

Center on
Religion and
Chinese Society
中國宗教與社會研究中心



Purdue Survey of Chinese Students in the United States: A General Report

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Purdue Survey of Chinese Students in the United States: A General Report

China has been the leading country of origin of international students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions since 2009 (Institute of International Education 2016). In 2015, Chinese students reached the unprecedented high number of 304,040, almost triple the number five years earlier. They represented the 11th consecutive year of rising numbers of Chinese students in the U.S. The 2015 number accounts for 31.2 percent of the entire international student population in the United States. “Never before in history have so many Chinese students studied at so many American universities” (Tea Leave Nation Staff 2015).

With such a significant and rising number, Chinese students have received considerable media attention. Major U.S. newspapers, magazines, and television stations have reported on the financial impacts of these tuition-paying Chinese students on universities and local economies. There have been reports on the luxury lifestyle of some well-off Chinese students with the accompanying economic impacts on the local housing and automobile markets. Other reporting has covered the growing Chinese middle class and their discontent with the Chinese education system; the social, cultural, and language barriers that Chinese students face in their adaptation on campus or in U.S. society; the changing perceptions of China and the United States among Chinese students; and conversions to Christianity among Chinese students studying in the United States.

The news stories are commonly based on occasional interviews with a few individuals, aggregated data released by certain institutions, or surveys based on convenience sampling. Although insightful, readers are often left to wonder how representative the individual experiences and views in those news stories are. Meanwhile, scholarly publications on Chinese students in the United States remain rare.

In response to the increased need for a better understanding of this significant phenomenon, the Center on Religion and Chinese Society (CRCS) at Purdue University carried out the first Survey of Chinese Students in the United States in spring 2016 (PSCS 2016). This survey focuses on the social, cultural, and spiritual life of Chinese students enrolled in a research university in the Midwest. It is supported in part by a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation to the CRCS for the project of “Mapping Chinese Spiritual Capital.”

In this general report, we profile the social characteristics of Chinese students, summarize the key findings of their social, cultural, and spiritual life, and provide the methodological information and detailed tables of this survey. We recognize that there are many types of universities in different locations in this vast land. This study is only the first systematic data collection on Chinese students studying in one of the Big Ten universities. A more representative study would require surveying Chinese students in other types of universities selected from different regions of the country, such as Chinese students in Ivy League universities or in community colleges.

Overview and Highlights

This Big Ten university (BT University hereafter) had about 40,000 students enrolled in Spring 2016, among whom were more than 4,000 from the People's Republic of China. Chinese students may be found in all colleges and departments of this university, with about 68 percent being undergraduates and 32 percent graduate students. We recruited participants for the survey through e-mails sent by the Office of the Registrar to all Chinese students. The respondents followed a web link in the e-mail to reach the online survey. A total of 960 Chinese students answered the survey, which was a response rate of about 23 percent. The sample is representative of the Chinese student population at this university in terms of colleges and student status, with slightly more respondents in engineering schools and slightly fewer in the business school. Among the 960 cases, 56 percent were undergraduate students and 44 percent were graduate students, 58 percent were male students and 42 percent were female students. The average age of the entire sample was 23 years old, and 21 and 26 years old for undergraduate and graduate students, respectively. The average length of stay in the United States by the time of the survey was 3.8 years.

Some of the key findings:

- ❖ Family background: The majority of the Chinese students were from well-off families.
 - More than 90 percent and 80 percent of the respondents' fathers and mothers had high-paying jobs. More than 70 percent of the respondents' major financial support came from their families. And about 80 percent of the respondents indicated that the financial pressure living in the United States was moderate or low for them.
 - More than 80 percent of the respondents reported having at least one college-educated parent.
- ❖ Attitudes toward the U.S. and China: More students developed a more positive attitude toward China.
 - About 26 percent of the respondents indicated that their attitude toward the United States had become more positive since coming to the United States, while about 29 percent of the respondents indicated having a more negative attitude.
 - About 44 percent of the respondents indicated that their attitude toward China had become more positive since coming to the United States, while about 17 percent reported having a more negative attitude.

❖ **Drinking and Smoking:** Chinese students drank less but smoked more than other students.

- Less than 20 percent of the Chinese students drank once per month or more in the past semester. This is significantly lower than the drinking behavior among the general college student population in the United States, which was 83 percent for males and 79 percent for females (Yusko, Buckman, White et al. 2008).
- About 10 percent of the respondents in our survey indicated that they smoked, whereas in the general college student population, the smoking rate was about 5 percent (Dutra and Glantz 2014).

❖ **Race and Ethnic Relations:**

- A majority of Chinese students had shared living space with roommates of at least one other racial/ethnic group.
- About 15 percent of the respondents indicated that they had been treated unfairly due to their race.

❖ **Religion and Spirituality:** Most of the Chinese students reported believing in some supernatural being or force but few reported being religious.

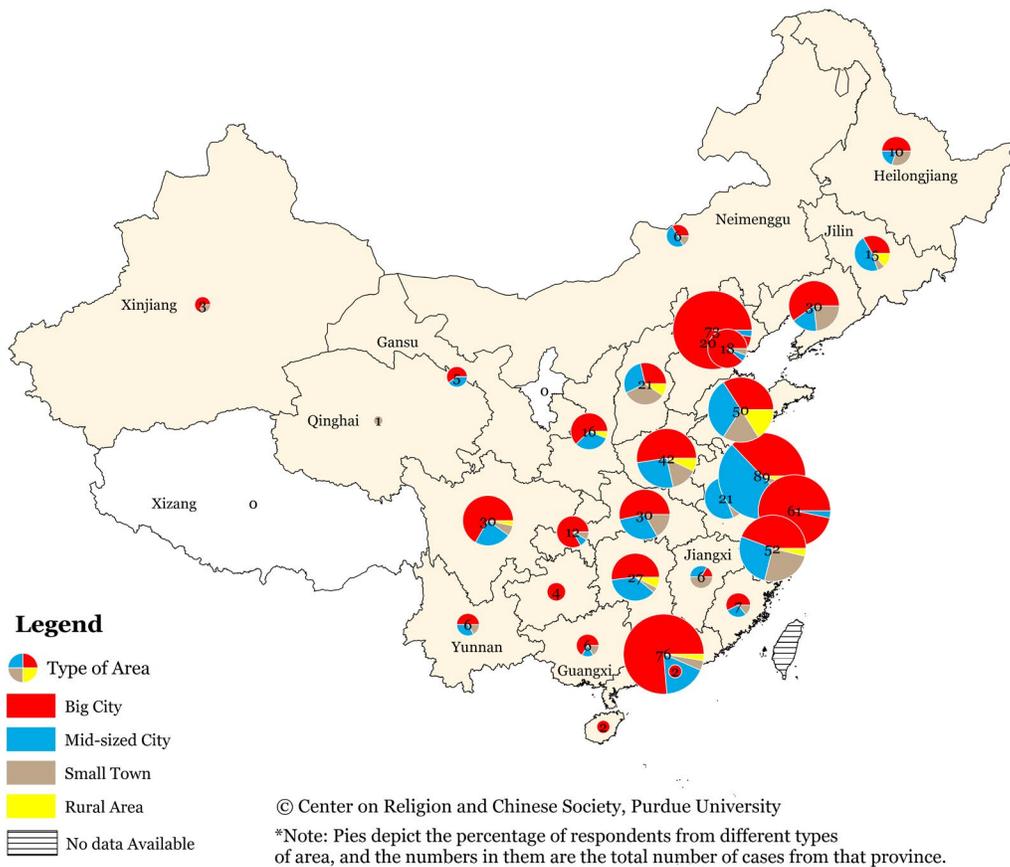
- Since coming to the United States, the number of Chinese students believing in Catholic Christianity doubled, while the number believing in Protestant Christianity quadrupled. However, believing in Buddhism, Daoism, and folk religion decreased.
- The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Chinese Communist Youth League (CYL) require their members to uphold atheism. However, more than 80 percent of CCP and CYL members in our sample reported believing in some supernatural power or being, while only 58 percent of the others (non-CCP and non_CYL respondents) reported the same.

Section 1: Social Background

PSCS 2016 contains detailed information on respondents' social background, including their provinces of origin in China, parental educational and occupational attainment, number of siblings, financial sources, and financial pressure while studying and living in the U.S.

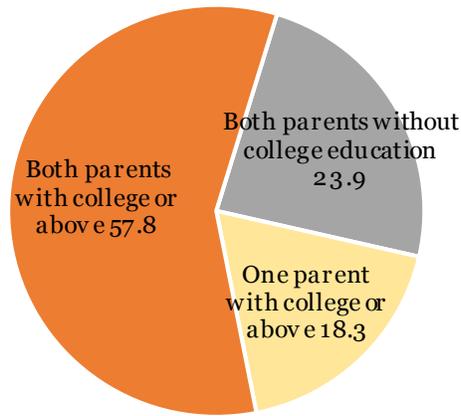
The respondents were from 31 provinces (including direct-controlled municipalities and autonomous regions) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. No one in the sample came from the Tibet or Ningxia Hui autonomous regions. The majority of the respondents were from big and mid-sized cities. The following map gives the breakdowns of the province of origin and the type of area the respondents were from.

Origin of the Chinese Students in the Survey: Province and Type of Area



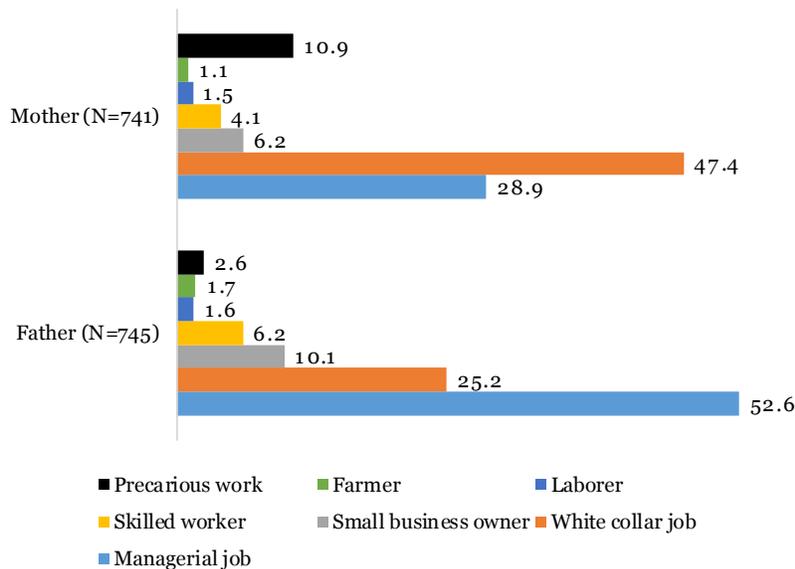
The majority of the respondents were from families with at least one college educated parent. As displayed in Figure 1.1, about 58 percent of the respondents' parents both had college or above degrees, 24 percent of the respondents were from families with one college-educated parent, and only 18 percent of the respondents' parents did not have a college degree.

Figure 1.1: Distribution of parental educational attainment (%)



The majority of parents had high-paying jobs, such as managerial or white-collar jobs. Less than 6 percent of the respondents' fathers were laborers, farmers, or had precarious (unstable) jobs. This is similar for the mothers, except that about 11 percent had precarious work. It should be noted that the survey did not provide a full-time homemaker option but it instead provided a precarious work option. Therefore, full-time homemaker mothers were likely categorized into the precarious work category.

Figure 1.2: Parental occupational status (%)



The majority of the respondents were born since 1980 when the Chinese government implemented its policy of “one-child” per married couple. Therefore, we were not surprised to find that about 80 percent of the respondents reported having no siblings. Only about 20 percent of the respondents had one or more siblings.

Figure 1.3: How many siblings do you have? (%)

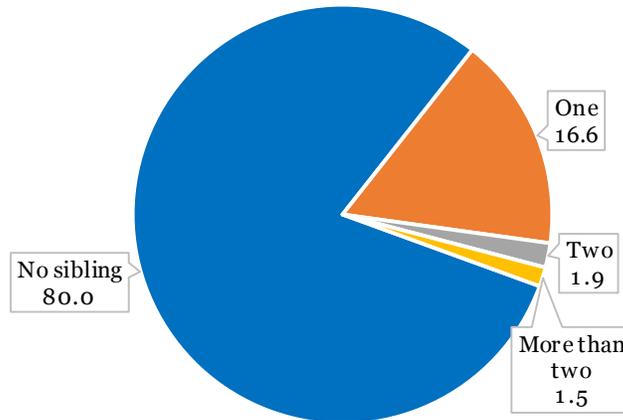
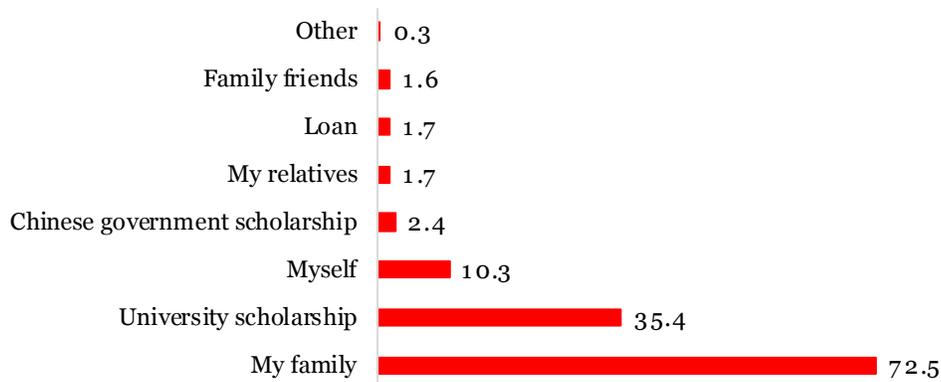


Figure 1.4 shows the funding sources of tuition and living expenses for the respondents. More than 70 percent of the respondents reported that their major financial support came from their families. About 10 percent of the respondents were self-supporting themselves. About 35 percent of the respondents were receiving university scholarships as their major funding source. These were predominantly graduate students.

Figure 1.4: Funding Source (%)



Original question: What is your major financial source for tuition and living expenses?

We also asked the respondents to estimate the financial pressure they felt living in the United States. About 80 percent of the students indicated that the financial pressure they felt living in the United States was moderate or low, which indicates that most Chinese students came from middle-class or well-off families. For the rest of them, the financial pressure was high or very high. It should be noted that the patterns are quite similar among undergraduate and graduate students.

Table 1.1: Level of financial pressure for living in the United States by student status (%). (N=751)

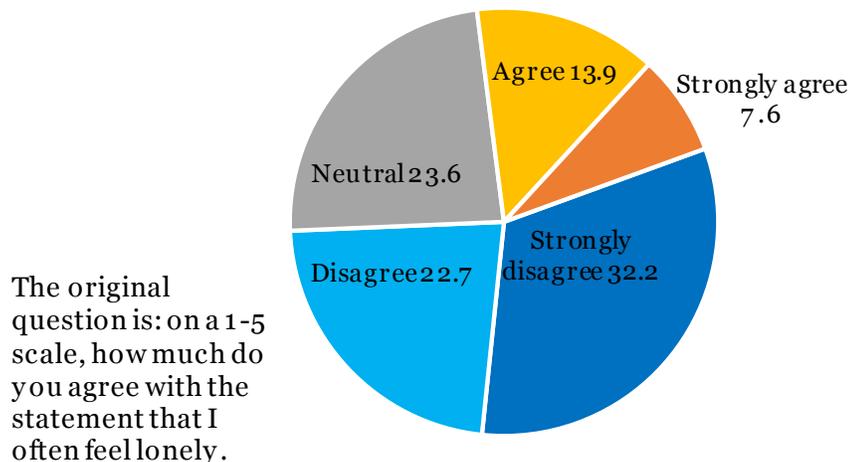
Student status	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Undergraduates	5.4	15.3	41.6	37.7	100
Graduate students	6.1	16.5	46.1	31.3	100
Total	5.7	15.9	43.6	34.8	100

Section 2: Social Life and Media Use

Previous research found that international students were more likely to feel isolated and suffer from stress for a variety of reasons (Constantine, Okazaki and Utsey 2004, Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker et al. 2004). Chinese students, or Asian international students in general, were more likely to suffer from anxiety or loneliness because of the greater cultural differences, the language barriers, and the high academic expectations (Yan and Berliner 2009, Yeh and Inose 2002). In this section, we focus on the social life of the Chinese students in the United States. We are especially interested in the students' social behaviors, family life, and communication with their families in China.

We asked the respondents to indicate how lonely they were. As shown in Figure 2.1, about 20 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I often feel lonely,” 24 percent of the respondents selected neutral, and about 55 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 2.1: I often feel lonely (%)



The vast majority of the respondents maintained frequent contact with their families in China. About 19 percent of the respondents indicated that they contacted their families every day, 68 percent contacted their families every week, and about 10 percent did so once a month. Only less than 4 percent of the respondents indicated that they contacted their families less than once a month.

The respondents contacted their families in China through various means. Almost all communication means were instantly interactive. The most common way of

communicating with family in China was through WeChat, the most popular messaging app in China that allows for live audio and video conversation. More than 90 percent of the respondents used WeChat. About 31 percent used telephone to communicate with family. Many also used Skype (23 percent), FaceTime (18 percent), and E-mail (7 percent). Only 1 percent of the Chinese students still used postal mail for family communication.

More than 50 percent of the respondents were single, with 35 percent in a relationship but not married, and about 10 percent of the respondents were married, most of whom were graduate students. Less than 1 percent of the undergraduates were married. For those who were married or in a relationship, only about 42 percent were living together with their spouses or living in the same city with their partners. Table 2.1 shows the status of living together or in the same city with the spouse or partner by student status and gender among respondents who were married or in a love relationship. Graduate students were more likely to live together than undergraduate students when they were married or in a relationship. The patterns are fairly similar for males and females.

Table 2.1: Living together with spouse/partner by student status and gender among respondents who were married or in a relationship (%). (N=370)

	Yes	No	Total
Student status			
Undergraduates	34.7	62.6	100
Graduate students	45.6	54.4	100
Gender			
Male	41.4	58.6	100
Female	43.0	57.0	100
Total	42.2	57.8	100

Note: Respondents who were single did not answer this question.

We also collected information on respondents' drinking and smoking behaviors. More than 80 percent of the respondents did not drink or drank less than once per month in the past semester. About 12 percent of the respondents drank once per month, and 5 percent drank once per week in the past semester. Two percent of the respondents reported drinking several times per week in the past semester. This is significantly less frequent than the drinking behavior among the general college student population in

the United States, which was 83 percent for males and 79 percent for females (Yusko, Buckman, White et al. 2008).

Among those who drank in the past semester, 23 percent occasionally got drunk, and about 5 percent sometimes got drunk, with less than 2 percent indicating that they always got drunk. More than 85 percent indicated that they usually drank with at least two to three friends. Drinking by oneself or with one friend respectively accounted for 12 percent each.

The majority of the students in our sample did not smoke. Only less than 10 percent of the respondents indicated that they smoked. But this is significantly higher than the general college student population in the U.S., among whom the smoking rate was about 5 percent (Dutra and Glantz 2014).

In general, graduate students were less likely to smoke or they smoked less often compared to undergraduate students. Among those who smoked, 39 percent smoked by themselves rather than with friends.

We also collected information on the groups and organizations that the respondents joined in both China and the United States. We purposely offered a series of groups and organizations in the survey, as respondents were very likely to have joined more than one type of groups or organizations. On average, each respondent joined 2.8 groups or organizations in China and 2.1 groups or organizations in the United States. We found that the respondents were more likely to join interest-based groups in China than in the United States. The percentage of those joining volunteer service groups decreased by 14 percent in the U.S. compared to that in China. When they were in China, 12 percent of the respondents joined the Chinese Communist Party and 54 percent joined the Chinese Communist Youth League. In the United States, only 4 percent of the respondents joined political interest groups.

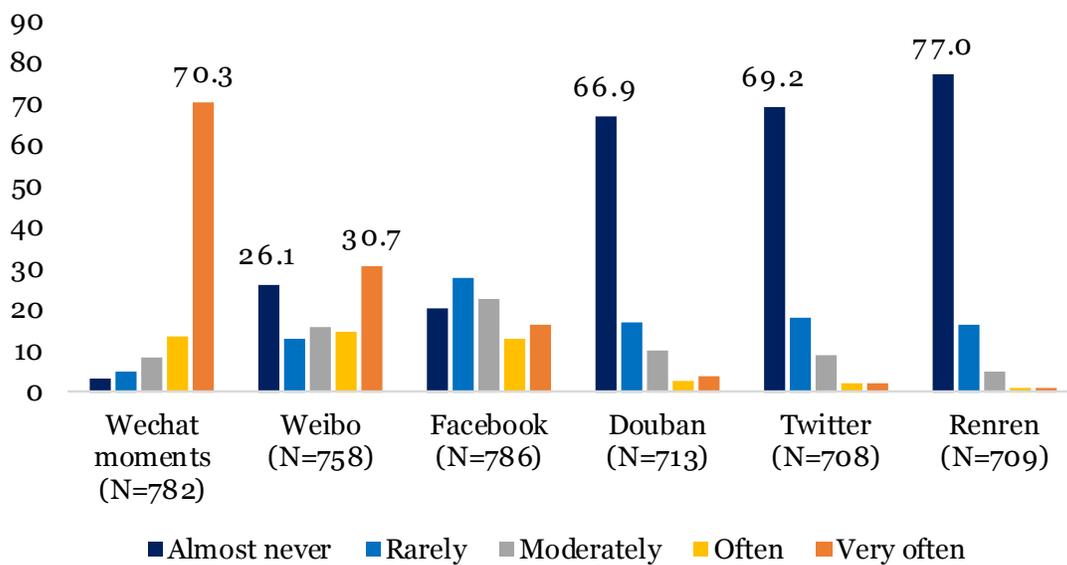
We also asked students to evaluate their health status. More than 50 percent of the respondents indicated that their health status was good (38 percent) or very good (15 percent). About 37 percent of the respondents reported having average health status. About 10 percent of the respondents indicated that their health status was bad (8 percent) or very bad (2 percent).

To better understand the attitudes toward general trust among Chinese students in the United States, we asked the respondents how much they agreed with the

statement, “I trust most people around me.” More than 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. About 25 percent of the respondents selected neutral, and 14 percent of the respondents chose disagree or strongly disagree.

We collected data on media use of the Chinese students. We provided six social media apps that were fairly common in the United States and China and asked the respondents how often they used these social media. As shown in Figure 2.2, WeChat Moments¹ was the most popular social media among the respondents, followed by Weibo² and Facebook. Interestingly, the once popular Renren has become obsolete.

Figure 2.2: Media Use (%)



We asked the respondents what type of media they usually used for reading the news. On average, each respondent used two to three (2.8) news outlets. About 84 percent of the respondents reported usually reading the news on Chinese websites and 64 percent usually read the news on non-Chinese language websites. About 62 percent of the respondents read the news on Chinese social media, 45 percent read the news on non-Chinese language social media, 16 percent read English newspapers, and 8 percent read Chinese newspapers.

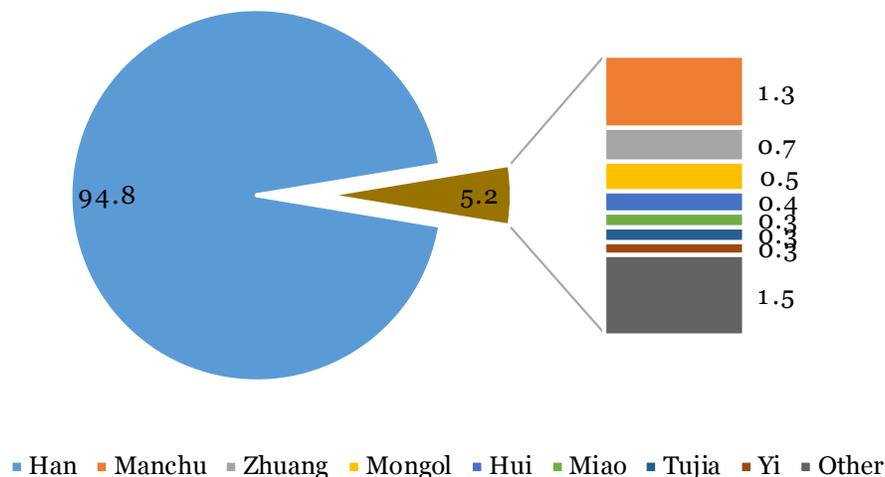
1 Wechat Moments is a feature of the very popular social network app, Wechat. Users can use Wechat Moments to share status updates, pictures with captions, music, and other personal and private information.

2 Weibo or Sina Weibo is a popular Chinese microblogging website/app that has similar functions to Twitter.

Section 3: Attitudes Toward Race and Ethnicity

Not many Americans know that China is a multi-ethnic country where 56 ethnic groups are officially recognized by the Chinese authorities. More than 91 percent of the Chinese population are Han Chinese. The 10 largest ethnic minorities are Zhuang, Hui, Manchu, Uighur, Mongol, Korean, Yi, Miao, Tibetan, Tujia, and Kazakh (Central Intelligence Agency 2016). In our sample of Chinese students studying in the United States, about 95 percent of the respondents were Han Chinese. Figure 3.1 shows the ethnic composition of our sample.

Figure 3.1: Ethnicity (%)



We also surveyed the students' racial/ethnic preferences for marriage and dating. Among the respondents who were married or in a relationship, 91 percent of the partners were Chinese. About 3 percent of the respondents reported having other Asian or European American spouses or partners, respectively, with 1.4 percent of the respondents indicating that they had an African American spouse or partner. About 1 percent of the respondents had a Korean or Japanese partner and a half percent reported having a Latino American partner.

We provided a multiple-choice question to collect data on marriage or dating preferences among respondents who were single. On average, each respondent selected two racial/ethnic groups as ideal marriage/dating partners. Among them, 96 percent of the respondents indicated that they would like to marry a Chinese, 44 percent for a European American, 41 percent for a Korean or Japanese. About 17 percent of the

respondents indicated that they would like to marry a person of other Asian ethnicity, 13 percent for a Latino American, and about 6 percent for an African American.

Table 3.1 shows the breakdown of desiring to marry a person from various racial/ethnic groups by gender. In general, men were more interested in marrying a non-Chinese person. The percentages of willingness to marry a European American person are 45 and 43 for men and women, respectively. When the options were Korean/Japanese, other Asian, Latino or African American, men were significantly more willing to marry a person of the aforementioned racial/ethnic groups. T test results suggest that there were significant differences between men and women when it comes to marrying a Korean/Japanese, Latino American, other Asian, or African American spouse. However, no significant difference was found between men and women when the options were Chinese or European American.

Table 3.1: Willingness to marry a person from various race/ethnicity breakdown by gender among respondents who were not married or in a relationship (%).

Race/ethnicity	Male	Female	t-Test
Chinese	95.6	97.2	-1.2
European American	45.2	42.8	0.4
Korean/Japanese	50.4	28.9	4.4***
Other Asian	20.2	11.7	2.3*
Latino American	16.3	7.2	2.8**
African American	7.9	2.8	2.2*
Total percent	235.7	190.6	N/A
Total Cases	252	180	N/A

Note: 1. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$ 2. This is a multiple choice question. 432 (252 male and 180 female) out of 960 respondents answered this question. 3. Those who were not single did not answer this question.

However, despite men's greater interest in marrying outside their ethnic group, our results show that women were actually more likely to be married to a non-Chinese person. As shown in Table 3.2, among respondents who were married to a non-Chinese, only women were married to European Americans or Koreans and Japanese, and 67 percent of those married to other Asians were women. Among respondents who were married to a Latino American spouse, men and women respectively accounted for 50 percent. Among respondents who had an African American spouse, 60 percent were men, and 40 percent were women.

**Table 3.2: Spouse's Race/Ethnicity by Gender (%).
(N=371)**

Race/ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
European American	0.0	100.0	100
African American	60.0	40.0	100
Latino American	50.0	50.0	100
Chinese	56.7	43.3	100
Korean/Japanese	0.0	100.0	100
Other Asians	33.3	66.7	100
Total	53.6	46.4	100

We also collected data on interracial/ethnic communication among the Chinese students. Our data show that the majority of the respondents had Chinese roommates before, followed by European American (32 percent) and other Asian (12 percent) roommates. About 7 percent of the respondents had had African American and Korean or Japanese roommates, respectively. It should be noted that on average, each respondent selected 1.5 options, suggesting that most respondents had shared living space with roommates of more than one racial/ethnic group.

To investigate the communication with faculty/staff of various races/ethnicities, we asked the respondents to list the frequency of communicating with faculty/staff. The results are shown in Table 3.3. We rank ordered the frequency based on the category of “very frequently.” In general, Chinese students had the most frequent communication with European American faculty/staff, followed by Chinese and other Asian faculty/staff. This is probably a reflection of the proportions of faculty and staff at this BT University in various racial/ethnic categories.

Table 3.3: How frequent do you communicate with faculty/staff of the following race/ethnicity (%)?

	Very rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently	Total
European American	3.0	6.2	24.9	28.0	37.8	100
Chinese	15.6	18.0	26.8	18.9	20.7	100
Other Asians	46.1	18.5	17.7	8.7	9.0	100
Korean/Japanese	46.1	19.1	20.5	8.7	5.6	100
African American	55.0	17.8	17.5	6.4	3.3	100
Latino American	51.8	23.0	17.5	5.8	1.9	100

Note: Categories are rank ordered based on values of the very frequently column.

One of the major stressors for the Chinese international students was found to be the language barrier (Yan and Berliner 2009, Yeh and Inose 2002). In PSCS 2016, we asked the respondents to evaluate the difficulty of communicating with others due to language barriers. More than 60 percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that “language barriers lead to communication barriers.” About 21 percent of the respondents chose neutral. And about 13 percent of the respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that language barriers caused difficulty in communicating with others.

Prior research shows that international students are more likely to be marginalized on campus (Sherry, Thomas and Chui 2010). Because of their distinct racial and cultural backgrounds, they are likely to be discriminated against and verbally harassed (Lee and Rice 2007). We asked the respondents to indicate if they felt they had been treated unfairly due to their race. About 64 percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had been treated unfairly due to their race, and 21 percent had a neutral opinion on this question. But about 15 percent of the respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they had been treated unfairly due to their race.

Section 4: Views of China, the United States, Democracy, and Freedom

We asked the respondents to indicate their attitudes toward China and the United States before and after coming to the United States. Have their perceptions of China or the United States become more positive, negative, or was there no change? About 26 percent of the respondents indicated that their attitude toward the United States had become more positive since coming to the United States, while about 29 percent of the respondents indicated having a more negative attitude. About 44 percent of the respondents indicated that their attitude toward China had become more positive since coming to the United States, while about 17 percent reported having a more negative attitude.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show students' views of China and the U.S. by year(s) in the United States. Among the respondents who had been in the United States for three and six years, respectively, more respondents showed more positive attitudes toward China. For the respondents who had been in the United States for eight years or longer, more respondents showed that they had more positive attitudes toward the United States.

Figure 4.1: Attitudes toward China (%)

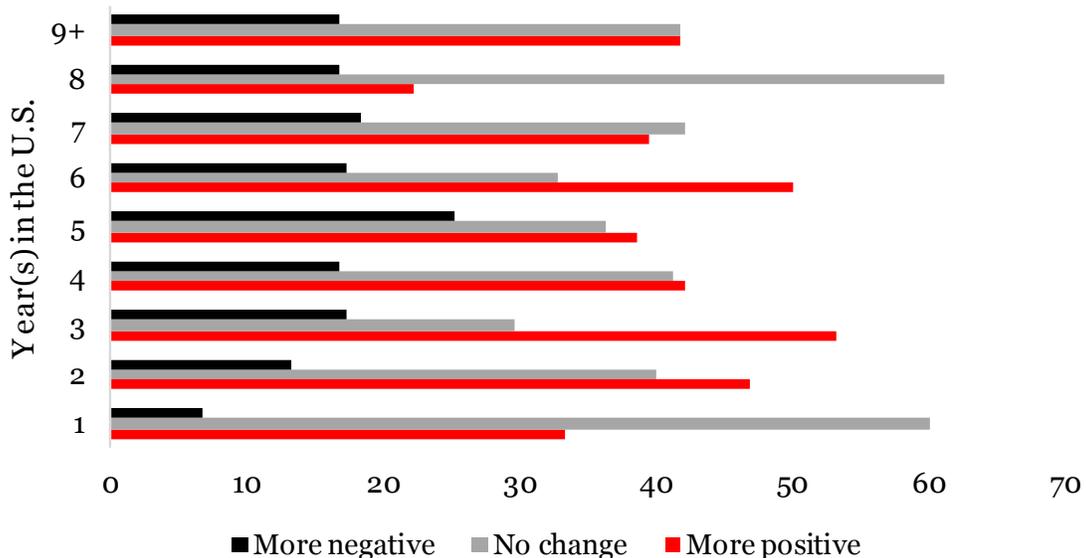
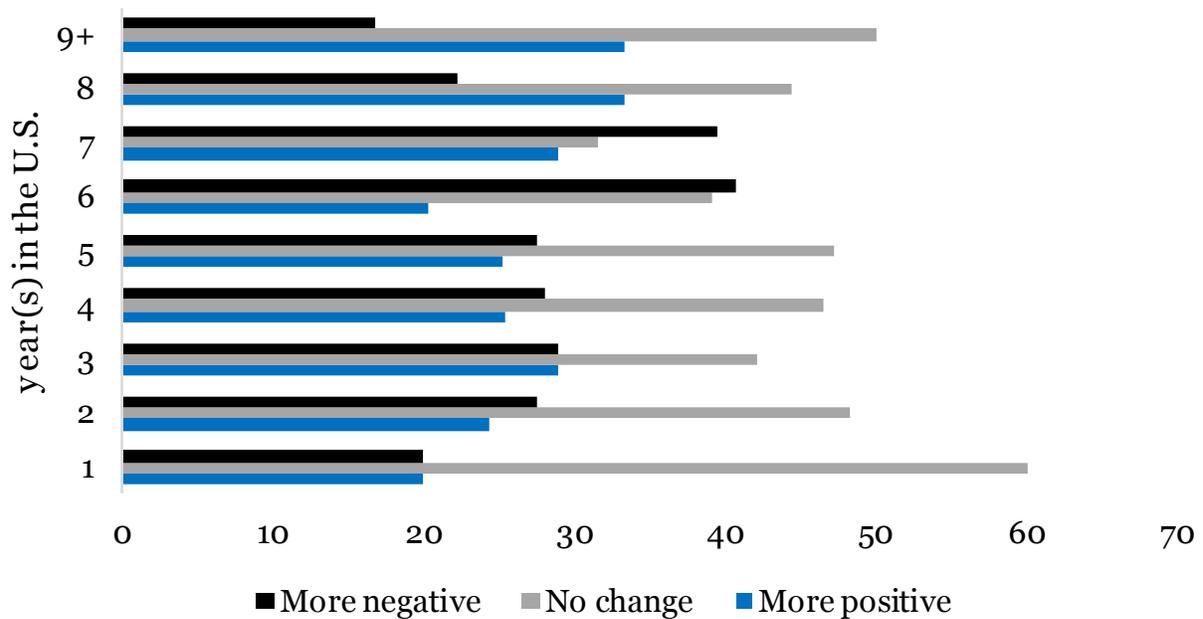


Figure 4.2: Attitudes toward the U.S. (%)



Previous research suggests that the experience of living abroad in a democracy affects people's attitudes toward home country politics (Han and Chen 2016). In our survey, we asked respondents how much they agreed with the statements that China's current political system was the most suitable one for China, and that Chinese traditional medicine can cure many diseases that Western medicine cannot. The results are shown in Table 4.1. About 43 percent of the respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that China's current political system is the most suitable one for China, while 30 percent of the respondents chose neutral on this topic. About 27 percent of the respondents chose that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Results also show that only less than 14 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the assertion that Chinese traditional medicine can cure many diseases that Western medicine cannot. The majority of the respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. About 27 percent of the respondents selected neutral on this question.

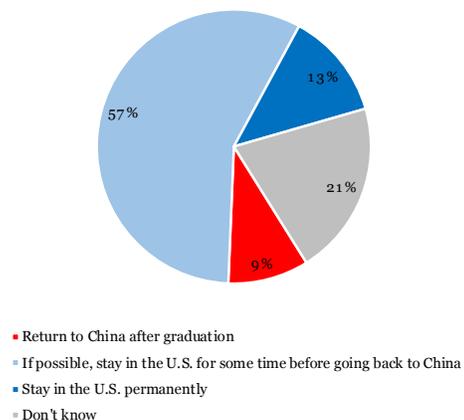
**Table 4.1: How much do you agree with the following statement (%)?
(N=738)**

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
China's current political system is the most suitable one for China	12.3	14.4	30.4	25.1	17.9	100
Chinese traditional medicine can cure many diseases that Western medicine cannot	33.8	25.6	27.3	8.4	4.9	100

To measure the cultural distance between the Chinese students in the United States and their home country, we asked the students to indicate if they watched the 2016 China Central Television (CCTV) Spring Festival Gala. The CCTV Spring Festival Gala has become a cultural symbol in China since the 1980s. For many Chinese, especially those who live in northern China, watching the program on Chinese New Year's Eve is almost ritualized. Results show that about 47 percent of the respondents watched at least some performances. For those who did not watch the performance at all, 17 percent indicated that they were too busy to watch. Interestingly, 36 percent said that they had no interest in watching the performance.

Figure 4.3 shows the future plans after graduation of the Chinese students. Less than 10 percent of the respondents indicated that they wanted to return to China immediately after graduation. A majority of the Chinese students indicated that they wanted to stay in the United States for some time before going back to China. About 13 percent of the respondents said that they wanted to stay in the United States permanently if possible.

Figure 4.3: Future Plan after Graduation (%)



We also collected data on Chinese students' attitudes toward the U.S. presidential election. Results show that about 28 percent of the students watched the 2016 presidential debate. Note that the survey was carried out in April. It is likely that more people would watch the televised debates between the two candidates of the Democratic and Republican Parties. Among those who did not watch the debate during the primary

election season, 43 percent expressed no interest in watching, and 29 percent said they were too busy to watch.

Results also show that, back in spring, Chinese students did not discuss the U.S. presidential election very often with either Americans or Chinese. About one out of five Chinese students had discussed the 2016 presidential election with Americans. This number is slightly higher when it comes to discussing the election with Chinese, reaching 27 percent.

We asked a series of questions about attitudes toward democracy. For the statement that “democracy is indecisive and has too much quibbling,” about 45 percent of the respondents chose to disagree or strongly disagree. About 37 percent of the respondents chose to be neutral on this topic. Only 17 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the above-mentioned statement.

For the statement that “democracy is not good at maintaining order,” about 67 percent of the respondents selected disagree or strongly disagree, with 24 percent of the respondents indicating that they were neutral on this topic. Only less than 10 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

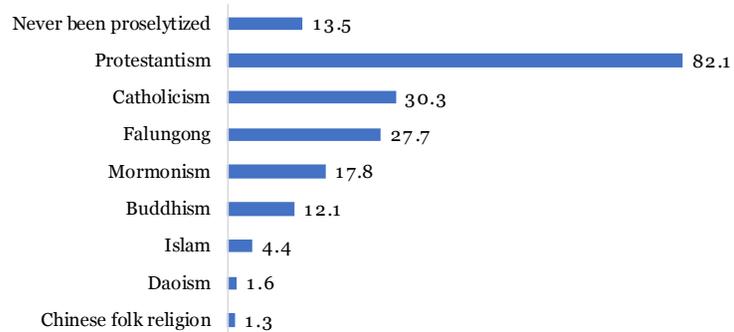
We asked the respondents to indicate how much they agreed with the statement “democracy may have problems but is better than any other form of government.” The opinions were very much split. About 37 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 35 percent preferred to remain neutral, and 28 percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the aforementioned statement.

We also investigated the attitudes toward the relationship between social order and individual freedom by asking the Chinese students to indicate how much they agreed with the statement “social order is more important than individual freedom.” About 30 percent of the respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, 37 percent agreed or strongly agreed, and 33 percent chose to be neutral when answering this question.

Section 5: Spiritual Life of Chinese Students in the U.S.

In PSCS 2016, we collected information about the spiritual life of the Chinese students in the United States. We began by asking the respondents if they had ever been proselytized since coming to the United States. Figure 5.1 shows the results of this question. About 82 percent of the respondents had been proselytized by Protestant Christians, followed by Catholics (30 percent), Falun Gong followers (28 percent), Mormons (18 percent), and Buddhists (12 percent). Other religious followers that had proselytized the respondents included Muslims (4 percent), Daoists (2 percent), and Chinese folk religion followers (1 percent).

Figure 5.1: Have you ever been proselytized by the followers of the following religions? (%)



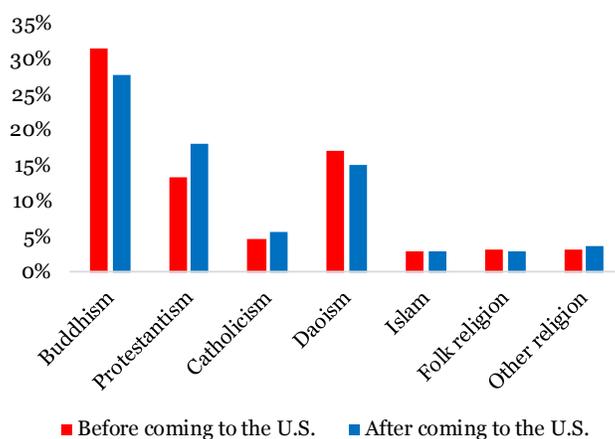
One of the limitations of previous surveys about religion among the Chinese is that they tend to follow the conventional survey design of choosing only one religion among several given options. However, forcing respondents to choose a single religious identity may fail to capture people's religious life in modern society. Therefore, instead of providing single and exclusive options when asking people about their religious identities, we purposely designed a set of questions asking the respondents how much they believed in each of the religions: completely believe, somewhat believe, don't believe much, don't believe at all.

The results are shown in Table 5.1. In general, the majority of the respondents indicated that they did not believe or did not believe much in any of the religions that were offered. However, what is interesting, we found that after coming to the United States, the percentage of those completely believing in Protestantism quadrupled, and the percentage of those completely believing in Catholicism doubled. We think that the "completely believe" category indicates a commitment to a religion. As displayed in Figure 5.2, combining the completely believe and somewhat believe categories together, we found that believing in Protestantism and Catholicism increased, whereas believing in Buddhism, Daoism, and folk religion decreased.

Table 5.1: Belief in religions before and after coming to the U.S. (%)

	Completely believe	Somewhat believe	Do not believe much	Do not believe at all	Total	N
Belief in Buddhism						
Before coming to the U.S.	1.7	29.6	25.1	43.7	100	758
After coming to the U.S.	2.3	25.5	24.3	47.9	100	749
Belief in Daoism						
Before coming to the U.S.	0.9	16.2	27.7	55.2	100	737
After coming to the U.S.	1.4	13.7	26.7	58.3	100	738
Belief in Protestantism						
Before coming to the U.S.	1.3	12.0	25.5	61.2	100	750
After coming to the U.S.	5.1	12.9	26.0	56.1	100	747
Belief in Catholicism						
Before coming to the U.S.	0.3	4.4	26.8	68.6	100	744
After coming to the U.S.	0.5	5.1	25.3	69.0	100	739
Belief in Islam						
Before coming to the U.S.	0.4	2.6	21.1	75.9	100	743
After coming to the U.S.	0.4	2.6	21.0	76.1	100	739
Belief in Folk religion						
Before coming to the U.S.	0.5	2.7	20.8	75.9	100	744
After coming to the U.S.	0.4	2.4	21.4	75.7	100	737

Figure 5.2: Belief in religions before and after coming to the U.S.



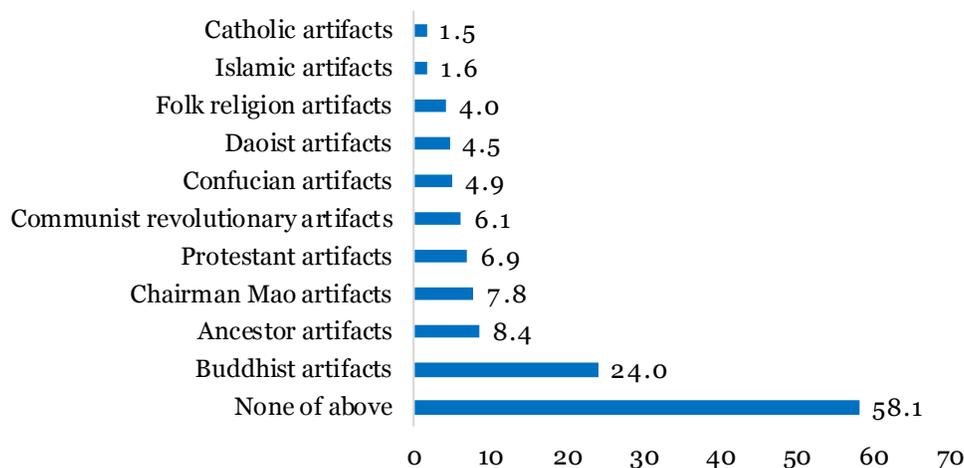
Yang (2016) suggests that Chinese people tend not to specifically identify with any particular religion, thereby creating a discrepancy between religious identity and practice. We collected data on the Chinese students' religious beliefs and practices. We asked the students to indicate how often they participated in ancestor worship, Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant, Confucian, Daoist, and Islamic activities. We also asked the students to indicate how often they visited the Chinese Communist leader Chairman Mao's Mausoleum and Communist revolutionary holy sites. Results are shown in Table 5.2. In general, consistent with their religious beliefs, the respondents increased their participation in Protestant and Catholic activities after coming to the United States and reduced their participation in other types of activities.

Table 5.2: Frequency of participation in the following activities before and after coming to the U.S. (%)

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often	Total	N
Participation in ancestor worship							
Before coming to the U.S.	17.4	18.4	29.2	12.6	22.4	100	740
After coming to the U.S.	92.7	2.3	3.2	1.0	0.7	100	689
Participation in Buddhist activities							
Before coming to the U.S.	61.0	15.1	13.9	5.0	5.1	100	707
After coming to the U.S.	92.8	2.8	3.2	0.7	0.4	100	683
Participation in Catholic activities							
Before coming to the U.S.	92.8	3.6	2.6	0.3	0.7	100	692
After coming to the U.S.	88.3	6.6	3.7	1.3	0.2	100	683
Participation in Protestant activities							
Before coming to the U.S.	80.0	11.3	5.0	1.6	2.1	100	700
After coming to the U.S.	57.1	18.0	12.6	4.8	7.5	100	707
Participation in Confucian activities							
Before coming to the U.S.	82.6	8.8	5.1	1.7	1.7	100	690
After coming to the U.S.	89.9	5.2	2.4	1.0	1.5	100	675
Participation in Daoist activities							
Before coming to the U.S.	89.1	5.0	3.7	1.2	1.2	100	685
After coming to the U.S.	96.0	1.8	1.3	0.2	0.7	100	678
Participation in Islamic activities							
Before coming to the U.S.	89.1	5.0	3.7	1.2	1.2	100	685
After coming to the U.S.	97.5	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.3	100	678
Visiting Mao's mausoleum							
Before coming to the U.S.	66.1	22.0	9.6	0.7	1.6	100	696
After coming to the U.S.	97.8	1.2	0.4	0.0	0.6	100	678
Visiting Communist revolutionary holy sites							
Before coming to the U.S.	65.9	20.7	10.0	1.2	2.3	100	692
After coming to the U.S.	97.3	0.6	0.9	0.3	0.9	100	665

We asked the respondents if they wore or kept any religious artifacts, which could be either amulets or simply decorative. More than a half number of respondents did not answer this question, indicating not wearing or keeping such artifacts. Among the 368 respondents who answered this question, on average, each respondent wore or kept two religious artifacts. About 60 percent of them indicated that they wore or kept Buddhist artifacts, followed by ancestors (21 percent), Chairman Mao (20 percent), Protestant (17 percent), Communist revolutionary (15 percent), Confucian (12 percent), Daoist (11 percent), and folk religious (10 percent) artifacts. About 4 percent of the respondents wore or kept Islamic or Catholic artifacts, respectively. However, if we use the total sample for calculation, as shown in Figure 5.3, much smaller percentages of people wore or kept religious artifacts.

Figure 5.3: Do you wear or keep any of the following items (%)?



We also asked the respondents to estimate the proportion of their peers who know about their religious affiliation. As shown in Table 5.3, respondents who completely believed in Islam and Protestantism have the highest average proportion of revealing their religious affiliation to friends. Those who completely believed in Daoism and Buddhism have the lowest average proportion of revealing their religious affiliation to friends. For those who somewhat believe in a religion, the differences were not so big. It should also be noted that the patterns are similar when it comes to revealing religious affiliation to schoolmates. However, as shown in Table 5.4, almost all the percentages were smaller than in Table 5.3, suggesting that the respondents were less likely to reveal their religious affiliation to schoolmates than to friends.

Table 5.3: On average, what proportion of your friends know about your religious affiliation? (%)

	Completely believe	Somewhat believe	Do not believe much	Do not believe at all	N
Buddhism	34.5	36.1	50.9	67.7	657
Protestantism	72.8	40.9	46.9	60.9	656
Daoism	22.8	40.3	48.4	62.5	649
Catholicism	52.7	44.1	46.2	59.5	649
Islam	74.7	47.2	46.2	57.9	649
Folk religion	68.0	36.5	47.2	58.1	648
Other	60.0	34.6	48.4	59.3	537

Note: Row/column percentages do not add up to 100. They are the estimated proportion.

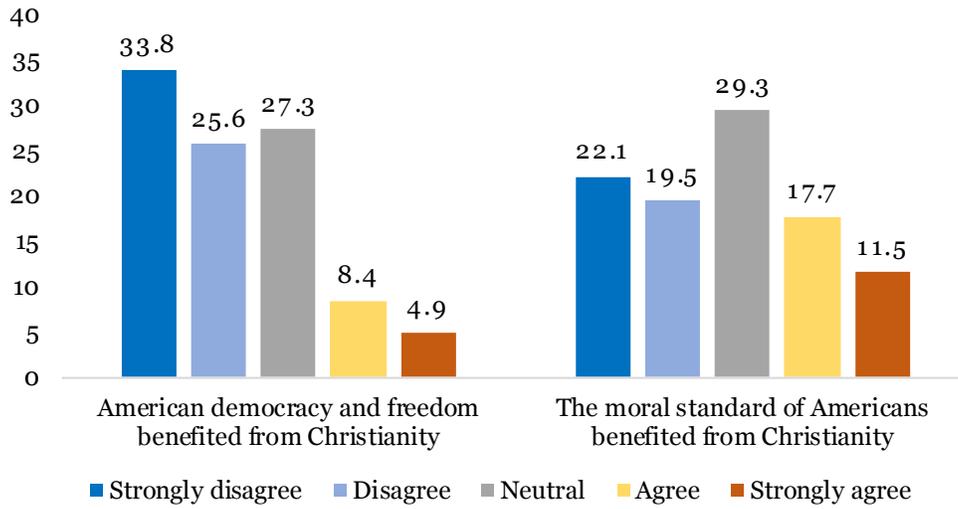
Table 5.4: On average, what proportion of your schoolmates know about your religious affiliation? (%)

	Completely believe	Somewhat believe	Do not believe much	Do not believe at all	N
Buddhism	28.1	27.6	41.5	55.6	582
Protestantism	48.4	36.0	36.9	50.4	582
Daoism	26.1	33.9	37.2	51.0	575
Catholicism	44.5	42.2	37.0	48.0	576
Islam	57.3	42.8	39.8	42.6	576
Folk religion	44.0	40.5	41.2	46.0	576
Other	42.1	34.6	40.6	46.8	481

Note: Row/column percentages do not add up to 100. They are the estimated proportion.

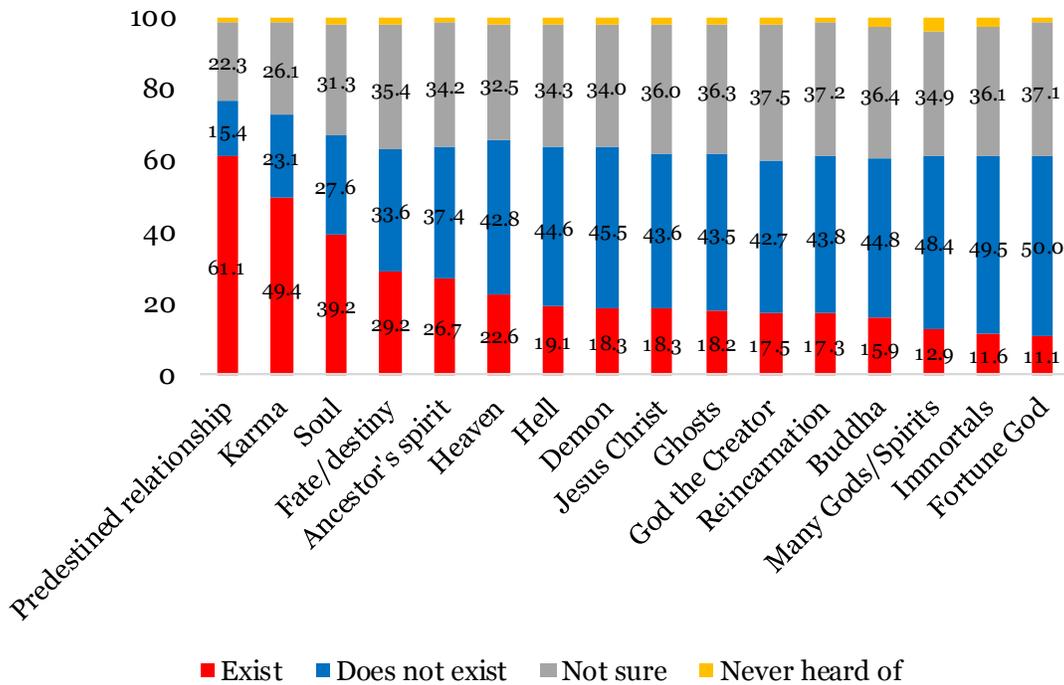
The respondents were asked how much they agreed with the statements that “American democracy and freedom benefited from Christianity” and that “the moral standards of Americans benefited from Christianity.” As shown in Figure 5.4, the majority of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with both statements, and about 30 percent of the respondents chose to be neutral when answering these two questions. About 29 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the moral standards of Americans benefited from Christianity, but only 13 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that American democracy and freedom benefited from Christianity.

Figure 5.4: Attitudes toward Christianity (%)



We also surveyed the Chinese students’ belief in a supernatural power or being by providing a series of supernatural items.

Figure 5.5: Belief in supernatural power/being (%)



To provide a clearer picture of respondents’ supernatural beliefs, we created a supernatural belief variable by recoding the original four categories in the

aforementioned items into two categories. We recoded the “exist” into “believe” and combined the “does not exist,” “not sure,” and “never heard of” into “do not believe.” As shown in Table 5.5, among the respondents who were members of the Chinese Communist Party, more than 78 percent believed in one or more supernatural power or being. Among the respondents who were members of the Chinese Communist Youth League, about 82 percent believed in at least one supernatural power or being. However, among the rest of the respondents, the percentage of believing in supernatural power or being was only about 58 percent. Given that the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Youth League require their members to uphold atheism, this is a surprising finding. The Chinese Communist students are more likely than others to believe in a supernatural power or being.

Table 5.5: Belief in supernatural power/being by political affiliation (%). (N=960)

	Believe	Do not believe	Total	N
CCP member	78.4	21.6	100	88
CCYL member	82.1	17.9	100	324
Other	57.7	42.3	100	548
Total	67.8	32.2	100	960

Appendix A: Methodology

Sample size estimation

For Simple Random Sampling with replacement (whether a student is selected does not influence another student's likelihood of being selected), any sample size equals $n_0 = \left(\frac{z_{\alpha} S}{e}\right)^2$. For commonly used margin of error of 0.05 and 95% confidence interval, $z_{\alpha} = 1.96$ and $e=0.05$. Before the survey started, we had learned that the total enrollment from China at this BT university reaches 4,426 as of 2015³, of which 3028 were undergraduates and 1398 were graduate students. We do not know the standard error of population characteristics, but now assume $S=0.5$ (the largest possible variance) although student population tends to be very homogeneous. Thus, by the above equation, $n_0=384$. Total Chinese student population N was 4426, then accounting for finite population correction $p(1-p)$, $n = \frac{n_0}{1+\frac{n_0}{N}}=353$. In short, a minimum of 353 cases were needed for a representative sample for the Chinese international student population at this BT University. The total sample size of our survey is 960 cases, which not only meets the minimum number, but also makes it possible to make comparisons across various subgroups.

Sampling procedure

Before starting collecting data from the population, we had used survey counselling service provided by the Survey Monkey in order to optimize the questionnaire design. Questions to be included in the survey, their wordings, and question flow, were consulted with scholars with extensive expertise in the fields of Sociology and Statistics. The survey questionnaire was then designed on Qualtrics, the same platform by which subsequent invitations to survey were distributed to the target population.

Around March 20th 2016, circulation of preliminary drafts of the different versions of the survey was conducted in small scale pilot studies. These preliminary drafts of the survey were not used for analysis and the final sampling but solely for getting feedback, upon which our final version of the survey was developed. Changes to the initial drafts included but not limited to wording and grammatical improvement, order of the questions, categories of answers, time-saving strategies, etc.

³ Per the Office of International Students and Scholars, total Chinese student size as of 2016 April is 4,117.

After IRB approval was granted in March 2016, the first wave of recruitment started on April 4. The total size of the target population (all Chinese international students at this BT university) by the time of April 2016 is 3087, which, according to the Registrar, comprises of all who had provided a permanent address from P.R. China and identified as Asian. Response rate to the first recruitment was 14.45% (446/3087). On April 8, the second wave of recruitment was sent to remind the targets of the survey participation. Excluding those who had already responded to the first recruitment, the size of the actual targets was 2641 (3087-446). Response rate to the second recruitment was 4.77% (126/2641).⁴

On April 11, another wave of recruitment had started to recruit another 1030 people. This target population was found in the records of the Office of International Students and Scholars (ISS) by their citizenship but not identified by the Registrar via permanent addresses and racial identity. We have contacted ISS for such information regarding who are “Chinese international students” because some Chinese international students reported not receiving our invitation to the survey. We suspected that they were not identified by the Registrar because they might not have indicated their racial identity as Asian (or they might not racially be Asian at all if they were members of the sizable minority groups such as Chinese Russians and Uyghurs) or provided a permanent address in P.R. China. Therefore, on this day, invitations to the survey were sent to two different populations: one identified by the Registrar, another located by the ISS. Because the two recruitments were dispatched on the same day, we cannot separate the origins of the responses. Therefore, we treat both the 1030 people from the ISS’ record and the 2515 people from the Registrar’s record as the total population in this recruitment on April 11. Response rate to the third recruitment was 8.2% (290/3545).

On April 15, a reminder to the 1030 people in the third wave was sent out, and 24 responded, yielding a response rate of 2.87% (24/835) to the fourth recruitment. On April 18, the final reminder sent to the rest 811 targets yielded a response rate of 4.43% (36/811). By April 15, total response rate was 22.4% ((572+350)/(3087+1030)). Among all who had participated, 100% completion rate was 77%.

4 In the literature of survey methodology, it is common to see lower response rate during the reminders as compared to the initial recruitment. With the exactly same sampling design, if the probability of responding at each wave is p_i , then the population from the reminder are less likely to respond, as compared to the population from the initial recruitment, by a factor of $p_1/p_2=3.04$. We may use this as non-response weight applied to the sample. However, other non-response weighting strategies exist, such as propensity score matching, post-stratification weighting, etc.

In sum, we had considerably overachieved our needed sample size of 353. As the survey results in Table A1 demonstrate, our sample is closely representative to the population in terms of majors and student status. Notwithstanding, there are slightly more graduate students in engineering schools in the sample than that in the population, less undergraduate business majors in the sample than that in the population, and an overrepresentation of graduate students in the sample. The discrepancy between sample and population will be accounted for by post-stratification weights: $W_j = \Pi \frac{N_j}{n_j}$ (Lohr 2010), where N_j is the population with j th characteristics such as majors.

Table A1. Distribution of student status and colleges in the sample and the population (%)

	In the sample				In the population			
	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total	N	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total	N
Agriculture	2.9	3.1	6.0	58	2.9	2.2	5.1	226
Education	0.8	1.5	2.3	22	0.3	0.7	1	44
Engineering	17.8	20.4	38.2	367	19.2	14.0	33.2	1471
Human & Health Science	4.1	1.6	5.6	54	5.1	1.2	6.3	280
Liberal Arts	6.6	3.2	9.8	94	10.0	2.7	12.7	564
Pharmacy	0.4	0.5	0.9	9	0.2	0.5	0.7	31
Science	9.9	8.1	18.0	173	12.4	6.2	18.6	824
Polytech	3.5	2.3	5.8	56	3.6	1.6	5.2	230
Veterinary	0.0	0.2	0.2	2	0.0	0.1	0.1	3
Business	10.3	2.7	13.0	125	14.5	2.5	17	753
Total	56.4	43.6	100	960	68.4	31.6	100	4426

Appendix B: Detailed Tables

Table A2. Parental Educational Attainment (%) (N=751)

	Father	Mother
No formal education	1.3	1.7
Elementary school	1.7	1.6
Junior high	5.3	6.0
Senior high	10.0	14.3
Vocational college	16.9	25.6
College	39.6	37.3
Graduate school	25.2	13.6
Total	100	100

Table A3: How often do you contact your family in China? (N=751)

Every day	18.6
Every week	67.9
Every month	9.9
Less than once per month	3.6
Total	100

Table A4: Means of communicating with family in China (%) (N=749)

Wechat	92.0
QQ	35.5
Telephone	30.8
Skype	23.0
Facetime	17.6
Email	6.8
Postal mail	1.2
Other	0.8
Total	207.7

Note: 1. This is a multiple choice question. 2. On average, each respondent selected 2.1 options.

Table A5: Marital status by student status (%). (N=815)

	Married	In a relationship	Single	Total
Undergraduates	0.5	34.8	64.8	100
Graduate students	22.0	36.6	41.4	100
Total	10.3	35.4	54.1	100

Table A6: How frequent do you drink this semester (%)? (N=819)

Student status	Never	Less than once per month	Once per month	Once per week	Several times per week	Total
Undergraduates	62.8	20.7	9.9	4.3	2.3	100
Graduate students	46.1	33.1	13.6	4.8	2.4	100
Total	55.2	26.4	11.6	4.5	2.3	100

Table A7: Did you get drunk this semester (%)? (N=365)

Never	70.1
Occasionally	22.7
Sometimes	5.5
Always	1.6
Total	100

Note: The respondents who never drink are not included.

Table A8: How many friends do you usually drink with (%)? (N=365)

Myself	11.5
One friend	12.3
Two to three friends	31.5
Four to five friends	16.4
More than five friends	28.2
Total	100

Note: The respondents who never drink are not included.

Table A9: How often do you smoke (%)? (N=813)

Student status	Do not smoke	Less than 2 cigarettes per day	3 to 5 cigarettes per day	6 to 10 cigarettes per day	More than 10 cigarettes per day	Total
Undergraduates	88.7	4.3	3.2	1.8	2.0	100
Grad students	92.5	4.0	1.9	0.8	0.8	100
Total	90.4	4.2	2.6	1.4	1.5	100

Table A10: How many friends do you usually smoke with (%)? (N=78)

Myself	38.5
One friend	24.4
Two to three friends	30.8
More than four friends	6.4
Total	100

Note: The respondents who never smoke are not included.

Table A11: When you were in China, did you join the following (%)? (N=708)

Student union	54.9
Chinese Communist Youth League	53.5
Volunteer group	41.0
Art group	29.8
Alumni association	28.5
Exercise club	24.4
Foreign language group	16.7
Townsmen association	15.3
Chinese Communist Party	12.4
Book club	8.2
Total	284.8

Note:1. This is a multiple choice question. 2. On average, each respondent selected 2.8 options.

**Table A12: In this semester, did you join the following (%)?
(N=563)**

Poker/Mahjong games	32.9
Student union	31.1
Drinking party	30.0
Volunteer group	26.5
Exercise club	17.2
Alumni association	14.7
Art group	14.0
Joy ride party	11.0
Dance party	10.7
Townsmen association	7.1
Foreign language group	6.9
Book club	4.4
Political interest group	3.9
Total	210.5

Note:1. This is a multiple choice question. 2. On average, each respondent selected 2.1 options.

**Table A13: How is your health this semester (%)?
(N=822)**

Very bad	1.7
Bad	7.7
Average	37.5
Good	38.3
Very good	14.8
Total	100

**Table A14: How much do you agree with the following
statement (%)? (N=739)**

I trust most people around me	Percent
Strongly disagree	5.8
Disagree	8.1
Neutral	25.2
Agree	38.6
Strongly agree	22.3
Total	100

Table A15: What media do you usually use for reading the news (%)? (N=795)

Chinese website	84.3
Foreign language website	64.4
Chinese social media	61.5
Foreign language social media	44.8
Foreign language newspaper	15.5
Chinese newspaper	8.4
Total	278.9

Note: 1. This is a multiple choice question. 2. On average, each respondent selected 2.8 options.

Table A16: What is your partner's race/ethnicity (%)? (N=371)

Chinese	90.8
Other Asian	3.2
European American	3.0
African American	1.4
Korean/Japanese	1.1
Latino American	0.5
Total	100

Table A17: If you are single now, would you like to marry a person of the following race/ethnicity (%)? (N=432)

Chinese	96.3
European American	44.2
Korean/Japanese	41.4
Other Asian	16.7
Latino American	12.5
African American	5.8
Total	216.9

Note: 1. This is a multiple choice question. 2. On average, each respondent selected 2.2 options.

Table A18: Have you ever had roommates of the following race/ethnicity (%)? (N=822)

Chinese	82.1
European American	32.2
Other Asian	12.2
African American	6.8
Korean/Japanese	6.8
Latino American	4.6
Total	144.8

Note: 1. This is a multiple choice question. 2. On average, each respondent selected 1.4 options.

Table A19: Did you watch the 2016 CCTV Spring Festival Gala (%)? (N=808)

Almost all the performances	10.3
Some performances	36.9
Too busy to watch	16.6
Not interested in watching	36.3
Total	100

Table A20: Have you watched the 2016 presidential debate (%)? (N=806)

	Percent
Yes	28.0
Too busy to watch	28.5
Not interested in watching	43.4
Total	100

Table A21: Have you discussed the U.S. presidential election with (%)? (N=808)

	Americans	Chinese
Never	44.3	19.2
Rarely	34.9	54.2
Sometimes	20.8	26.6
Total	100	100

Table A22: How much do you agree with the following statement (%)?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	N
Democracy is indecisive and has too much quibbling	18.9	26.5	36.7	12.6	5.3	100	736
Democracy is not good at maintaining order	35.6	31.6	23.5	6.0	3.3	100	731
Democracy may have problems, but it's better than any other form of government	10.5	17.6	35.2	23.5	13.2	100	733
Social order is more important than individual freedom	10.1	20.2	32.8	22.3	14.6	100	734

Table A23: How many of the following people know your religious belief (%)?

	Mean	SD	Total	N
Friends	54.7	39.1	100	669
Schoolmates	44.6	36.2	100	593

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