



## KEY TAKEAWAY

Belying expectations about a quick settlement after the positive G-20 meeting, the heightened rhetoric from both sides suggested further hardening of their negotiating positions. Meanwhile, the decline in global trade volumes continued to weaken manufacturing output across most major economies though the services sector remained relatively resilient.

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## THIRD QUARTER 2019 COMMENTARY

For the third quarter of 2019, the Thomas White International Fund Class I shares returned -2.68% while its benchmark, the MSCI All Country World ex US Index (net), returned -1.80%. Year-to-date, the Fund's Class I shares have returned +11.47% versus +11.56% for the benchmark.

### AVERAGE ANNUAL RETURNS<sup>1</sup> AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

	3 <sup>d</sup> QTR	YTD	1Yr	3Yrs	5Yrs	10Yrs	Since Inception
<b>TWWIX</b>	<b>-2.68%</b>	<b>11.47%</b>	<b>-3.18%</b>	<b>4.53%</b>	<b>1.24%</b>	<b>3.65%</b>	<b>6.37%</b>
<b>MSCI AC World ex U.S. Index<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>-1.80%</b>	<b>11.56%</b>	<b>-1.23%</b>	<b>6.33%</b>	<b>2.90%</b>	<b>4.45%</b>	<b>5.04%</b>

Gross Expense Ratio: 1.18%. Net Expense Ratio: 0.99%\*

*Represents the performance of the Class I shares after 8/31/2012 (inception of the share class) and Investor Class (inception 6/28/1994) for periods prior to that date.*

*Performance data is based upon past performance, which is no guarantee of future results. The investment return and principal value of an investment will fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be higher or lower than the performance data quoted. Please call 1-800-811-0535 to obtain performance data as of the most recent month-end. The Fund imposes a 2% redemption fee on shares held less than 60 days. Performance data does not reflect the redemption fee. If reflected, total returns would be lower.*

*\* The Advisor has entered into a fee deferral/expense reimbursement agreement through 2/28/2020.*

Disappointment over the delay in finalizing the much-anticipated U.S.-China trade deal hurt investor sentiment and pushed international equity prices lower during the review period. Belying expectations about a quick settlement after the positive G-20 meeting, the heightened rhetoric from both sides suggested further hardening of their negotiating positions. Meanwhile, the decline in global trade volumes continued to weaken manufacturing output across most major economies though the services sector remained relatively resilient. To counter the slowdown, central banks in both developed and emerging countries have stepped up their monetary easing measures. The European Central Bank is restarting asset purchases while the Bank of Japan said it will consider additional measures later this year. Industrial commodity prices remained soft during the third quarter while crude oil prices surged briefly in response to an attack on Saudi Arabian production facilities.

### FUND REVIEW

Defensive sectors such as healthcare, consumer staples and utilities outperformed during a third quarter that was more volatile than the first half of the year. The technology sector also remained in favor as earnings growth continues to be resilient. Cyclical sectors such as energy, materials and industrials were hurt by concerns about slower growth while interest rate uncertainties and weaker expected credit demand negatively affected the financials sector.

Weak stock selection in the consumer discretionary, financials and communication services sectors detracted the most from the Fund's relative returns when compared to its benchmark during the review period. Higher allocation to materials as well as being underweight the utilities sector also hurt relative returns. Stock selection was effective in the consumer staples and healthcare sectors, while higher allocation to the technology sector was beneficial. At the country level, selection effect was positive in China, Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Taiwan.

The Fund continues to maintain a relatively higher exposure to sectors that are more sensitive to economic trends, such as materials and industrials. Though these sectors tend to lag during defensive

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market environments, we believe the fundamentals of these holdings are healthy and valuations are relatively inexpensive. The Fund is also retaining a higher exposure to the technology sector as several holdings continue to see stable growth that supports current valuations. Financials sector valuations are also attractive, while offering relatively high dividend yields.

The Fund's higher allocation to emerging markets, 32.8% average weight for the quarter compared to the benchmark's 25.7%, detracted from returns during the quarter, though stock selection remained effective. Expected earnings growth for the emerging markets next year is stronger than the developed markets. If the external headwinds, especially the trade frictions, subside, we believe the earnings recovery in emerging markets could be more robust in the coming year.

#### TOP AND BOTTOM PERFORMING STOCKS DURING Q3 2019

Top Performers	Average Weight %	Total Return %	Contribution to Return %
Taiwan Semiconductor	2.0	19.36	0.36
M3	1.2	31.74	0.32
Kweichow Moutai	1.9	12.48	0.26
Treasury Wine Estates	1.1	20.90	0.21
SMC Corporation	1.0	14.83	0.16

  

Bottom Performers	Average Weight %	Total Return %	Contribution to Return %
BHP Group	1.9	-11.54	-0.24
HDFC Bank	1.4	-11.83	-0.24
Konecranes	0.4	-24.02	-0.23
Kering	1.4	-13.97	-0.21
SoftBank Group	1.6	-9.83	-0.21

#### TOP TEN HOLDINGS

Company	Weight
Taiwan Semiconductor	2.2%
Kweichow Moutai Co., Ltd.	2.1%
Royal Dutch Shell plc Class B	1.9%
Ping An Insurance	1.9%
BHP Group Ltd.	1.8%
BP plc	1.7%
CSL Limited	1.6%
Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.	1.5%
Alibaba Group Holding ADR	1.5%
Lukoil PJSC ADR	1.5%

**Total Number of Holdings: 100**  
**Top 10 Holdings Weight: 17.7%**

**Taiwan Semiconductor**, the leading global manufacturer of chipsets used in cellphones and other devices, contributed the most to returns during the quarter on signs of a healthy demand rebound. **M3**, a Japanese provider of healthcare analytics and other services, gained on strong earnings as well as inclusion in the major domestic market index. Chinese alcoholic spirits manufacturer **Kweichow Moutai** advanced as it continued to see strong demand growth and pricing power. **Treasury Wine**, an Australian wine maker, advanced on expectations of sales volume gains in overseas markets. **SMC Corporation**, a Japanese industrial equipment manufacturer, outperformed on expectations of improving demand and stable margins.

**BHP Group**, the leading global mining group, detracted the most from Fund returns for the period as iron ore prices corrected from multi-year highs seen earlier in 2019. **HDFC Bank** lagged after the previous quarter's gains on concerns that an economic slowdown in India could crimp demand for consumer credit. However, HDFC Bank is expected to be one of the largest beneficiaries of the recent corporate tax cut in India. **Konecranes**, a leading manufacturer of elevators and cranes, was hurt by lower than expected revenues and cost savings for the previous quarter and was sold. **Kering**, owner of luxury brands including Gucci, was negatively affected by softer than forecast revenue growth. Japanese technology and telecom holding company **SoftBank** underperformed as proposed initial public offerings (IPO's) from some of its portfolio companies such as WeWork received tepid response from investors. SoftBank was sold during the quarter.

The Fund's exposure to the utilities sector was increased with the purchase of **Enel** in Europe and **Guangdong Investment** in China. We believe both companies offer stable earnings growth with relatively low regulatory risks when compared to other companies in the sector. **Largan Precision**, the leading supplier of cellphone cameras, was added as it could benefit from stronger replacement demand for premium cellphones. The Fund's exposure to European financials was broadened with the addition of insurer **AXA** as well as exchange operator **Euronext**. Thai bank **Kasikornbank** and **Exide Industries**, an automotive battery manufacturer in India, were sold as they continue to face lower earnings. Consumer staples group **Reckitt Benckiser** was sold as its earnings growth has lagged peers

and the recent leadership change has created uncertainties. The Fund also exited Mexican cement producer **Cemex** as the company has failed to grow earnings and reduce leverage.

## OUTLOOK

Despite the more aggressive public posturing, we expect the U.S. and China to move towards a temporary trade truce that should reduce short-term economic growth risks for both countries. It is now evident that the protracted trade standoff has hurt both the U.S. and Chinese economies, though the negative impact on the U.S. has become manifest only recently. Given the seemingly intractable positions on key issues such as market access and intellectual property protections, as well as domestic political compulsions on both sides, a comprehensive deal appears less likely at this time. Nevertheless, an agreement to avoid further import tariffs and continue negotiations should help prevent further declines in trade volumes and revive investor sentiment.

Similarly, it is possible that the European Union and the British government will reach a compromise to delay Brexit beyond the current October-end deadline. A mechanism to avoid customs controls at the Irish border, without the U.K. accepting EU trade standards, remains elusive. However, given the potential disruption a no-deal Brexit could cause to the already weakened European economies, both sides seemingly have enough incentives to compromise. This will allow time for a clearer political mandate to emerge in the U.K., most likely after a general election, about the country's future relations with the EU.

Governments and central banks are likely to continue their fiscal and monetary measures to prevent further economic slowdown. Despite their persistent reluctance, it is possible that political pressure will force policy makers in Continental Europe to consider increased fiscal spending to strengthen domestic demand. Emerging market central banks have been more aggressive in lowering interest rates this year and select countries have also initiated fiscal measures. Against this backdrop, we believe international equity valuations remain inexpensive at less than 13 times next year's forecast earnings for the MSCI All Country World ex US Index. Earnings and cash flows for the benchmark constituents are expected to grow around 9% each next year, with a dividend yield of over 3.5%.

Thank you for investing in the Thomas White International Fund.

**Mutual fund investing involves risk. Principal loss is possible. Investing in international markets may involve additional risks, such as social and political instability, market illiquidity, exchange-rate fluctuations, a high level of volatility and limited regulation. These risks are greater for emerging markets. Investments in small and mid cap companies involve additional risks such as limited liquidity and greater volatility.**

**Earnings growth is not representative of the fund's future performance.**

*You should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses of the Fund carefully before investing. For a statutory or summary prospectus containing this and other information, please call 1-800-811-0535 or visit [www.thomaswhitefunds.com](http://www.thomaswhitefunds.com). Read it carefully before investing.*

Opinions expressed are those of the Thomas White Funds and are subject to change, are not intended to be a forecast of future events, a guarantee of future results, nor investment advice.

Fund holdings are subject to change at any time and are not recommendations to buy or sell any security.

Cash Flow is the incomings and outgoings of cash, representing the operating activities of an organization.

Dividend Yield: Dividend yield is the ratio of a company's annual dividend compared to its share price.

The G-20 (or Group of Twenty) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union. Although membership is generally based on the size of each member's economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product, this is not an absolute criteria. The organization has stated that "In a forum such as the G-20, it is particularly important for the number of countries involved to be restricted and fixed to ensure the effectiveness and continuity of its activity. There are no formal criteria for G-20 membership and the composition of the group has remained unchanged since it was established. In view of the objectives of the G-20, it was considered important that countries and regions of systemic significance for the international financial system be included. Aspects such as geographical balance and population representation also played a major part."

<sup>1</sup>Total return includes reinvestment of dividends and capital gains and reflects fee waivers/reimbursements, in the absence of which total returns would have been lower.

<sup>2</sup>The MSCI All Country World ex U.S. Index is a free float-adjusted market capitalization-weighted index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of both developed and emerging markets. The index is unmanaged and returns assume the reinvestment of dividends. It is not possible to invest directly in an index.

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