for information not available in CFPS. CNNIC's regional distribution data was from January 2017, and occupational data was from February 2021.

Table S2. Summary Statistics and Balance Check for the 2021 Wave A Experiment

Variable	Control Group (N=1286)				Treatment Group (N=1259)				Diff. in Means	
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	t	p-Value
Dependent Variables										
China Situation	5.99	1.02	1	7	5.63	1.16	1	7	8.41	<0.0001
Future Prospects	6.27	0.94	1	7	6.01	1.06	1	7	6.64	<0.0001
Political System	6.09	1.00	1	7	5.88	1.08	1	7	5.16	<0.0001
Trust in Government	3.28	0.65	1	4	3.16	0.63	1	4	4.73	<0.0001
China Model	3.34	0.65	1	4	3.12	0.72	1	4	8.08	<0.0001
Hong Kong System	4.47	0.74	1	5	4.22	0.81	1	5	8.21	<0.0001
Taiwan Reunification	4.01	0.92	1	5	3.65	1.02	1	5	9.41	<0.0001
Belt & Road	4.48	0.67	1	5	4.26	0.78	1	5	7.58	<0.0001
Common Destiny	4.17	0.78	1	5	3.87	0.86	1	5	9.43	<0.0001
Covid Praise	4.32	0.77	1	5	4.15	0.88	1	5	5.03	<0.0001
Wolf Warrior Diplomacy	4.57	0.66	1	5	4.48	0.73	1	5	3.10	0.0019
Use Military	4.19	0.65	1	5	4.16	0.64	1	5	1.17	0.2412
Covid Domestic Origin	3.37	0.98	1	5	3.39	0.97	1	5	-0.31	0.7549
Leadership Turnover	3.87	0.97	1	5	3.83	0.98	1	5	0.95	0.3424
Support Democracy	4.29	0.65	1.5	5	4.27	0.67	1	5	0.76	0.4470
Independent Variables										
National Self-Image	375.43	90.81	40	600	376.61	88.73	50.5	600	-0.33	0.739
Female	0.50	0.50	0	1	0.50	0.50	0	1	0.10	0.922
Education	4.04	0.96	1	6	4.07	0.95	1	6	-0.74	0.460
Income Level	4.22	1.28	1	7	4.17	1.19	1	7	0.99	0.322
CCP Member	0.14	0.34	0	1	0.14	0.35	0	1	-0.33	0.742
Age Group	4.37	1.93	1	10	4.54	2.04	1	10	-2.07	0.039
Life Satisfaction	3.59	0.99	1	5	3.61	0.97	1	5	-0.51	0.612
Political Interest	2.99	0.68	1	4	3.01	0.68	1	4	-0.53	0.599
Nat'l State Media	0.56	0.50	0	1	0.58	0.49	0	1	-0.85	0.394
Local State Media	0.25	0.44	0	1	0.27	0.44	0	1	-0.86	0.390
Commercial Media	0.40	0.49	0	1	0.42	0.49	0	1	-1.13	0.258
Social Media	0.83	0.37	0	1	0.83	0.38	0	1	0.13	0.893
Foreign Media	0.05	0.22	0	1	0.05	0.21	0	1	0.16	0.876
Personal Communication	0.33	0.47	0	1	0.34	0.47	0	1	-0.46	0.644
Visited Developed	0.13	0.34	0	1	0.15	0.35	0	1	-1.01	0.311
Visited Developing	0.14	0.35	0	1	0.15	0.45	0	1	-0.67	0.502
Visited HMT	0.16	0.37	0	1	0.17	0.38	0	1	-0.77	0.441

Notes: Independent sample *t*-tests with unequal variances. *P*-values reflect two-sided tests. Support for democracy is the average of agreement with "democracy is the best available political system" and "it is unhealthy for a country's fate to rest on one or two people." Overseas visit refers to visited developed country, visited developing countries, and visited Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.

Table S3. Treatment Effects on Overall/Domestic Evaluations

	China Situation	Future Prospects	Political System	Trust in Govt	China Model	Aggregate
Treatment	-0.059***	-0.043***	-0.036***	-0.040***	-0.071***	-0.050***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.005)
National Self-Image	0.298***	0.258***	0.277***	0.286***	0.322***	0.288***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.018)
Female	0.003	0.003	-0.008	-0.003	-0.008	-0.003
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.005)
Age Group	-0.031	-0.025	0.013	-0.019	-0.068**	-0.026*
	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.013)
Education	-0.054**	-0.038*	0.020	0.009	-0.090***	-0.031*
	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.015)
Income Level	0.168***	0.135***	0.131***	0.066**	0.114***	0.123***
	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.015)
CCP Member	0.013	0.008	0.005	0.020	0.015	0.012
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.008)
Life Satisfaction	0.117***	0.039**	0.038*	0.106***	0.052*	0.070***
	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.012)
Political Interest	0.065***	0.094***	0.090***	0.112***	0.084***	0.089***
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.014)
National State Media	-0.005	-0.004	0.007	0.013	0.004	0.003
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.006)
Local State Media	0.005	-0.011	0.003	0.006	0.012	0.003
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.006)
Commercial Media	0.006	0.009	0.002	-0.002	-0.001	0.003
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.005)
Social Media	0.002	0.002	0.016	0.007	-0.022	0.001
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.008)
Foreign Media	-0.017	-0.039*	-0.053***	-0.018	-0.024	-0.030*
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.014)
Interpersonal Communication	-0.009	-0.003	-0.024***	-0.016	-0.015	-0.013*
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.006)
Developed World Visit	-0.025*	-0.022*	-0.016	-0.032*	-0.044**	-0.028***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.008)
Developing World Visit	-0.022*	-0.014	-0.012	0.002	-0.027*	-0.015*
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.007)
HMT Visit	-0.020*	-0.016	-0.001	-0.027*	-0.042**	-0.021**
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.007)
Constant	0.489***	0.598***	0.502***	0.405***	0.547***	0.508***
	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.021)
Observations	2545	2545	2545	2545	2545	2545
Adjusted R^2	0.203	0.145	0.146	0.117	0.130	0.251

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. HMT refers to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.

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Table S4. Treatment Effects on External Expectations

	Belt & Road	Common Destiny	Covid Praise	Taiwan Reunification	Hong Kong System	Aggregate
Treatment	-0.054***	-0.076***	-0.040***	-0.089***	-0.062***	-0.064***
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.005)
National Self-Image	0.304***	0.326***	0.373***	0.474***	0.338***	0.363***
	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.032)	(0.027)	(0.019)
Female	-0.012	-0.010	0.022**	-0.014	-0.040***	-0.011*
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Age Group	-0.043*	-0.015	-0.050*	-0.051*	-0.051**	-0.042**
	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.018)	(0.013)
Education	-0.014	0.006	-0.083***	-0.010	-0.015	-0.023
	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.021)	(0.015)
Income Level	0.075***	0.092***	0.066**	0.075**	0.047*	0.071***
	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.015)
CCP Member	0.007	0.034**	0.020	0.020	0.009	0.018*
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Life Satisfaction	0.072***	0.070***	0.075***	0.055*	0.037*	0.062***
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.018)	(0.013)
Political Interest	0.090***	0.102***	0.009	0.066**	0.112***	0.076***
	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.014)
National State Media	0.0004	0.003	-0.010	-0.009	-0.0001	-0.003
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.006)
Local State Media	0.005	-0.001	0.019*	0.009	-0.006	0.005
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.006)
Commercial Media	-0.005	0.001	-0.012	-0.003	0.004	-0.003
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.005)
Social Media	-0.017	-0.008	-0.022	-0.017	-0.008	-0.014
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.007)
Foreign Media	-0.054**	-0.008	-0.052**	-0.005	-0.026	-0.029*
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.013)
Interpersonal Communication	-0.001	-0.004	-0.001	-0.008	-0.017*	-0.006
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.006)
Developed World Visit	-0.031**	-0.039***	-0.026*	-0.045**	-0.019	-0.032***
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.008)
Developing World Visit	0.002	-0.016	-0.020	0.003	-0.012	-0.009
	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.012)	(0.008)
HMT Visit	-0.028**	-0.049***	-0.032**	-0.041**	-0.017	-0.033***
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.008)
Constant	0.589***	0.451***	0.599***	0.399***	0.601***	0.528***
	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.020)
Observations	2545	2545	2545	2545	2545	2545
Adjusted R^2	0.148	0.161	0.135	0.153	0.146	0.270

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. HMT refers to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.

Table S5. Balance Check for the 2021 Wave B Experiment

Variable	Control Group (N=466)		Treatment Group (N=433)		Diff. in Means	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	p-Value
Self-Image	372.90	84.60	371.99	88.78	0.158	0.874
Female	0.56	0.50	0.56	0.50	-0.093	0.926
Education	4.15	0.96	4.15	0.97	-0.101	0.920
Income Level	4.21	1.15	4.17	1.08	0.502	0.616
CCP Member	0.12	0.32	0.15	0.36	-1.504	0.133
Age Group	4.56	1.95	4.60	2.00	-0.323	0.747
Life Satisfaction	3.59	0.96	3.67	0.92	-1.132	0.258
Political Interest	3.02	0.67	3.03	0.64	-0.350	0.726
Nat'l State Media	0.58	0.49	0.65	0.48	-2.226	0.026
Local State Media	0.27	0.44	0.32	0.47	-1.734	0.083
Commercial Media	0.40	0.49	0.44	0.50	-1.003	0.316
Social Media	0.84	0.37	0.85	0.36	-0.360	0.719
Foreign Media	0.05	0.21	0.42	0.20	0.257	0.797
Personal Communication	0.32	0.47	0.40	0.49	-2.633	0.009
Visited Developed	0.17	0.37	0.18	0.38	-0.500	0.617
Visited Developing	0.17	0.38	0.17	0.37	0.208	0.836
Visited HMT	0.18	0.39	0.21	0.40	-0.793	0.428

Notes: Independent sample *t*-tests with unequal variances. *P*-values reflect two-sided tests. HMT refers to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.

Table S6. Correlates of Participation in the 2021 Wave B Survey

	Wave B Participation
Wave A Treatment	-0.112
	(0.084)
Self-Image	-0.436
	(0.284)
Female	0.357***
	(0.087)
Age Group	0.550**
	(0.205)
Education	0.783**
	(0.251)
Income Level	-0.351
	(0.217)
CCP Member	-0.204
	(0.128)
Life Satisfaction	0.115
	(0.188)
Political Interest	0.144
	(0.205)
National State Media	0.234*
	(0.096)
Local State Media	0.161
	(0.105)
Commercial Media	0.008
	(0.090)
Social Media	0.128
	(0.121)
Foreign Media	-0.412
	(0.213)
Personal Communication	0.101
	(0.094)
Visited Developed	0.204
	(0.128)
Visited Developing	0.168
	(0.126)
Visited HMT	0.093
	(0.118)
Constant	-1.486***
	(0.298)
Observations	2545

Notes: Logistic regression coefficient with robust standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. HMT refers to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.

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Table S7. Demographics of the 2020 Study Participants and Chinese Internet Users

Demographics		Study Participants	2018 CFPS (Internet Active Adults)	CNNIC
Gender	Female	49.8%	48.7%	
	Male	50.2%	51.3%	
Age	≤ 19	4.8%	4.5%	
	20-29	36.7%	29.5%	
	30-39	29.1%	27.7%	
	40-49	19.6%	19.0%	
	50-59	8.8%	12.2%	
	≥ 60	1.0%	7.0%	
Education	≤ Primary school	2.1%	13.5%	
	Junior high school	8.3%	34.6%	
	Senior high school	25.1%	22.8%	
	3-year college	25.4%	14.6%	
	≥ 4-year college	39.2%	14.5%	
CCP Member	Yes	14.9%	11.7%	
	No	85.1%	88.3%	
Region	Eastern China	51.9%		48.8%
	Central China	28.6%		27.6%
	Western China	19.5%		23.6%
Occupation	Self-employed	21.9%		22.4%
	Student	12.2%		26.9%
	Corporate office worker	19.1%		8.0%
	Corporate management	8.6%		2.9%
	Government employee	3.0%		2.4%
	Government officials	0.3%		0.4%
	Professional	13.3%		6.0%
	Manufacturing worker	5.8%		2.6%
	Service worker	5.2%		4.4%
	Migrant worker	2.6%		4.2%
	Farmer	1.4%		6.3%
	Unemployed	4.7%		8.8%
	Retired	2.1%		4.7%

Notes: To compare the demographics of the study's participants with China's general internet population, I use data from the internet-active adult sub-sample of the most recent China Family Panel Studies (CFPS, 2018), a

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biennial nationally representative survey, as well as the most recent reports on Chinese internet users from the China Internet Network Information Center at the time of my study (CNNIC, 2019-20). For CFPS I use its "resampled sample" (subsample=1), which is nationally representative by design (see CFPS User's Manual, 3rd Edition, http://isss. pku.edu.cn/cfps/docs/20200315092524928116.pdf). I also only include respondents aged 18 and above from CFPS in order to make the data comparable to my study. "Internet active" respondents are those for whom the importance of the internet as an information source (qu802) is 4 or 5 on a scale from 1 to 5. The variable in CFPS used for education is "cfps2018sch," and CCP Member = Yes if "party" or "qn4001" is 1. China's 7th Census is not used since it does not provide information on internet use or detailed age breakdown. Because CNNIC surveys include children, while my survey only includes adults, I use CFPS as the main benchmark and CNNIC for information not available in CFPS. CNNIC's regional distribution data was from January 2017, and occupational data was from April 2020.

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Triumphalism and the Inconvenient Truth: Correcting National Overconfidence in a Rising Power

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Abstract

Do people in a rising authoritarian power with pervasive propaganda and information control overestimate their country's reputation, power, and influence in the world? Previous research on national overconfidence and grand self-imagery generally examines perceptions of hard power rather than soft power, and it focuses on the state or leadership level rather than the mass level. I show, with a survey conducted in 2020 and a pre-registered two-wave survey experiment in 2021, that the Chinese public overwhelmingly overestimates China's global reputation and soft power relative to benchmark public opinion polls on China conducted around the world, even during a crisis. Importantly, informing Chinese citizens of China's actual international image lowers their evaluations of the country and its governing system and moderates their expectations for its external success. These effects from simple information interventions are not fleeting, and they indicate that triumphalism and overconfidence can be meaningfully mitigated.

Keywords: Overconfidence, misperception, metaperception, information intervention, soft power, triumphalism, China

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Wiktionary

triumphalism

English

Etymology

triumphal + *-ism*

Noun

triumphalism (*plural* **triumphalisms**)

1. The attitude or belief that a particular <u>doctrine</u>, <u>culture</u>, or social system, particularly a religious or political one, is superior and that it will or should <u>triumph</u> over all others.

- **1994**, Michael Howard, "<u>The World According to Henry: From Metternich to Me (http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/49890/michael-howard/the-world-according-to-henry-from-metternich-to-me?page=show)</u>," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1994:

  But not only did Soviet **triumphalism** eventually provoke the Reaganite reaction in the United States, but, Kissinger suggests, it produced the overextension of Soviet resources that led directly to economic and ultimately political collapse.

- **2001**, Jon Beckwith, *Triumphalism in Science*[1] <u>(https://web.archive.org/web/20150522083419/http://www.americanscientist.org/bookshelf/pub/triumphalism-in-science)</u>.

  A better understanding of science should lead not to **triumphalism** but to the kind of humility recently expressed by Nobel Prize-winning geneticist Francois Jacob in *Of Flies, Mice and Men*: "Science cannot answer all questions. . . . It can, however, give some indications, exclude certain hypotheses. Engaging in the pursuit of science may help us make fewer mistakes."

- **2001**, "<u>The speedy fall of the Taliban must not obscure the size of the task ahead (http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/leading-articles/the-speedy-fall-of-the-taliban-must-not-obscure-the-size-of-the-task-ahead-619435.html)</u>", in *The Independent*:

  One reason why **triumphalism** about the fall of the Taliban should be eschewed is because the US and its allies have shown insufficient regret and sadness at the deaths of Afghan villagers. This has allowed the propagandists of Islamic nihilism to claim that the US cares about the deaths of civilians in New York but not in Afghanistan.

- **2004**, Steven Bayme, "<u>Orthodox Triumphalism Revisited (https://web.archive.org/web/20081023202119/http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=ijITI2PHKoG&b=838493&ct=1105683)</u>", in *The Jewish Week*:

  Yet in addition to being self-defeating, sectarian **triumphalism** undermines core Jewish values of common peoplehood and mutual bonds between Jews worldwide.

- **2004**, Dr. Michael A. Weinstein, *The Power and Interest News Report*:

  The abasement rituals at Abu Ghraib were most generally conditioned by the climate of impunity created by **triumphalist** strategy, ideology and rhetoric, which led, at least, to dismissive negligence and then cover-ups by authorities.

- **2008**, David Souter, <u>concurring opinion (http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/06-1195.ZC.html)</u>, *Boumediene v. Bush*, 553 U.S. ___, ___ (2008)

  The several answers to the charge of **triumphalism** might start with a basic fact of Anglo-American constitutional history: that the power, first of the Crown and now of the Executive Branch of the United States, is necessarily limited by habeas corpus jurisdiction to enquire into the legality of executive detention. And one could explain that in this Court's exercise of responsibility to preserve habeas corpus something much more significant is involved than pulling and hauling between the judicial and political branches.

Related terms

- triumphalist

Translations

attitude

- Catalan: triomfalisme *m*.
- Finnish: triumfalismi
- French: triomphalisme *(fr) m*.
- Galician: triunfalismo *m*.
- Italian: trionfalismo *(it) m*.
- Polish: triumfalizm *m*.
- Portuguese: triunfalismo *m*.
- Spanish: triunfalismo *(es) m*.