

Economic Coercion as Foreign Policy Signalling: China's Punitive Measures Against France, 2008–2009

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Abstract

This case study examines China's use of informal economic coercion against France during the 2008 Tibet crisis. Drawing on official Chinese statements, trade data, and bilateral agreements, the case study traces events from March 2008 to late 2009 and highlights Beijing's efforts to enforce political red lines while presenting its actions as a defensive response. Measures included suspending diplomatic engagements, consumer boycotts targeting French companies, and stalled commercial deals. Framed in terms of national sovereignty, these measures illustrate how China leverages trade, market access, and nationalist sentiment to punish target states and deter similar actions by others.

Keywords: Economic coercion, economic statecraft, geoeconomics, consumer boycotts, diplomatic retaliation, Tibet, Dalai Lama, China, France
JEL Classification: F13, F14, F51, F52, F53

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1. Introduction

Since 2008, China’s economic growth and its rise as the third-largest economy marked a significant milestone in its quest for power (Shambaugh 2013). The hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games provided Beijing with a high-profile opportunity to re-inforce its great power status, representing a celebration of China’s renaissance (Xu 2006). This event also demonstrated China’s use of both soft and hard power in its foreign policy (Caffrey 2011).

However, the Games mobilized transnational advocacy on Tibetan autonomy and human rights abuses in Tibet. The use of the internet and social media, primarily Facebook and Myspace, contributed to a global awareness surge on the issue and amplified the visibility of diplomatic meetings between the 14th Dalai Lama and Western leaders (Drissel 2008; Topgyal 2011). Protests during the global Torch Relay brought into the international spotlight, especially in European capitals, China’s repressive regime and military crackdown; Beijing nonetheless framed them as interference in its domestic affairs, provoking a nationalist response within the country (Ayson and Taylor 2008).

Meanwhile, that year’s global financial crisis had deepened Europe’s economic vulnerability and intensified its search for new markets. Stable relations with China were a lifeline for growth at a time when US and EU demand faltered, thereby

TABLE 1. Actors involved

Actor	Actor Type	Role/Position	Relevant Action or Treatment
French Government & President Nicolas Sarkozy	State	Targeted Entity	Did not condemn protests; met with Dalai Lama.
Chinese Government, principally Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Government	Initiator	Condemned foreign protests as interference; imposed punitive measures and indirectly influenced consumer boycotts.
French companies (Carrefour, Peugeot, Renault)	Company	Targeted Entity	Targeted by Chinese consumer boycotts online and, in Carrefour’s case, in stores.
Chinese Civilians	Public	Support Base	Organized boycotts and protests against French companies.
Western Media and Non-governmental organizations	Civil Society	Advocate supporter	Organized protests and coverage of the Tibet issue criticizing the Chinese government.
14 th Dalai Lama	Spiritual and Political Leader	Advocate	Held meetings with French leaders and gave interviews in French media.

Note: The table identifies selected actors most relevant to the case analysis and is not intended to be exhaustive. Roles refer to the actors’ positions or functions during the period examined in the article. Source: Authors’ compilation and analysis based on official statements, media reports, institutional records, and sources cited in the article.

increasing the strategic importance of Sino-European ties (Zhang 2016). As a result, European leaders found it increasingly challenging to balance their economic interests with China with their normative commitments. Civil society groups, media, and members of the European Parliament called for stronger responses to human rights violations in Tibet; however, most national governments adopted more cautious diplomatic approaches to avoid jeopardizing economic ties with Beijing (Balducci 2010; Fox and Godement 2009). For those who openly opposed China or facilitated meetings with the Dalai Lama, the Chinese government utilized a number of punitive measures, signalled political dissatisfaction, or openly threatened the prosperity and longevity of their bilateral relations (Zhang 2023). As such, the Tibet case unfolded as a complex political and economic episode involving a wide array of actors, including governments, diplomatic missions, corporations, media and civilians.

2. Timeline of Events

At the outset, tensions surfaced when French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced on March 25, 2008, that he may boycott the 2008 Olympic Games opening ceremony, mentioning that “[our] Chinese friends must understand the worldwide concern that there is about the question of Tibet, and I will adapt my response to the evolutions in the situation that will come, I hope, as rapidly as possible” (European Parliament 2008b). However, the Chinese foreign ministry sought to downplay these remarks noting that “We must follow the purpose of the Olympics and not politicize the Games,” (Chinese Embassy in Jordan 2008). At the same time, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang stated that, “the Lhasa riot is a violent, secessionist incident planned and incited by the Dalai group,” and sought to counter any depictions of China as isolated, emphasizing that there were “more than 100 countries who have expressed their understanding and support for China’s handling of the Tibetan riots.” Then, explicitly pointing at France, he stressed that “the Chinese government is firmly opposed to the Dalai Lama visiting any country in any identity to engage in secessionist activities and is opposed to any country having any official contacts with the Dalai Lama,” (Xinhua 2008).

During the Olympic torch relay in France on April 7, 2008, extensive protests caused the flame to be extinguished three times over a distance of 28 kilometres, after which it was transported by bus (France 24 2008c). On the same day, Jin Jing, the Chinese Paralympic wheelchair fencer, was attacked by protesters. The Green Party raised a Tibetan flag at City Hall in Paris¹; the French Parliament rejected calls to do the same (Reuters 2008b). These events sparked a widespread civilian response in China, with a strong presence on the internet and social media beginning on April 9,

¹ See Central Tibetan Administration. The Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama The 14th Dalai Lama <https://www.dalailama.com/the-dalai-lama/events-and-awards/travels/travels-2000-2009>

2008, when a campaign to boycott French products was launched. This was followed on April 10, 2008, by targeted actions against the Carrefour supermarket chain. During this period and throughout the month, protests against Carrefour continued, accompanied by cyber efforts to block the company's name on Chinese online search engines.² Meanwhile, on April 21, the Paris City Council granted the Dalai Lama honorary citizenship despite opposition from Sarkozy's party (France 24 2008b; Guardian 2008).

The highly publicized tour of the Dalai Lama³ in Europe and other countries was condemned by the Chinese government. France was one of the stops on the Dalai Lama's tour; however, on August 6, 2008, President Sarkozy announced that he would not meet the Dalai Lama during his visit (France 24 2008e). Subsequently, the French president also gave an interview to Xinhua News (French Republic 2008), an outlet closely associated with the Chinese government, to help calm the tense relations between the two sides. On August 8, Sarkozy attended the ceremony as the holder of the EU presidency, and stated, "I spoke to all the Member States to find out what they thought and whether any of them were opposed to my taking part ... [and] I would like to say that I received agreement from all the Member States to attend the Olympic opening ceremony," (European Parliament 2008a).

In August, reports of a possible meeting between the Dalai Lama and Sarkozy during his 10-day tour in France raised concerns from Chinese officials. The Dalai Lama arrived in mid-August, gave public remarks in Nantes, and did not request a meeting with Sarkozy (Central Tibetan Administration 2008b). On August 22, he inaugurated the Lerab Ling temple in Roqueredonde, where he met with Carla Bruni-Sarkozy and Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner (*ibid*).

Despite Sarkozy attending the Games, the announcement on November 13 that he would meet the Dalai Lama after all (France 24 2008d) was met with strong condemnation from Chinese officials. Then, on 26 November, Beijing announced that Premier Wen Jiabao would not attend the upcoming EU-China Summit, scheduled for December 1, 2008, in Lyon (Beijing Review 2008). Subsequently, on 4 December 2008, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Jianchao held a regular press conference, stating that "France is well aware of our position {...} and that the French side should take seriously our position and concern, create the atmosphere and conditions for the resumption of China-EU Leaders' Meeting, and take concrete measures to contribute to improving China-France relations and developing China-EU relations" (Chinese Embassy in the Republic of Cyprus 2008). He even acknowledged consumer boycotts as a form of public pressure on France, while urging Paris to address the

² Chinese nationalists hit at Carrefour over Tibet | China | The Guardian

³ See Central Tibetan Administration. French President to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Poland - Central Tibetan Administration

TABLE 2. Timeline of events

Date	Actor	Action/Response
March 25, 2008	French President	Announces possible boycott of the Beijing Olympics, citing concerns about Tibet.
April 7, 2008	French Pro-Tibetan activists	Extinguished the Olympic Flame multiple times during the Paris torch relay; Jin Jing attacked.
April 8, 2008	Chinese Government	Calls Paris protests “despicable activities” and urges France to rethink actions.
April 9–10, 2008	Chinese Internet Users and Consumers	Launch campaign to boycott French products.
April 15, 2008	Carrefour spokesperson	States that the company does not want to be involved in politics or sports.
April 16, 2008	French Ambassador Suho	Reaffirms French government support for Beijing Olympics and ‘One China’ policy.
April 17, 2008	Chinese Hackers	Take down Carrefour’s official website in China, leaving boycott slogans.
April 18, 2008	Zhao Jinjun (Chinese envoy)	Visits France, discusses China-France relations.
April 19–20, 2008	Chinese Protesters	Mass demonstrations outside Carrefour stores with some temporarily closed for “maintenance”.
April 21, 2008	Paris City Council	Grants Dalai Lama honorary citizenship.
April 21 and 23, 2008	French delegation	Visits Shanghai to ease tensions, delivers apologies and reiterates France’s Tibet and ‘One China’ stance.
April 22, 2008	Chinese Ministry of Commerce	Issues official statement on Carrefour boycott.
August 15–20, 2008	14 th Dalai Lama	Tours France; gives public teachings; meets French officials.
November 14, 2008	French President	Announces he will meet Dalai Lama. ⁴
November 26, 2008	Chinese Premier	Announces he will skip the EU-China summit in Lyon (scheduled for December 1).
December 4, 2008	Chinese MFA Spokesperson	Urges France to act responsibly.
December 6, 2008	French President	Meets Dalai Lama in Gdansk, Poland.

Note: The timeline identifies selected events most relevant to the case analysis and is not intended to be exhaustive. Dates refer to the reported date of each event or public statement.

Source: Authors’ compilation and analysis based on official statements, media reports, institutional records, and sources cited in the article.

⁴ See Central Tibetan Administration. French President to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Poland - Central Tibetan Administration

situation and calling on the Chinese public to remain calm and rational. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of mutually beneficial business ties with France and urged Paris to maintain favourable conditions to protect long-term bilateral relations (*ibid*). On the evening of December 7, Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei summoned the French ambassador (MFA China 2008). For his part, Sarkozy tried to remind China of its international legal responsibilities, stating after the meeting: “One must approach this calmly. The world needs an open China that participates in global governance. China needs a powerful Europe that gives work to Chinese enterprise” (Central Tibetan Administration 2008a).

3. Measures

Beginning in mid-March 2008, the Chinese government used a series of coercive instruments in response to what it perceived as provocations and infringements on its sovereignty by France. Beijing's approach was characteristic of its broader economic statecraft as employed since the early 2000s; informal, flexible, deniable and with an emphasis on symbolic rather than systemic retaliation (Papageorgiou 2025; Frederick and Shatz 2022).

Although China has long expressed its opposition to formal economic sanctions and lacked institutional mechanisms to implement them at the time, it nonetheless demonstrated the capacity to exert pressure through ad hoc, tactical measures directed at non-strategic sectors of the economy, short-termed and allowing space for escalation or de-escalation without breaching World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations (*ibid*; Harrell et al. 2018).

The first coercive measure was state threats. China issued political threats aimed at deterring the French government from further engagement with the Dalai Lama and for its stance during the protests. Through political signalling, Beijing cancelled a series of arranged visits, including the planned attendance of Premier Wen Jiabao at the 11th annual EU–China Summit (DW 2008), demonstrating its willingness to suspend high-level diplomatic exchanges to express disapproval and exert pressure.

In terms of trade, China avoided explicit import or export restrictions and instead employed delay tactics and exclusionary practices. Talks with Airbus to finalise a multi-billion-dollar deal for 150 new passenger planes were indefinitely postponed, although an Airbus spokesperson denied any connection to the summit row, stating that the company was “not planning to sign any big aircraft order during the summit anyway, nor is any big order expected soon” (Reuters 2008a). Simultaneously, France was excluded from the itinerary of two major Chinese trade delegations, with one of them leading to contracts worth USD 15 billion in other European countries, bypassing France entirely (Reilly 2013).

China's most impactful tool, however, was the mobilisation of consumer nationalist boycotts, which not only pressured foreign companies but also signalled to

other companies and states the potential economic costs of non-compliance. By leveraging public sentiment, China transformed individual acts of consumption into a form of economic coercion, amplifying the state's economic leverage through its market access, beyond traditional diplomatic or military means. Although the Chinese government officially denied involvement, these movements were encouraged through state-aligned media and online platforms (Timofeyeva 2017).

Chinese state-affiliated media Xinhua and China Central Television (CCTV) framed the Paris protests as external interference aiming to sabotage the Olympics, cultivating a nationalist response (Edney 2008). The boycotts targeted French consumer brands⁵, with Carrefour as the primary target. Protests spread both online and in front of physical stores⁶, impacting sales and corporate revenues. The campaign was framed as an expression of spontaneous public outrage, with Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu claiming that “some Chinese people have expressed their opinions and feelings recently. All these are by no means accidental, and the French side needs to ponder and reflect upon them” (China Daily 2008b). The protests' sustained visibility and lack of censorship indicate tacit state orchestration, followed by de-escalation through online audience management (Timofeyeva 2017). Finally, the Chinese state indirectly re-restricted travel to France by suspending package tours organized through state-run travel agencies, reducing the number of visas issued, discouraging independent travel, and even removing French destinations from their brochures (France 24 2008a).

4. Outcomes

China's coercion against France in 2008 appears to have been highly effective, producing both immediate commercial impacts and lasting diplomatic concessions. In economic terms, empirical studies confirm the trade-damaging effects of meetings with the Dalai Lama (2002–2008), particularly when involving heads of state (Fuchs and Klann 2013).

Moreover, French automobile brands such as Peugeot and Citroën experienced a 25–33% drop in sales in China, with consumers shifting to domestic and other Asian alternatives (Hong et al. 2011). Carrefour also suffered a decrease in revenues throughout April and May and significant reputational damage (Gao 2012), having to issue statements supporting the Beijing Olympics and opposing Tibetan independence (China Daily 2008a). Other French firms adopted a pre-emptive stance, demonstrating loyalty to China's policies in Tibet, such as cosmetics company Avène, which “donated 200,000-yuan worth of sun protection products to People's Liberation Army and People's Armed Police officers serving in Tibet” (Nyiri 2009, 5).

⁵ Peugeot, Citroën, and LVMH

⁶ in a number of cities, including Qingdao, Changsha, Hefei, Wuhan, and Kunming.

Following the 2008 boycotts, French leaders came under sustained pressure. Diplomatic exchanges began in late April 2008 with President Sarkozy's televised apology to Jin Jing and subsequent personal letter⁷ delivered by the French Senate president Christian Poncelet, which reiterated France's support for the 'One China' policy, as well as its support for the success of the Beijing Olympics (France 24 2008f; King 2010). China also dispatched senior envoy Zhao Jinjun to France for talks, while Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin attended a China–EU forum. The pressure achieved its clearest outcome in April 2009 at the G20 Summit in London, when China and France issued a joint statement reaffirming the paramount importance of bilateral ties, mutual respect, and non-interference, with France explicitly recognising Tibet as an integral part of China and objects to all support for Tibet's independence in any form whatsoever" (MFEA and Chinese MFA 2009).

Economically, during the period of Carrefour boycotts that lasted between April and May 2008, a total of 409 stores were affected; of these, 26 were forced to close temporarily for a few days, with the majority located in the North, West and Central regions of the country (Denis-Remis et al. 2013). It was a relatively short and acute event that, despite the backlash, did not appear to affect the company's annual revenues. Carrefour reported revenues in China of EUR 2,990 million (approximately EUR 2.99 billion) in 2008 and EUR 3,473 million (approximately EUR 3.47 billion) in 2009 (Carrefour 2009). Since annual figures tend to smooth over short-lived quarterly disruptions, it is difficult to directly measure the boycott's financial impact. However, it should be noted that during the April–May 2008 protests, Carrefour cancelled a planned May Day sales promotion and anticipated about a 20% decline in holiday-period sales⁸.

Contemporary reports describe temporary store disruptions and short-run sales drops of roughly 20% and note concerns from local suppliers about product returns⁹. These events illustrate the immediate, protest-driven shock to Carrefour's operations in China. Nevertheless, Carrefour's response during the period of boycotts was to reduce the price of rice and oil to attract low-income consumers, publicly denying any political involvement, and donating 2 million RMB for the victims of the Sichuan earthquake, denoting efforts to mitigate reputational and revenue losses (Nyiri 2009; Denis-Remis et al. 2013).

Despite these efforts, France's exports to China declined from 2008 to 2009, dropping from USD 13.28 billion to USD 10.94 billion (WITS data). Although China accounts for only a small share of France's total exports (slightly above 2%), this decline is consistent with the "Dalai Lama effect" theory (Fuchs & Klann 2013).

⁷ His statement: "It is understandable that the Chinese people feel hurt. I hereby strongly condemn what they did."

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/business/protest-hit-carrefour-cancels-china-sales-plan-xinhua-idUSPEK370013/>

⁹ <https://www.theepochtimes.com/article/chinese-suppliers-suffer-with-carrefour-boycott-1730303>

This is further supported when comparing China's imports from the world to those from France between 2008 and 2009.

During this period, marked by the global financial crisis that led to a general economic slowdown and shifts in bilateral trade across many countries, China's total imports from the world decreased by 11.2%, while imports from France declined by 17.6%. This indicates a somewhat disproportionate decline (6.4 percentage point difference) in imports from France, suggesting a France-specific effect that can be correlated with the Olympic Games' incident.

Moreover, by applying the difference-in-differences (DiD) model on annual bilateral export from France to China, with France serving as the treated country, while Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy, consistently the three largest EU exporters to China, are the control group. Focusing on these major exporters ensures that the comparison is among economies with similar trade scale and exposure to global shocks (Figure 1). France's exports to China fell about 17.6% between 2008 and 2009, which was in line with DiD estimates showing a negative and significant event effect for that year compared to the top-3 EU exporters (Germany, Netherlands, Italy).

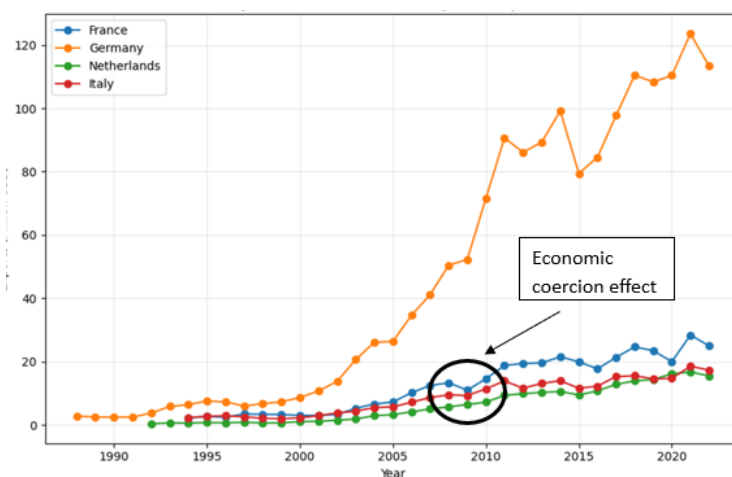


FIGURE 1. Exports to China: France compared with Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy (USD billion).

Note: The comparison countries are Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy, the three largest EU exporters to China used as the control group in the article's analysis. The annotation marks the 2008–2009 period discussed in the case study.

Source: Authors' calculations based on World Bank, World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), bilateral export data.

However, the impact was short-lived, as French exports to China rebounded in 2010, surpassing 2008 levels and reaching USD 14.55 billion (WITS). These results

further support the view that China’s coercive measures are not intended to harm its own economy or disrupt strategic sectors and also explain why the government chose to terminate the boycott despite public calls for its continuation. Additionally, from 2008 to 2009, the number of Chinese tourists from China to France had fallen significantly, while also the overnight stays in France declined by approximately 41,000 nights, representing a decrease of roughly 5%. This short-term dip coincides with the period of political tension and consumer boycotts following the Dalai Lama’s visit to France. After 2009, overnight stays rebounded sharply, indicating a rapid recovery in Chinese tourism in the subsequent years.¹⁰ Additionally, in 2008, Chinese hotel nights in France fell 17.1% in the first three quarters, with industry estimates of a 30–40% decrease in Chinese trips to France.¹¹ Additionally, reports noted visa applications to France collapsing by two-thirds amid organized tour

TABLE 3. Outcomes from the measures

Indicator	Observed impact
French automobile sales in China	Estimated 25–33% decline in sales.
Carrefour supermarkets	Short-term protests and temporary store closures in spring 2008, creating brief operational disruption and reputational risk.
Bilateral trade relations	6.4 percentage-point larger decline in imports from France than in China’s total imports from the world, 2008–2009.
Tourism from China to France	Chinese hotel nights in France fell 17.1% in the first three quarters of 2008 compared with the same period in 2007; Chinese trips to France reportedly declined by an estimated 30–40%; reduced travel was framed as voluntary rather than state-directed. ¹²
Bilateral diplomatic relations	Joint China–France statement at the G20 Summit reaffirming mutual respect, non-interference, and French opposition to Tibetan independence.

Note: The table summarizes selected observed impacts discussed in the case study and is not intended to be exhaustive. Percentage changes reflect the figures reported or calculated in the article. The 6.4 percentage-point figure refers to the difference between the decline in China’s total imports from the world and the decline in China’s imports from France between 2008 and 2009.

Source: Authors’ compilation and analysis based on sources cited in the article.

¹⁰ <https://statinvestor.com/data/37752/chinese-tourist-overnight-stays-in-france/>

¹¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/les-touristes-chinois-ont-boud-la-france-lan-dernier-idUSPAE50F0IY/>

¹² See China Daily Journeys to this West no great shakes. https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2008-06/25/content_6793026.htm

boycotts.¹³ This provides strong evidence of a short-lived, politically linked demand shock. Further, reports from *Tour Hebdo* indicate that in the first ten months of 2008, Chinese tourist arrivals to France dropped by 6.24%, even as overall Chinese outbound travel rose about 14%, reinforcing the view that the decline was destination-specific.¹⁴ Looking more closely at the visa channel, visa applications from Beijing to France fell by two-thirds year-over-year,¹⁵ according to the French ambassador, who attributed the drop to a diplomatic backlash following protests at the Paris Olympic torch relay, even as he denied that a formal boycott order had been issued.¹⁶

5. Wider Analytical Insights

This case study demonstrates how Beijing employed coercive measures to achieve its foreign policy goals and enforce its red lines, confirming that rising powers, once they consolidate economic strength, pursue foreign policy objectives through economic statecraft (Blanchard and Ripsman 2008; Reilly 2013). By not imposing formal sanctions but rather limited coercive measures, China positioned itself as a responsible power acting defensively (Papageorgiou and Melo 2022). China's measures targeted both international and domestic audiences. Internationally, Beijing signalled its readiness to retaliate against states crossing its political red lines and sending a signal to other European and Asia-Pacific countries by adopting the "kill the chicken to scare the monkeys" strategy. Then, domestically, it fostered a nationalist sentiment to strengthen the local economy through the mobilisation of the public and the use of its market power to change consumer preferences and boost its own products (Frederick and Shatz 2022). Over time, China has refined tactics such as consumer boycotts, diplomatic pressure, and trade restrictions, integrating geo-economic leverage with geopolitical aims. These informal measures bypass formal dispute frameworks, challenging the rules-based order and requiring economic resilience, supply chain diversification, and regional cooperation to protect free trade and political autonomy.

¹³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/les-touristes-chinois-ont-boud-la-france-lan-dernier-idUSPAE50F0IY/>

¹⁴ <https://www.tourhebdo.com/actualites/destination/frequentation-2008-la-chine-accuse-le-coup-436398.php>

¹⁵ See the Economic Times. Beijing tourists to France drop 70 pc: Ambassador.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/beijing-tourists-to-france-drop-70-pc-ambassador/articleshow/3160397.cms>

¹⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/markets/companies/chinese-tourist-visas-to-france-down-two-thirds-idUSPEK249583/>

Appendix. Difference-in-Differences Model and Regression Results

(DiD) model on annual bilateral export data (WITS, World Bank)¹⁷, as follows:

$$Y_{ct} = \alpha + \beta(France_c \times Post_t) + \gamma France_c + \delta Post_t + \varepsilon_{ct}$$

Where Y_{ct} denotes exports from France to China in the year t . $France_c$ is a country dummy that equals 1 if the observation is for France and 0 for all other EU countries in the control group. $Post_t$ is a time dummy that equals 1 for the post-event period and 0 for all years before the event. β is the Difference in Difference coefficient, which captures the additional change in France’s exports to China after the event compared to the average change over the same period in the control group countries. We run two different sets of regressions for robustness reasons, namely for 2008 and 2009 as the event year. The results of Columns 1 and 2 (Table A1) show that for the 2008 event (post-period beginning 2009) and for the 2009 event (post-2010), the $France \times Post$ coefficient is negative and statistically significant in both cases, indicating a persistent decline in French exports to China relative to the control group. The DiD estimate unambiguously reflects the overall post-2008 shocks affecting trade, including the global financial crisis, since the latter struck all major EU exporters. However, the fact that France shows a much larger negative change in 2008 and 2009 relative to the other top exporters strongly suggests that the China-led boycott of French products contributed substantially to the observed export decline.

TABLE A1. Regression results using difference-in-differences methodology

Event year	(1) 2008	(2) 2009
$France_c \times Post_t$	-17.57*** (-2.688)	-17.69*** (-2.550)
$France_c$	-1.9 (-1.106)	-2.38 (-1.289)
$Post_t$	32.5*** (5.067)	33.0*** (4.851)
_intercept	7.31*** (5.105)	8.14*** (5.152)
observations	124	124
Durbin-Watson	2.176	2.184
F-stat.	43.08***	51.58***
period	1988-2022	

Note: The table reports difference-in-differences estimates using annual bilateral export data for France and the comparison countries used in the article’s analysis.

Source: Authors’ calculations based on World Bank, World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), bilateral export data.

¹⁷ <https://wits.worldbank.org/countrystats.aspx?lang=en>

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