

China's Deficit in American Studies

1. Proper Noun
2. Adjective
3. Noun
4. Noun
5. Proper Noun - Plural
6. Noun - Plural
7. Noun
8. Adjective
9. Noun - Plural
10. Noun
11. Noun - Plural
12. Noun
13. Adjective
14. Noun - Plural
15. Noun
16. Noun - Plural
17. Coordinating Conjunction
18. Adverb
19. Noun - Plural
20. Adjective
21. Adjective
22. Proper Noun
23. Preposition Or Subordinating Conjunction

24. Noun - Plural
25. Coordinating Conjunction
26. Preposition Or Subordinating Conjunction
27. Noun - Plural
28. Noun
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_____ Proper Noun faces a _____ Adjective imbalance of intellectual _____ Noun with the United States. Contrary to conventional _____ Noun, Chinese know less about the United _____ Proper Noun - Plural than Americans know about China. Most Chinese students and _____ Noun - Plural interested in the United States concentrate either on English language and _____ Noun or on Sino-American _____ Adjective history and policy _____ Noun - Plural. There are few opportunities for _____ Noun in the United States, and scholarly work on American domestic _____ Noun - Plural is "woefully inadequate," according to a Peking University _____ Noun in _____ Adjective studies.

By contrast, Americans have done surveys, _____ Noun - Plural histories, and _____ Noun research in the humanities, _____ Noun - Plural sciences, and sciences all across China, including such sensitive areas as _____ Coordinating conjunction. Since China's opening to the West, 30 years ago, Americans have acquired _____ Adverb detailed _____ Noun - Plural about nearly every aspect of traditional and contemporary China. "Just as American scholars go to Hunan and Guangxi," a Chinese _____ Adjective told me, "Chinese should know more about Arizona and Ohio in order to be familiar with the _____ Adjective _____ Proper Noun." I conducted _____ Preposition or subordinating conjunction in China for the Ford Foundation's Beijing office last year to review the state of _____ Noun - Plural studies in _____ Coordinating conjunction and to make recommendations for increased _____ Preposition or subordinating conjunction between specialists in China and the United States. Since 1989, Ford has been one of the few private _____ Noun - Plural of financial _____ Noun for American studies in China, but its support has _____ Verb - Past Participle in recent years.

My _____ Verb - Past Tense showed that Chinese scholars and policy analysts are _____ Adjective ready and able to move beyond the narrowly focused approach that has _____ Adjective American studies in _____ Preposition or subordinating conjunction in the past. "We need to study the economy, society, history, and _____ Noun of the United States, not just what Obama said," said one observer. He and many others are eager to investigate the cultural, ethnic, and _____ Adjective factors that help to explain America's _____ Noun and its _____ Noun decisions. As it stands now, "China equates American diversity with _____ Noun, not realizing it is the _____ Noun of the U.S.," says an American professor.

Reflecting their own history and values, Chinese tend to _____ Noun group _____ Preposition or subordinating conjunction over individual rights. , , " ."

The relative thinness of China's grasp of the American way of life should not be surprising. The serious study of the United States is still young, and China has lacked the resources to look beyond practical and immediate issues

such as language, business, law, and diplomacy. Topics including race and ethnicity have been neglected. American institutions, both public and private, are inadequately prepared to respond to changing Chinese imperatives for in-depth learning about the United States. There are several reasons. First, Americans often take their own culture for granted, assuming that U.S. interests and values are widely known and easily accessible. Second, American studies as practiced in the United States is an eclectic, interdisciplinary field that does not always match up well with Chinese academic disciplines. Third, there is a widespread perception that the U.S. government is responsible for explaining America to the world. But with limited resources, concerns about security, and a focus on the Muslim world, the consensus is that U.S. public diplomacy is not getting the job done.

The list of obstacles goes on: American foundations, think tanks, and universities provide far more support for the study of China and U.S.-China relations than for American studies. Many promising Chinese students with backgrounds in American studies are recruited into China-studies programs in the United States, where they have obvious comparative advantages. Over the years, the Fulbright Program in China has shifted from history and literature to fields such as law, business, foreign policy, and communications. And while there are opportunities for individual exchanges between our two countries, remarkably few institutional partnerships focus exclusively on American studies in China.

Despite all of those problems, there is a real opportunity for Chinese and Americans to work together. At a time when scholars in China are ready to move beyond the status quo, many American-studies scholars in the United States have embraced a global view of American history, politics, economics, and culture. They are becoming more aware of important research outside the United States, informing a transnational perspective. This is therefore an excellent time for Americans to both strengthen the study of the United States in China and promote the internationalization of American studies back home.

Here are some recommendations to improve the situation:

- * Increase opportunities for Chinese to attend meetings of professional associations in the United States and for Americans to attend conferences in China.

- * Expand networks for information about the United States through Web sites, conferences, and training programs. The U.S.-China Education Trust and the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs offer good models.

- * Provide incentives for Chinese scholars to publish articles in international journals, such as the online Journal of Transnational American Studies.

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Support certificate programs for Chinese graduate students and young scholars from less developed regions in China. Universities in China, Hong Kong, and the United States can organize summer institutes.

* Expand opportunities for student-exchange programs dealing with aspects of American society. These exchanges should be designed as long-term institutional partnerships.

* Sponsor Sino-American research projects on topics such as immigration, crisis management, poverty, climate change, religion, and Chinese-American studies.

* Create more pathways for Chinese government officials, diplomats, journalists, students, scholars, and policy analysts to learn about the United States. The National Committee on United States-China Relations and the Asia Foundation could expand existing programs.

* Organize a consortium of American foundations, with Chinese advisers, to review and help address China's priorities for American studies. Earlier efforts in the fields of international-relations studies and legal studies offer potential models.

* Establish a China-U.S. advisory group or commission, financially supported by the two governments but managed independently, to identify gaps and foster long-term efforts to promote American studies in China as well as Chinese studies in the United States.

China now expresses its soft power across the United States through 60 Confucius Institutes, which offer resources for teaching Chinese language and culture. Yet America has no equivalent organizations in China, partly because of objections from Chinese authorities. Instead the United States relies mainly on movies, sports, and corporate advertising to convey its core values. It was telling when after seeing the movie Avatar recently, a Chinese official enthusiastically told his American colleague, "This is real American genius."

It is obviously in America's interest for China to have a clear, objective, nuanced understanding of the United States. American colleges, universities, charitable organizations, and foundations should play an active role in rectifying the intellectual imbalance between the two countries. Sustained support for American studies in China will not put an end to suspicion and mistrust, but it does have the potential to smooth out bumps in the road ahead.