The "Soft (and Smart) Power" of Influence:

China's New Diplomatic Rhetoric in the 21st Century

MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

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ABSTRACT

The concept of soft power has recently become more integrated in China's diplomatic strategy and foreign policy. China's utilization of hard power only is insufficient if it wishes to be an active player on the international stage. The country needs to employ soft power to stimulate its influences and leadership in world politics. This study focuses on the argument that soft power can play a significant role in shaping China's charm image among other countries. It also discusses that China has employed various tools of soft power's sources including communication and mass media, Chinese culture, language, arts, aids, trades and investments to promote its influences abroad. Through these resources, China utilizes a combination of soft power and public diplomacy unique to itself. This new diplomatic rhetoric supports China's interest in using soft power comes from its demanding national interests. These national interests include trying to secure a peaceful environment for its economic growth, to accommodate for its increasing energy needs, and also to minimise the influence of other powers, particularly the United States in the advent of the 21st century. With the U.S. President Donald J. Trump at the forefront of current events in 2018, what does China's soft power mean for its future? How do we characterise its new diplomatic rhetoric?

INTRODUCTION

Approximately twenty years ago, Joseph S. Nye Jr., a professor at Harvard University coined the term 'soft power' and defined this concept as "the ability [for a country] to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. [Similarly], a country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values, and policies" (2008). Nye explains that "soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. It is leading by example and attracting others to do what you want" (Kurlantzick, 2007). This defining moment has then entered and shaped foreign policy discourse.

In the advent of the 21st century, the rise of East Asian nations such as Japan, South Korea, and the People's Republic of China at the global level is a subject of interest to all in an international order that was predominantly occidental. Since the middle of the 1990s, China has started to emerge as an international power, an ambitious nation with global foreign policy strategies. Many would even question if China could become the first nation since the fall of the Soviet Union that would challenge the United States' hegemonic status in the international realm (Kurlantzick, 2007). With the rise of China at the forefront of international relations, one cannot help but question the origins of the nation's increased level of influence: is it its hard power measured in military weapons and economic strength, or is it its soft power? China represents a fascinating case of study as its government's domestic and foreign policies publicly dictate soft power as a goal to become an important global player. The transformation from a threat to opportunity, from danger to benefactor allowed China to suggest to the world that it can be a great power. This change in China's image is due to a variety of factors, some of them beyond Beijing's control. Nonetheless, it is largely due to China's growing soft power, which has emerged as the "most potent weapon

in Beijing's foreign policy arsenal" (Kurlantzick, 2007). In the early 2000s, China realised that its image mattered more in a system where respect from others is important due to rather troubling and negative foreign polling opinions (Shambaugh, 2016). As we have witnessed with the hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympics or the implementation of Confucius institutes around the world as well as other practices, China is ready to set the stage for its global image and international prestige based on what it deemed to be soft power practices. The attractiveness that Nye defined could be a nation's branding portrayed through different means which include a country's popular and elite culture, its government-funded programs intended to influence public opinion abroad, its business' actions abroad, international perception of its government's policies, and the gravitational pull of the nation's economic strength, among other factors (Kurlantzick, 2007). Interestingly, Kurlantzick (2007) suggests that a government's broad strategies can boost its soft power and it is possible that an authoritarian government may be better able to direct coordinated strategies than a democratic one.

This major research paper seeks to understand the discourse of soft power and diplomacy in the Chinese government's new diplomatic narratives and analyse the role of soft power in China's foreign policy strategy. With the emergence of East Asian nations and especially of China at the front line of international politics, what does soft power mean in China's diplomacy approach and foreign policy? Specifically, is there a Chinese notion of soft power different than what Nye defined? If yes, what is then the Chinese soft power? Debates have emerged questioning whether China's renewed diplomatic strategies are characterised as soft power or public diplomacy. My hypothesis is supported by Joshua Kurlantzick and Meyer's arguments which justify that in the Chinese context, both the

Chinese government and many nations influenced by China enunciate a broader idea of soft power than did Nye. Likewise, my thesis is also partially endorsed by Liz Economy's argument stating that the lines of soft power and public diplomacy are blurred in the Chinese context. Consequently, the Chinese have defined a notion of soft power unique to its own circumstances which are a tailored-style of diplomacy. To answer the above questions and to justify my position, this major research paper begins by providing a brief synopsis on Nye's soft power literature and the multiple kinds of literature on public diplomacy with an emphasis on their definition and theoretical conceptualizations.

An examination of their conceptual differences will be discussed thereafter. The thematic issues on China include the ways in which the Chinese understand soft power with an overview of its historical evolution amongst Chinese scholars and the narratives that shaped the official government position. Furthermore, the paper defines the various manifestations of Chinese soft power through a cultural and a business perspective to illustrate the government's attempts to promulgate the importance of soft power in a diplomatic strategy. The research follows by explaining various scholars' arguments on soft power versus public diplomacy in the case of Beijing which will endorse my hypothesis that the People's Republic of China has engaged in a soft power is a new diplomatic rhetoric unique to it and influences China's foreign policy strategy at the international level.

UNDERSTANDING 'SOFT POWER' VS. 'PUBLIC DIPLOMACY'

What is 'Soft Power'?

Before delving into the rhetoric of 'soft power', one must understand the encompassing notion of 'power'. "Power is the capacity to do things. At the most general

level, power means the ability to get the outcomes one wants (Nye, 2004). As a matter of fact, there are several methods through which one could influence and affect the behaviour of others. While some may think of power as a narrow concept with command and coercion, others understand that it is possible for an actor or a set of actors to obtain many desired outcomes without commanding nor having much tangible power over others (Nye, 2004).

The notion of 'soft power' was first invented and defined by Joseph S. Nye Jr., University Distinguished Service Professor at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government in the late 1980s. In his book, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Nye posits a perception of power with two facets (2004). He suggests that 'hard power' is a familiar theme for everyone; "military and economic might often get others to change their position. Hard power can rest on inducements ('carrots') or threats ('sticks')" (Nye, 2004). However – what about the times where a government can obtain favourable political outcomes without tangible threats or payoffs? Cue in the 'second face of power': the indirect way of getting what you want from other nations, also known as the 'soft power'.

This tactic of getting others to desire the results you want co-opts people rather than coerces them (Nye, 2004). Consequentially, Nye argues that the theory of power itself has encountered a change of nature (1990). Indeed, there is more to international power and power dynamics between countries than hard power and plain coercion. The theory of soft power suggests that State A can use its intangible resources to charm State B without threatening or coercing. In contrast, hard power means that State A would force state B to do the favour of State A (Arif, 2017). Nonetheless, hard and soft powers are still well

interconnected because they represent both aspects of the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behaviour of others.

Nye distinguishes the differences between them as one of degree: both in the nature of the behaviour and in the tangibility of the resources (Nye, 2004). There exist multiple types of behaviour between command and co-option that exist along a spectrum – ranging from coercion to economic inducement to agenda-setting to pure attraction (Nye, 2004). In the case of the 'soft power', Nye suggests that "soft power resources tend to be associated with the co-optive end of the spectrum of behaviour" (2004). However, an important distinction ought to be made between soft power and influence. After all, influence can also rest on the hard power of threats whereas soft power moves beyond the simple persuasion or the ability to move people by argument. Per Nye, it is the ability of attraction; and soft power resources are the assets that produce attraction (2004). In fact, political leaders have long recognised the power that comes from the said attraction. In international politics, the resources that produce soft power arise largely from the values an organization or country expresses in its ability to "establish preferences associated with intangible assets such as attractive personality, culture, political values, and institutions, and policies that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority" (Nye, 2004). Although governments may find it difficult to control and employ soft power, it does not, in any case, diminish the importance and relevance of soft power in international politics (Nye, 2004). Let us acknowledge the essential features of soft power according to Nye: 1) it is resulted from being liked, respected, trusted, or admired; 2) it is an intangible asset whereby a State can make itself more likeable and more comprehensible through its behaviour and policies;

and 3), the context is crucial where soft power only accrues when conditions ought to be right.

As discussed previously, a State's soft power rests primarily on three expressions as would say Nye: "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad) and its foreign policies" (this is when they are depicted as legitimate and having moral authority) (2004). Nye describes culture as "the set of values and practices that create meaning for a society" (2004). Literature, art, and education are the manifestations of high culture appealing to elites whereas popular culture focuses on mass entertainment. "When a country's culture includes universal values and its policies promote values and interests that others share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes because of the relationship of attraction and duty it creates" (Nye, 2004). More importantly, Nye warns us about the potential confusion between soft power and popular cultural power, as many analysts would think. Cultural resources are not to be treated as the behaviour of attraction although there is no denying that popular culture often is a resource that produces soft power (Nye, 2004). American popular brands may come into one's mind such as McDonald's or Coca-Cola, but Nye asserts that commerce is only one of the varied ways in which culture can be transmitted; personal contacts, visits and exchanges, ideas and values disseminated through foreign education, for example, are other methods to share one country's culture (2004).

Domestic and foreign government policies portray another conjoined source of soft power. Nye suggests that government politics at home or abroad can reinforce or tarnish a country's soft power: "policies that appear hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to the opinion of others, or based on a narrow approach to national interests can undermine soft power"

(2004). As well, the values a government champions in its behaviour at home (for example, democracy), in international institutions (working with others), and in foreign policy (promoting peace and human rights) strongly affect the preferences of others: "government can attract or repel others by the influence of their example" (Nye, 2004). However, soft power does not belong to the government in the same degree that hard power does. Nye writes, "Some hard power assets such as armed forces are strictly governmental; others are inherently national, such as oil and mineral reserves, and many can be transferred to collective control, such as the civilian air fleet that can be mobilised in an emergency" (2004). On the other hand, soft power resources are separate from the government and are only partly responsive to its purpose (Nye, 2004).

Power in a global information age is less tangible and less coercive (Nye, 2004). In a diverse world of advanced democracies, authoritarian rulers, preindustrial agricultural economies and such, military, economic and soft power all remain relevant types of power in different degrees of different relationships (see Table 1) (Nye, 2004). Amongst these three types of power, Nye describes that attraction and agenda-setting are included in State behaviours; values, culture, policies and institutions fit within the category of primary currencies; and finally, public diplomacy, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy fall into the range of government policies (2004).

More importantly, Nye emphasizes that the soft power that is becoming more and more relevant "in the information age, is in part, a social and economic by-product rather than solely a result of official government action" (2004). Withal, soft power remains an important element in the mix as the current economic and social trends of information revolution continue to transform and shape the world.

Table 1. Types of Powers in Different Degrees of Different Relationships

	State Behaviours	Primary Currencies	Government Policies
Military Power	• Coercion • Protection	• Threats • Forces	• Coercive diplomacy • Wars • Alliances
Economic Power	• Coercion • Inducement	• Sanctions • Payments	• Sanctions • Aid • Bribery
Soft Power	• Attraction • Agenda-Setting	• Values • Cultures • Policies • Institutions	• Public Diplomacy • Bilateral & Multilateral Diplomacy

What is 'Public Diplomacy'?

From Nye's table (Table 1), one can observe that public diplomacy is one of the many government policies that a State can undertake to engage in its soft power. Nonetheless, there have been academic debates and discussions concerning the distinctions or the intertwined connections between soft power and public diplomacy (Nye, 2008; Servaes, 2012; Buzan, 2016).

Standard or traditional style of diplomacy is viewed as when one government actively engages with its counterpart: it is the way in which government leaders communicate with each other at the highest level — an elite version known to the general public (University of Southern California, web.). In contrast, public diplomacy puts its emphasis on the ways in which a nation (or a multilateral organization like the United Nations) communicates with citizens in other societies (University of Southern California, web.). Similarly, not only does public diplomacy deal with the government, more

importantly, it deals with non-government individuals and organizations. The actual term 'public diplomacy' was coined in the middle of the 1960s by a Foreign Service Officer, Edmund Gullion (Melissen, 2005). However, it is worthy to note that a unified and single definition of public diplomacy does not currently exist. Multiple definitions of public diplomacy exist in the literature of international politics: Elton Gilboa, a professor and director of Communication Studies at Bar-Ilan University, stipulates that in 1980, public diplomacy was described as a "direct communication with foreign people, with the aim of affecting their thinking, and ultimately that of their government" (2008). Likewise, Paul Sharp, a distinguished diplomacy studies scholar at the University of Minnesota, defines public diplomacy as "the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented" (Melissen, 2005).

But later studies have discerned problems with such definitions: by not identifying the type of actors involved in its discourse, scholars and policy analysts failed to holistically describe public diplomacy (Hukil, 2015). The response was due to the widely-held belief that only nation-states engaged in such behaviours. As a result, Hans Tuch, an American diplomat, provided a succinct and workable definition of public diplomacy by identifying its key actors and content. He described "public diplomacy as a government's way of communicating with foreign publics to achieve an understanding of its country's ideas, culture, institutions and national policies" (Melissen, 2005).

For many academicians, public diplomacy is a mere propagandist strategy and the term "public diplomacy" is often used interchangeably with propaganda (Melissen, 2005). In other cases, public diplomacy is also seen as an "outgrowth of propaganda", categorizing

it as a concept within propaganda (Melissen, 2005). The substantial affiliation between public diplomacy and propaganda prevails because many views "public diplomacy as influencing foreign audiences by communicating ideas and values that serve the interests of the propagandists" (Hukil, 2015). In recent years, many types of research have been conducted on the front of public diplomacy by using propagandist theories, models, and methodologies (Gilboa, 2008). One academic historian, David Welch theorizes that "propaganda is the deliberate attempt to influence the opinions of an audience through the transmission of ideas and values for the specific purpose, consciously designed to serve the interest of the propagandists and their political masters, either directly or indirectly" (Melissen, 2005). Yet, these considerations that equal public diplomacy with propaganda seem misconstrued— as Nye argues, public diplomacy is distinctive from propaganda since the latter often lacks credibility (2008). Simple propaganda is historically associated with the manipulation and deceit of foreign publics (Nye, 2008). Conversely, public diplomacy manifests credibility and impartiality. It is a 'two-way street' since public diplomats not only talk to but also listen to what people wish to say (Nye, 2008). As well, good public diplomacy involves developing long-term relationships with the host society and creating an enabling environment for government policies (Nye, 2008).

Nye's research is well-known in the aspect of public diplomacy. Three dimensions of public diplomacy should be discussed to grasp a better understanding of what it entitles. As cited in Leonard (2002), the mix of "direct government information with long-term cultural relationships varies with three dimensions of public diplomacy and all three are important" (Nye, 2008). Daily communications illustrate the first and most immediate dimension of public diplomacy (Nye, 2008). It involves explaining the context of domestic and foreign

policy decisions and after which, the State devotes attention to what and how to tell the press with a focus on the domestic press (Nye, 2008). Following that, developing a set of simple themes, like in political advertising campaigns which revolve around strategic communication, conveying the second dimension of public diplomacy (Nye, 2008). The campaign "plans symbolic events and communications over the course of the next year to reinforce central themes or to advance a particular government policy" (Nye, 2008). Finally, the third aspect is the development of longstanding relationships with key individuals over many years through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels (Nye, 2008). Every dimension of public diplomacy is a critical player in catering and promoting an attractive image of a country that can improve its prospects for obtaining its desired outcomes (Nye, 2008).

Differences Between 'Soft Power' and 'Public Diplomacy'

Naturally, with a wide array of definitions, understandings of both concepts and especially similarities between soft power and public diplomacy, one cannot help but wonder whether differences exist between these two notions. In truth, several scholars view public diplomacy as an instrument of soft power; it is a tool that national governments utilize to mobilize intangible resources to attract foreign public and not uniquely their state representatives (Nye, 2008). In a global information age, scholars also recognize public diplomacy that comprises a soft component. States draw such attraction and enticement through broadcasting, educational and cultural exchange programs, public information and, political action (Smyth, 2001). As discussed previously, Nye is also amongst the academicians who argue that public diplomacy falls into the realms of soft

power. Understanding the relationship between soft power and public diplomacy rests on the crucial distinction between "power measured in behavioural outcomes and power measured in terms of resources" (Nye, 2008). In the realms of international politics, the resources that achieve soft power arise largely "from the values an organization or state expresses in its culture, in the examples, it sets by its internal practices and policies, and in the way, it handles its relations with others" (Nye, 2008). Government utilizes public diplomacy as an instrument to mobilize these resources to communicate with and attract the public of other countries rather than merely their governments. Public diplomacy that degenerates into propaganda not only fails to convince but can undermine a country's soft power (Nye, 2008).

The opposition refutes that public diplomacy and soft power are two distinct and separate concepts. David Shambaugh, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at the George Washington University argues that almost every government in the world and its foreign ministry engage in public diplomacy and its attempt to make the "government's views and policies are known more widely abroad and to persuade other public – and this is why it is called 'public diplomacy' – in the virtue [of said] government's policies" (2016, video). His argument is supported by quoting Nye who believed that soft power is when others want to emulate, respect you, and value your political system and want to be like you. Soft power comes rather from society (bottom-up approach) and not entirely from the government (Shambaugh, 2016, video). Mixing both positions, Liz Economy, Director for Asia Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, suggests that for most countries, there is a clear divide between soft power and public diplomacy. The former is organic and inherent within the political culture: the values and ideals are

embraced by the population at large that are attractive. The art, music and, culture come from the creativity of the people. Thus, it can be suggested that it is the government's task to promote that organic soft power through public diplomacy (2016, video). Therefore, Economy interplays both sides of the argument and acknowledges the component of public diplomacy in a country's general soft power practices.

After considerations of different positions and definitions on both concepts, explaining the Chinese case and how the country became interested in soft power and how it applies soft power or its new diplomatic rhetoric will be of interest to support my argument that China is fostering its tailored style of diplomacy beyond Nye's original conception of what soft power is.

THE CASE OF CHINA: HOW 'SOFT POWER' BECAME A NATIONAL DISCOURSE

China's interest in soft power arose in the late 1990s. Firstly, the rapid development of China's economy provided confidence in China's economic position in the global market (Arif, 2017). Secondly, Arif suggests that China understood that it was important to develop its relationship with neighbouring countries especially Asian countries. Finally, China has realised that using hard power will not achieve its goals in some issues, as for example, in the South China Sea dispute with the Philippines (Gil, 2008). Chinese influence has increased in Asia over the last few decades through developing economic trades, providing aids to Asian countries and creating regional organizations. Cho & Jeong (2008) state that "besides increases in economic and military power, the strengthening of China's soft power has been pivotal in expanding the country's regional influence has risen as a potential

competitor to the United States in the Asian region". The U.S. has spread its influence to countries around the world, especially in Asian countries through mutual trades and alliances with other means of soft power. This compels Chinese leaders to rethink China's image at least on a regional scale as a start.

Chinese leaders have realised that being a great power or even a powerful state in the region requires having hard power and soft power as well (Arif, 2017). It is obvious that combining both powers allow states to enjoy flexibility in its relations with other countries and maintain advantageous positions in international competition (Chen et al., 2009). Applying different kinds of power including soft power would help China to pursue its national interests: expanding its economic ties with other countries and integrating its market into the global markets. It also allows China to be more involved in the policy of developing countries and to make new alliances and regional associations in the Asia Pacific, Africa and Latin America (McGiffe, 2009). In today's globalised world, through the use of soft power, a country can play an important role in the world economy and international relations. At the end of the scale, using hard power has become more costly and is also unfavourable among societies and international communities. Many people around the world opposed the 2003 American invasion of Iraq due to the gory and bloody consequences of the war (Nye, 2004). Moreover, if China threatens its neighbours, as a result, they will be inclined to make other alliances against China's threat. In contrast, if China uses soft power to attract its neighbours, then neighbouring states will feel less need to balance China's power with equally coercive measures (Nye, 2012). By attracting neighbouring countries, China would reduce the United States' influence in the region.

China's influence from a regional and international perspective has increased remarkably over the past decade. Literatures have pointed out that, besides the increase in economic and military power, the strengthening of China's soft power has been pivotal in expanding the country's regional influence (Lampton, 2005). Beyond its rapid economic growth, China, "by advertising Chinese values and publicizing its culture, has risen as a potential competitor to the United States in the Asian region" (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Scholars have cited other efforts to this end that include the establishment of a 24-hour Chinese TV and radio broadcasting stations targeting Southeast Asia, increased aid to Asian countries, steps to attract international students and promote the study of Chinese language, and active participation in regional multilateral organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Bates & Huang, 2006). The fruits of these diplomatic efforts depict and support the palpable improvement of China's image in the world. Various survey results demonstrate the increase of international affinity for China (Cho & Jeong, 2008). In the survey results published by the Pew Research Center in June 2005, surveyed participants of Asian descents in Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia, Lebanon, Jordan, and India regard the rise of China as positive and believe its economic growth would benefit their countries (2005). Subsequently, the BBC World Service Poll of twenty-two countries conducted from November 2004 to January 2005 also illustrates China's positive image, especially viewed by its neighbours (Cho & Jeong, 2008).

Today, China's interest and research in the area of soft power surpass those of all other countries even including the U.S. (Liu, 2004). As there is currently no consensus on the definition of soft power in China, Chinese translations of soft power vary depending on the various scholars. *Ruanshili* (soft strength), *ruanquanli* (soft force), *ruanliliang* (soft

power), and *ruanguoli* (soft country power) are most frequently used among all the choices (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Chinese researchers and American policy experts advance that interest in soft power has increased dramatically among scholars in China since the 1990s (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Part of the Chinese government's official stance derived from the publication and translation of Nye's book on soft power around 2005-2006 and Nye's work is one of the reasons why the Chinese caught on to the idea of soft power (Shambaugh, 2016, video).

For example, two years after the first publication of Nye's *Bound to Lead* (1990) in a translated Chinese version, the then President Jiang Zemin's chief advisor and former professor at Shanghai's Fudan University, Wang Huning, published an article in the *Fudan University Journal* (1993), stressing the need for China to strengthen its soft power (Liu, 2004). Five years later, Pang Zhongying, a Nankai University professor, published an article in *Strategy and Management* that introduced Nye's soft power theory to the public (Pang, 1997). Moreover, Shen Jiru, a renowned scholar on American studies, called for the strengthening of China's soft power in a 1999 paper in *Outlook Weekly*. In August 2002, the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) held a conference on "The Importance and Influence of Soft Power in U.S. Foreign Policy." Interestingly, criticisms of Nye's theory have arisen claiming that his notion of soft power pertains mainly to the American experience and arguing for a soft power theory tailored to the Chinese situation (Pang, 2005).

The Chinese academia and scholar community acknowledged this concept which became widespread across the country and reached to the desk of the then-Chinese Communist Party leader Hu Jintao. In Hu's era, "top leaders in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have also started to take a greater interest in strengthening China's soft power"

(Cho & Jeong, 2008). It was not until the late 1990s that Chinese intellectuals promulgated soft power theory in relation to Chinese national strategy (Cho & Jeong, 2008). As Chinese national power expanded with rapid economic growth, the global system noticed China's prominent rise and Chinese people were interested in China's place in global affairs (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Contrary to the past, major press media began reporting extensively on global issues; consequently, "active discussions of these issues and on foreign policy occurred not only on the government level but also within civil society" (Cho & Jeong, 2008). These multiplex factors prompted changes in the self-consciousness of Chinese people and in the way the Chinese government viewed itself (Zhang, 2005, p.126).

As discussed previously, international opinion on China also improved with China's decision to maintain a fixed value for its currency, the renminbi (RMB) during the 1997–98 Asian economic crisis contributed to the stabilization of funds for afflicted countries (Lampton, 2005). As a result, Chinese intellectuals have attempted to develop a new national strategy that would assist in China's rise from regional to global power (Cho & Jeong, 2008). The concept of comprehensive national power *(zonghe guoli)* also emerged in the late 1990s; "as soft power gained wider recognition as an important component of comprehensive national power, Chinese scholars regarded the strengthening of China's soft power as a top national objective" (Cho & Jeong, 2008). This appraisal is well documented in Chinese academic research that includes expressions such as "comprehensive national power" and "grand strategy" (*dazhanlüe*) in their publications (Cho & Jeong, 2008,). For instance, in 1999, Huang Shuofeng published the *Theory of Comprehensive National Power*, widely regarded as a pioneering achievement in the field of soft power. In his work, Huang describes the comprehensive national power that encompasses hard power (i.e., economic

power, science and technology power, national defense power, and natural resource power); soft power (i.e., political power, diplomatic power, and cultural and educational power); and coordinating power (i.e., political structures, government leadership, organizational decision-making power, management capabilities, and reform coordination capabilities) (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Huang's volume paved the way for subsequent researches by distinguished Chinese scholars who further developed the study of China's national strategy, including soft power (Cho & Jeong, 2008).

Other scholars have also posited that the rise of a country's power can be mainly assessed by its "comprehensive rise in the national power" (Li & Hong, 2012). Finally, Li (2008) argues that studying the notion of soft power has become a popular topic amongst Chinese scholars; the majority of them accepted Nye's idea and his definition of the term but deviate from Nye's main positions by adding the active role of mass media. They discuss the role of media and communication devices as a significant part of the State's soft power (Cho & Jeong, 2008). The soft power resources employed by China will be analysed further in this paper and the tactics of communication will be discussed as part of China's cultural tools to emulate soft power.

Nevertheless, according to Arif (2017), the subject of soft power in Asian countries has not been widely researched by Western academicians and scholars, although a few publications have been presented in print and online in the past few years. Mingjiang Li conducted a survey in 2008 for published Chinese articles in Chinese periodicals and journals that were collected in a huge database called the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database. He reported that the number of articles published annually with reference to "soft power" in the article text averaged about eight from 1994 to 2000

(2008). This number increased significantly to 53 from 2000 to 2004 and continued to rise to 314 between 2005 and 2007 (Lai & Lu, 2012).

Soft power narratives in China fall broadly into two types: soft power theory as a national development strategy and soft power theory as foreign policy (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Cho and Jeong assert that national development strategies mainly involve discussions on institutional reforms needed for economic development, while foreign policy centres on the establishment of said policy regarding China's rise (2008). Simultaneously, some Chinese scholars highlight the strengthening of soft power as a means of addressing China's domestic problems originating from the blind pursuit of economic growth in recent decades (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Ye Zicheng, a professor at Peking University, advises that China should try to bolster its soft power in the areas of politics, economy, and foreign policy in order to avoid a downfall like its communist compatriot, the Soviet Union (Cho & Jeong, 2008). According to Ye, the Soviet Union collapsed because of the deteriorating soft power which resulted in a decrease of its international influence despite being the strongest military power in the world equal with the U.S. at the time (Cho & Jeong, 2008). He further proposed an "institutional innovation" in all areas (especially in political, economic, and cultural institutions) as a method of increasing China's soft power (Ye, 2003).

Comparatively, Pang Zhongying postulates that soft power, allegedly indispensable for a country to become a global power, is predicated on good governance (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Pang argues that Beijing should administer measures in improving governance such as "socialist democracy, rationalization of economic structure, and efforts to resolve economic inequality and imbalance" (2006). The authors of *China's International Status*

Report 2005, Zhang Youwen and Huang Renwei, scholars at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, introduced for the first time the establishment and strengthening of soft power as one of the criteria to evaluate the increase of China's national power (2005). Zhang and Huang contend that China's soft power increased in 2004 because of its new attempts at the institutional building which include revising the Constitution to protect private property, enhancing the ruling capacity of the CCP, and construction of the legal system (2005).

However, soft power discussions have been conducted mainly on the areas of foreign policy. During Hu Jintao's era, the rhetoric that China must strengthen its soft power, as well as its hard power to develop into a global power, was universal (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Indeed, the term 'soft power' has gained even greater popularity; discussions on soft power are abundant not only in academic papers but also in newspapers and magazines. The introduction of the peaceful rise theory in 2003 helped decisively shape the use of soft power theory into a nationwide trend (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Before Hu's presidency, China had made considerable efforts related to this arsenal although the specific term 'soft power' was not employed (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Apparent examples arise from the "new concept of international politico-economic order," developed from the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence during the Mao Zedong era, which reprehended the international order fashioned in an Americanised way (Cho & Jeong, 2008).

Additional examples include the "new security concept," which questioned traditional security measures (such as the NATO or the U.S.-Japan alliance), and the "responsible power theory," which "argued against the view that China was destructive to the international system and claimed that China was a responsible power accountable for

its actions in international society" (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Before the translation of Nye's work, Chinese leaders went abroad and encountered a predominantly "China Threat Theory" overseas and especially in the United States (Shambaugh, 2016, video). This dominant narrative caused serious concerns as it was not concordant with the Chinese's own position of 'peaceful rise' on the international stage (Shambaugh, 2016, video). Such frameworks proposed the "China opportunity theory" and "China contribution theory," to countermeasure the "China threat theory" and "China collapse theory" (Cho & Jeong, 2008). The soft power rhetoric enjoyed greater systemization via these attempts of which the proposal of the "peaceful rise theory" and "harmonious world" as well as the strengthening of public diplomacy are prominent cases during the Hu era (Cho & Jeong, 2008).

Hence, soft power as a Chinese diplomatic strategy has taken two directions: one stream articulates extensively the coping with the alleged American soft power strategy through appropriate countermeasures while the others advocate foreign policy measures that will allow China to emerge as a global power (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Chinese scholars vigilant about the negative effects of American soft power on China propose to confront this issue in a direct fashion (Cho & Jeong, 2008). The focus of their publications stems from the fact that America's soft power strategy was critical in the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Cho & Jeong, 2008).

Shortly after become head of the CCP in 2012, Hu's successor, Xi Jinping declared that "[China] must become a cultural superpower […] increase China's soft power and formulate a national narrative that is attractive and that can better communicate Chinese messages to the rest of the world" (Meyer, 2018). According to Meyer (2018), President Xi's speech expresses a finding: an incomplete picture of China today but also a motive with

ambition: reconquer the strength of attraction of China that resonates within the Jesuits when the latter arrived in the country towards the end of the sixteenth century. In that time, Chinese culture shined in all its glory throughout Asia where all societies embodied influence of Confucius principles: a government that is concerned with its citizens, harmonious society, filial piety, and respect of rituals and traditions. In its reach of influence, the Middle Kingdom was a regional model and did not feel the need to promote its values due to their natural reach within the region (Meyer, 2018). The concept of soft power did not exist at that time, but it was the peak of China's so-called *soft power* where it does not impose its will but rather influence people's minds.

In the era of information and globalization, the strengthening of America's cultural hegemony and the spread of American values through Internet and media broadcasts are great risk factors for China (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Cho and Jeong write that the Chinese academic community wary of the American risk regards this matter as America's attempt at peaceful evolution (*heping yanbian*). To counteract these attempts, these sceptical scholars urge the Chinese government to strengthen education in socialist ideology and institute policies in order to protect China's traditional and cultural heritage (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Hence more, it is no surprise that these researchers "consider Nye's soft power theory as a reflection of America's desire to maintain hegemonic leadership in the post-Cold War era and are especially critical of Nye's December 2005 article in the *Wall Street Journal*" (Cho & Jeong, 2008). As discussed earlier, Nye cautions against the rapid increase of China's soft power in Asia and calls for America to directly confront China's rise (Cho & Jeong, 2008). The scholars believe that "Nye overestimated China's soft power and claim that Nye's theory amounts to nothing more than a "soft power version of the China threat

theory," which they say provides the U.S. with an excuse to restrain China's development more forcefully in the post-Cold War era" (Zhang, 2006).

Notwithstanding, Chinese researchers who study international politics generally maintain the narrative that strengthening soft power is needed strategically in order for China to become a prominent international player (Cho & Jeong, 2008). These scholars attest that the emergence of China as a regional power is already an established fact recognised by the international community because the country's economic growth by itself seems to prove this claim (Cho & Jeong, 2008). On that account, China's diplomatic objectives have "changed along with the expansion of national power and the rise in its global leadership" (Cho & Jeong, 2008). With its admission into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001, China's past diplomatic objective of entering the global community has been obtained (Cho & Jeong, 2008). Currently, Beijing's main objective rests on "the right to speak in the process of making new international rules and conceiving major regional and global policies" (Cho & Jeong, 2008). In this regard, Cho and Jeong address that the Chinese government now faces two new challenges: the first is to clear away from the "China threat theory" and to persuade international society to accept China's rise as an established and desirable fact (Cho & Jeong, 2008). The second objection is to secure the right to voice China's opinion in the global community by shouldering international responsibilities. Scholars assert that these two tasks are closely related to the strengthening of China's soft power.

In light of these goals, most Chinese scholars come to agree that in order for China to develop itself into a respected global player, it needs to invigorate its soft power strategies. Quoted in Hu's speech at the Seventeenth Chinese Communist Party Congress in 2007, 'soft

power' strategies are slowly peeking through the Chinese government's pursued interests as a rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Nye himself describes this moment as the turning point of a renewed Chinese investment in matters of international diplomacy (2016, video). Despite that Chinese academia produced work in citations and writings related to soft power before Hu's speech, the pivotal moment of 2007 secured the attention that the Chinese government will engage towards it. It reflected on China that the nation was beginning to move from being an emerging or regional power to a global power (Economy, 2016, video). Originally, economic and military powers were sought after by nations that aspire to become a global power. However, the realization that global image, adoration, and admiration emulated from its soft power mattered propelled China to pursue a comprehensive form of power that welcomed components of soft power in its diplomatic rhetoric.

SOFT POWER RESOURCES: THE TOOLS OF CULTURE

As China began to build a global strategy, "it also has developed more sophisticated tools of influence, which it deploys across the world", Kurlantzick writes (2007). Similarly, Lee writes that "non-traditional and non-material soft power sources such as culture, political values, the capability to enact international rules and agenda, and a foreign policy based on moral authority and legitimacy are emerging as important sources of power" (2008). Moreover, the Chinese government has exercised a concerted and focused foreign policy for employing soft power in its favour through a combination of foreign aid, investment, economic assistance and various tourism and educational programmes (Lee, 2008). China utilizes culture apparatus, related to Chinese culture and arts and language

and ethnicity. China's growing economic allows for Beijing to deploy these tools – independent from trade and investment – as it is costly to hold cultural summits or to send language teachers to other nations (Kurlantzick, 2007).

Economy describes the implementation of the Chinese soft power through three pillars. The first-part strategy is to develop the content of Chinese soft power with some political elements such as values, ideologies that can cohere but are also able to attract a foreign public. Over the past decades, the thematic of 'peaceful development', 'harmonious societies', 'Chinese dream', and 'one belt one road' – which is the recreation of ancient silk road that centered around China – all fostered a political culture that the Chinese government aims to appeal to its domestic and foreign public. The second-part strategy is one that the public is familiar with: popular culture. The ideas of music, literature, Chinese traditional medicine, Confucius himself, and all elements considered positive that originate from China throughout its history (Economy, 2016, video). Finally, the third pillar is to defend the vehicle by which China can project its soft power. The country has invested billions of dollars in its domestic media to project overseas. Confucius institutes around the world are another aspect of promulgating Chinese soft power through which they disseminate Chinese culture and teach the Chinese language. Another instrument of projection is the implementation of leading think-tanks to get Chinese ideas out to the world to counteract a dominant Western narrative (Economy, 2016, video). With the resonance of cultural narratives in the discussion of Chinese soft power, the critical analysis of its cultural strategies is in order if we wish to understand what China is doing in the international system.

Strengthening Communication through the Media

According to a study by the scholar Rumi Aoyama, since the end of the Cold War, China has moved away from a pure propaganda form towards a more nuanced public relation (Kurlantzick, 2007). It even changed the name of the Party's Propaganda Department to the Publicity Department. In the post–Cold War era, Aoyama found, Chinese public diplomacy has five main objectives:

> *"Publicizing China's assertions to the outside world, forming a desirable image of the state, issuing rebuttals to distorted overseas reports about China, improving the international environment surrounding China, and exerting influence on the policy decisions of foreign countries" (Kurlantzick, 2007).*

Since China announced the idea that peaceful development would be the core of its foreign policy, its public diplomacy has taken on a major undertaking for Beijing: selling the idea that China will not be a threat to other nations (Kurlantzick, 2007). China's strategic efforts reinforce the concept of peaceful development, efforts through expanding the international reach of its media (Kurlantzick, 2007). A huge amount of money, estimated to billions de USD, was spent on broadcasting, papers and on turning Xinhua News Agency, CCTV, China Daily into global media outlets (Nye, 2016, video). Kurlantzick writes that the Chinese government has "upgraded the Chinese newswire Xinhua, created new overseas editions of the People's Daily newspaper", established a formal briefing system at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs so that journalists can hold modern press conferences, and expanded and professionalised the international broadcasting of CCTV, Chinese state television (2007, p.63). This expansion included hiring Western-looking news anchors and making CCTV news's style more refined and polished. Satellite television subscribers abroad now can receive a package of Chinese channels; for example, Spanish-speaking viewers can watch CCTV's newly promoted Spanish-language channel (Kurlantzick, 2007).

On the other hand, although Xinhua News originally delivered news back to Chinese publications – and to the Party – it has now uplifted in newspapers circulation across the developing world and even in American news sites such as Google search engine (Kurlantzick, 2007). Xinhua has accrued its credibility as it also gets cited by scholars as a real news source, just like another newswire. Nonetheless, Xinhua is not Reuters or another private corporation: it remains run by China's State Council, essentially an organ of the government; the Xinhua office even served as the de facto Chinese embassy in Hong Kong before the handover in 1997 (Kurlantzick, 2007). This prominent news agency receives orders from the Party's Publicity Department, "exhibiting the kind of reverence for government spin that the White House could only dream about" (Kurlantzick, 2007). Xinhua's reporters receive training and sessions heavy in seminars on the necessary role of the Communist Party. Its journalists also still provide a kind of intelligence information service for top Chinese leaders. According to the global watchdog Reporters Without Borders, "hand-picked journalists, who are regularly indoctrinated, produce reports for the Chinese media that give the official point of view and others" -- these reports are often classified 'internal reference' for the country's leaders as Xinhua remains at the heart of a system established by the Chinese Communist Party (Kurlantzick, 2007).

Education as a Promotional Agency

Promotion of Chinese-culture and Chinese-language studies is a major component of China's new diplomatic strategy. A deputy to the National People's Congress told the China Daily that promoting the use of the Chinese language will contribute to spreading Chinese culture and increasing China's global influence (Xing, 2006). "It can help build up our

national strength and should be taken as a way to develop our country's soft power," Hu said (Xing, 2006). Around the world, the Chinese government has launched several measures to increase the teaching of Chinese. Beijing provides funding of what it calls the Confucius Institutes, Chinese-language and culture schools created at leading local universities in countries from Kenya to South Korea to Uzbekistan to Australia. China plans to open at least one hundred Confucius Institutes around the world within the next five years (Kurlantzick, 2007). With 475 centres operating in 120 countries, the Confucius Institutes have established footholds worldwide (Shambaugh, 2016, video). The Confucius Institutes are reminiscent of the British Council or the Alliance Française, which have helped promote British and French cultural brands without being explicitly linked, in people's minds, to the Whitehall or the Elysée Palace (Kurlantzick, 2007). Interesting enough, the name Confucius Institute portrays no link to communism ideals or to the Communist Party itself as it repudiates Mao – the chairman had tried to wipe out the teaching of Confucian beliefs during his leadership (Kurlantzick, 2007). The instigation of the Confucius Institute around the world to portray Chinese traditional culture is an important instrument to build up the educational soft power.

Should local universities desire China studies beyond the Confucius Institute curriculum due to lack of resources, they can call upon the Chinese Ministry of Education to lead intensive short courses for local Chinese-language teachers, or even send Chinese teachers for a period (Kurlantzick, 2007). For instance, in Cambodia, Beijing works closely with Chinese provincial governments to deploy hundreds of instructors to Phnom Penh's Chinese schools, sparking requests for still more instructors from China. Similarly, in countries like Indonesia, Argentina, Kenya, and Thailand, China's Ministry of Education has

begun “dispatching groups of language teachers for one- and two-year stints, which are normally at least partially funded by the Ministry” (Kurlantzick, 2007). The Chinese government has also attempted to push instruction in Mandarin and in Chinese culture in overseas primary schools, partly by signing agreements with countries like Thailand to help integrate the Chinese language into public schools’ curricula, and partly by helping students in poor nations like Cambodia attend private local Chinese-language primary schools (Kurlantzick, 2007). The Chinese Ministry of Education has vowed to help train one thousand Mandarin teachers per year and to offer other Chinese language resources. Generally, these private schools receive some assistance from mainland Chinese governmental and private sources: the Chinese newspapers in Cambodia are filled with reports of small grants given to Cambodian Chinese language schools from mainland Chinese governments and language associations (Kurlantzick, 2007). Because the Chinese-language schools in Cambodia receive this outside funding, their tuition fees are lower than many public schools, where impoverished (and potentially corrupt) Cambodian teachers demand excess payments, in addition to their salaries, just to teach classes in general (Marks, 2000). Cambodian parents thus view the Chinese-language schools as providing a quality, less corrupt education.

While promoting Chinese studies in other nations, Beijing also has tried to lure more foreign students to China (Cao, 2004). The Ministry of Education advertised Chinese universities abroad, creating new scholarship programs for students from the developing world, loosening visa policies for foreign students, and increasing spending to lure elite foreign scholars from the West to teach in China, thereby upgrading China’s university system (Kurlantzick, 2007). About 300,000 foreign students now study in Chinese

universities (the majority learning the Chinese language), with additional numbers in vocational colleges. Every year, the China Scholarship Council offers around an astonishing number of 20,000 scholarships to foreign students (Kurlantzick, 2007). At the same time, Chinese government ministries administer a variety of short courses for officials, diplomats, and military officers from developing countries. These classes do teach students tangible skills, but they also try to win hearts and minds along the way (Kurlantzick, 2007).

> *"Beijing has focused intensely on Chinese-born scholars working in the West, creating national programs named 'Strengthening the Country Through Human Talent' (rencai qiang guo), charging the Finance Ministry to make funds available to entice these Chinese-born scholars, or haigui pai, to return, and pushing select Chinese universities to use 20% of their government funding on hiring scholars from abroad" (Kurlantzick, 2007).*

Returnees have been also very welcomed by the Chinese elites: Hu Jintao himself announced that those who return would be "irreplaceable" in China today. The incentives may be working: in places like Cambodia, a feeder system has been implemented (Kurlantzick, 2007). Students who do well in China-backed primary schools in Cambodia often can obtain assistance from China to continue studies in the People's Republic, in either middle school, high school, or university (Marks, 2000). It is important to note that China has opened around five hundred of its primary and middle schools for foreign students. With its enriched curriculum and invested efforts, in 2006, China "landed one of its university MBA programs in the top twenty-five on the Financial Times' ranking of the world's finest business schools, alongside such luminaries as Wharton in Pennsylvania, U.S. and Insead in France" (Kurlantzick, 2007).

'Host Diplomacy': Politics and Sports

China is also engaging in what it calls "host diplomacy," holding countless governmental and non-governmental conferences (Shambaugh, 2016, video). Large-scale conclaves – such as the Boao Forum for Asia (which brings together Asian businesspeople into a Davos-style World Economic Forum–like event); the China Development Forum; the Beijing Forum; Tsinghua University's World Peace Forum; the World Forum on China Studies; the China-Caribbean Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum (attended by nearly one thousand officials from China and the Caribbean); the ASEAN-China Eminent Persons Group (which unites former statesmen and has produced a comprehensive roadmap for the future of Southeast Asia–China relations); and the Global Think Tank Summit – bring leading figures from around the world to China every year (2016, video).

Some events are "real extravaganzas", such as the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, and the 2014 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting. The G20 summit in Hangzhou in September 2016 also proved to be an equally elaborate and impressive showcase of culture. My own experience with the G20 Youth Summit in Beijing and Shanghai 2016 confirmed China's intention and success at host diplomacy. The lavish décor of venues, the intricate execution of all elements related to the Summit, and the remarkable attention to detail put in by the organizers proved that China is also starting to invest in young leaders, future global shapers which can play to its advantage. Furthermore, the new Chinese diplomatic narrative also includes setting up networks of informal summits, designed to bring together opinion leaders either in China or in the developing world. The smaller summits make Beijing a centre for meetings of international Chinese-language media and of Chinese studies associations. Simultaneously, these conferences and summits grant China to subtly

emphasize its role as a potential partner for investment and trade and its position as a leader of the developing world (Shambaugh, 2016, video).

Aside from international political and diplomatic events, sport is also an important player in Chinese rhetoric of expanding its global influence. In particular, through the Olympic Games, the Middle Kingdom is amongst the leaders worldwide by numbers of medals won by a country. In particular, during the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China proved outstanding track records when the country became number one amongst all competing countries in gold medals with 51 won and became number two for the number of total medals with a number of 100 won. In particular, China wants to stand out and develop the sport industry as a national priority. For President Xi, a fanatic of the universal sport that is soccer, the stage of the stadium could be another way to promote a "Chinese Dream" to the new world (Meyer, 2018). To become a soccer superpower, there are three steps that China should do: qualify for the World Cup, organise it in China and if possible in 2030, win the World Cup. As for soccer and for other areas, the Chinese government wants to utilize all its possible resources to decrease the gap in its lateness in the soccer game and ascend to be an elite in soccer amongst all countries. Furthermore, the country has won its bid in July 2015 to host the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing, this will be another platform for China to strengthen its foreign diplomacy and foster multilateral relationships with participating nations through attraction.

This Chinese culture of 'host diplomacy' also translates to redefining the country's sports policies according to its international ambitions but to also respond to its domestic directives in improving public health and development new markets for consumption (Meyer, 2018). In 2016, the Chinese government develop its *Healthy China 2030* policy

programs aiming to improve all standards of health until 2030 – an objective closely tied to economic and public health issues. For 2020, the government has implemented intermediate objectives such as 435 millions of Chinese citizens will practice sports on a daily basis – against 360 million in 2015 – and the consumption of goods and services will reach around 2.5% of households' disposable incomes (Meyer, 2018). This program specifies that. Similar to other policy areas, the sports policy pursues Chinese national objectives while aiming to reinforce China's image and its soft power capacities abroad.

SOFT POWER RESOURCES: THE TOOLS OF BUSINESS

Aside from the conventional cultural lens, Kurlantzick (2007) suggests that the second tool of soft power for China to achieve its aim is business. China's formal diplomacy also includes a more nuanced set of business tools. Beijing has realised that China can utilize its economic might to boost its appeal in foreign nations if it portrays its growth in a certain light and if other countries can benefit from China's economic power. Thus, China has attempted to demonstrate that, as it grows, it also will become a much larger consumer of other nations' goods, creating the win-win economics that is central to the theme of Chinese diplomacy (Arif, 2017). Chinese officials also support win-win economics by providing trade, investment, and tourism targets.

As discussed in the cultural section of this paper, host diplomacy can also translate into a forum diplomacy where it leverages a multilateral platform as a focal point to project social, political and economic power. Through this increasingly "potent mechanism", China […] has advanced Asian-African alignment and economic cooperation (Morreale, 2018). According to Deng (2008), stemming from its emergence as a renewed global power,

China's increasing presence in Africa portrays its ever-extending economic reach where it is committed to improving and building infrastructure, education and cultural exchanges in Africa. The Chinese government has actively pursued an agenda focused on African development – an alternative model to various authoritarian African states (Liang, 2012). Beijing's model of development gained more popularity in the developing world compared to Western countries' emphasis on democracy.

Chinese soft power in Africa manifests itself in the form of payments in Africa. The country's soft power projection in the continent is intertwined with economic goods – particularly, trade, investment, aid, grants, loans, and debt relief (Liang, 2012). Liang (2012) suggests that China has begun its conscious efforts of soft power in Africa as late as the beginning of the 2000s, driven primarily by its growing "economic clout and increasing need for energy and commodities to sustain its development". Economic strength has become both the source and the means of China's soft power. Beijing has devoted tremendous financial resources to forging friendships and winning hearts amongst the African governments. Chinese companies, whether state-owned or private, have received governmental policy support through low-interest loans and funds to trade with and do business in Africa.

Since its adherence as a member of the WTO in 2001, Beijing has undergone a policy shift (Liang, 2012). It has become more actively engaged with the developing world – its Africa policy is carried out on a different plane, moving from political goals to economic interest. In recent years, the renewed interest in Africa and other parts of the developing world has evolved into a multifaceted pursuit of energy, markets, and influence. As part of

this shift, the ideological content of foreign policy-making receded in favour of a greater (if not sole) emphasis on economic growth. Instead of promoting its political values in the developing world, China has demonstrated a growing interest in cultivating business partners (Liang, 2012). In a great potential to further develop the complementary relationship between China and Africa, China has brought to Africa a "well-needed dynamic market and new investment opportunities" (Liang, 2012). From this dynamic relationship, Africa has given China in return, the energy and commodities that will fuel China's own economic growth.

Investments

At present, Chinese outward foreign direct investment still lags far behind investment from the United States and Japan (Arif, 2017). Therefore, when Hu Jintao met Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2005, he promised over USD$1.6 billion in new Chinese investment and aid to Manila; in 2005, when China hosted Indonesian Minister of Finance Jusuf Anwar, the Chinese announced that their investment in Indonesia could triple within five years to as much as USD$20 billion. On official visits abroad, Chinese leaders often bring along large business delegations to meet with local business people. Developing-world business people can execute deals directly with Chinese political leaders and heads of Chinese companies without worrying about legislators back in China holding up completion of the deals, as might happen in the United States.

Kurlatzick writes that, even if China's technology lags behind that of Western or Japanese competitors, China also can advertise its willingness to transfer technology, part of what supposedly makes it, as a developing nation itself, a different kind of actor (2007).

Poorer nations in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia have been receptive to this and think Chinese companies are well-suited for investing in them. In Nigeria, where the government chose Chinese aerospace giant Great Wall Industry Corporation to launch a new Nigerian satellite, one foreign-affairs official told the Financial Times: "Being a developing country, they understand us better. They are also prepared to put more on the table. For instance, the western world is never prepared to transfer technology – but the Chinese do." While China cannot yet challenge the United States, Europe, or Japan as a source of outward investment, it already can match them as a trading partner (Kurlantzick, 2007). China's consumption is focused on the developing world; it does not import much from the United States outside of high-technology products, while its imports from the developing world are worth more than seven times as much. As a result, countries in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and other regions are scrambling to take advantage of China's enormous appetites for resources, industrial components, and other products. In 2005, for the first time in decades, the economies of Asia outside Japan were collectively larger than the economy of Japan, showing how China is becoming more important to the region. Eventually, China will become the centre of trade and economic integration in Asia, providing Beijing with the goodwill that accrues from being the economic locomotive (Kurlantzick, 2007).

Sensitive to fears of China's economic power, a symbol of China's past Chinese officials have tried to assuage other nations by inking free trade deals and making trade concessions. In fall 2001, to the surprise of many Southeast Asian diplomats who'd been unsuccessfully pressuring other countries to consider a trade deal, Chinese officials suggested creating a free trade zone between China and Southeast Asia. Since then, China

has started work on at least 16 other new trade agreements around the world. Backing up investment promises and trade, China has developed a substantial aid program. From almost nothing in the mid-1990s, Chinese aid now can compete with the U.S. and Japanese aid programs in parts of Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

In Asia, China's aid has risen from roughly USD$260 million in 1993 to more than USD$1.5 billion in 2004. By 2004, China's aid to the Philippines was four times larger than that of the United States. In early 2018, China pledged an additional USD$ 75 million in economic and infrastructure assistance to the Philippines as a commitment to maintain good relations and making it to a higher level of friendship between the two countries. Beijing has revamped its aid programs to better tie assistance to discrete policy goals, including promoting Chinese companies abroad, cultivating important political actors, and bolstering China's benign regional image (Kurlantzick, 2007). In Thailand, for instance, Chinese aid has been used for the kind of lobbying familiar in Washington: to bring important elected Thai politicians to study trips and conferences in China. Beijing has also used funds to purchase surplus Thai agriculture, mollifying Thai farmers worried about the impact of China's free trade agreement with Southeast Asia (Kurlantzick, 2007).

China's own economic need for raw materials and new markets has led its companies to Africa, where its investments have skyrocketed in the near-last two decades (Liang, 2012). From 2003 to 2009, China's outward foreign direct investment (FDI) outflows to Africa increased from USD$490 million to USD$9.33 billion. Chinese investments are concentrated in the energy sector, in which trade-related finance is tied to another major area of investment: infrastructure construction – mostly public and

commercial buildings, water delivery networks, roads, railroads, electrical power systems, and dams (Congressional Research Service, 2008). More than 1,600 Chinese companies have invested in 49 African countries, most of which are in South Africa, Nigeria, Zambia, Sudan, Algeria, and Egypt (Chen, 2009). Furthermore, the State has also engaged in and signed bilateral investment agreements with 33 African countries. Beijing additionally also set up the China-Africa Development Fund, a stock equity fund created by China's state-owned financial organizations to give special support to Chinese enterprises when they invest in Africa.

Trade

As previously iterated, Chinese officials are sensitive to fears of China's economic power; thus, they try to reassure developing nations through signing free trade deals and making trade concessions (Kurlantzick, 2007). Furthermore, China's embrace of free trade in the Southeast Asia region and its promotion of the idea that it will become a major source of foreign direct investment also bolster its image. In addition to the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, Beijing is negotiating closer bilateral trade ties and economic partnerships with the individual Southeast Asian States. China-ASEAN total trade in 2005 was roughly USD$130 billion; U.S.-ASEAN total trade in 2005 was about USD$150 billion. By comparison, the United States struggled to complete a bilateral free trade agreement with Thailand. On visits to the region, Chinese leaders set targets for future Chinese investment into Southeast Asia. Chinese direct investment also still lags far behind investment from the United States and other wealthy countries like Japan per Kurlantzick (2007).

Over the past decade, the Chinese government has not only lifted restrictions on migration within China but has also made it vastly easier for Chinese to leave the country for business and tourism. Partly as a result, Chinese migration, often on overstayed short-term visas, is transforming the demographic makeup of northern mainland Southeast Asia, from northern Burma to northern Vietnam. Because of outmigration from Yunnan and other border provinces, ethnic Chinese now dominate entire towns in places like Luang Namtha, in northern Laos. The recent migrants are much more attuned to trends in China than older generations of ethnic Chinese, and they also have created a kind of renminbi zone in northern mainland Southeast Asia, where the Chinese currency serves as a de facto second currency, writes Kurlantzick (2007).

China's trade leadership in Africa can be demonstrated through the economic cooperation between both parties. The earliest and most important form of this relationship was trade, as stated in the *China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation White Paper* by China's State Council in 2010. By 2010, bilateral trade between China and Africa (imports and exports) was $123 billion, more ten times the value at the early 2000s. As a result of the global financial crisis, China has become the largest trading partner of Africa since the start of 2009. Fundira (2011) writes that from 2000 to 2011, the compounded growth of China's total trade with Africa increased by 33% with imports and exports increasing 36% and 31%, respectively. For imports, Angola (36%) and South Africa (18%) account for over half of China's total imports from Africa. Chinese imports have been concentrated in a few products: mineral fuel and oil accounted for 65% of imports from Africa in 2010. The top ten African exports to China in 2010 accounted for 96% of China's total imports from Africa. In terms of exports, China's trade pattern with Africa is more

diversified (Fundira, 2011). The top three export destinations - South Africa (18%), Nigeria (11%), and Egypt (10%) – account for 39% of China's total exports to Africa. The top ten products that China exports to Africa represent only 64% of China's total exports to Africa. Machinery and electronic products head the list of exports; they account for 29% of the total (China's State Council, 2010). Driven by the expansion in the scale of bilateral trade, China's changing trade structure has comparative advantages in machinery and electronic products vis-à-vis the African countries (Liang, 2012).

Since the beginning of the century, China has presented a distinctive type of soft power in Africa. It is strongly motivated to build soft power, which is instrumental in achieving its foreign policy objectives. From Beijing's perspective, Africa is a continent that is vital to China's continued economic growth as well as to expand its global influence. China's soft power surge in Africa also serves its long-term interest to deepen and broaden its place in the global economy. In line with mercantilist theory, which suggests that pursuing national power and plenty are complementary, Beijing's policy reflects the new thinking of the Chinese leadership that pursuing soft power through business interests are reinforcing. The combination of soft power through culture and economic resources have been used as portions of elements of a complex strategy to achieve China's aggregate foreign-policy goals (Liang, 2012).

DESIRED OUTCOMES THROUGH SOFT POWER

Arif notes that Chinese leaders have understood the limits of hard power to change other's behaviour, and the costly consequences of using it (2017). Beijing is acutely aware

of the necessity for a soft power approach to promoting national interests in the 21st century. Arif suggests that soft power would benefit China's interests in several ways (2017). China is looking to secure its natural and energy sources as the main element to boost its economic growth; therefore, its close ties with more countries provide more alternatives to reach these resource needs. As Gil (2008) states, "China wants to create a peaceful international environment in which its economic development can continue and in which it can portray itself as a responsible and constructive player in world politics" (p. 117). China's major spheres of influence include Latin America, Africa and Central as well as South-West Asia. It is in these areas that China's foreign policy, political value and economic carrots have served as the main inspiration for its soft power to attract these countries. These regions have welcomed the rules on which Beijing has shaped its foreign policy because of their shared development concerns.

There are different views among analysts over China's long-term interests in these areas and their implication for the United States. Some believe that China's soft power aims have been employed to weaken the United States' influence in the region. In contrast, others argue that China's strategy is to continue its economic development at least for the next 10-15 years (Lum et al., 2008). There is no doubt that the United States' soft power has played a key role in the world because it effectively upholds values like transparency, justice, election and human rights domestically. In contrast, China's "domestic policies and values set limits where the Communist Party fears allowing too much intellectual freedom and resists outside influences" (Nye, 2004). Therefore, in order to foster its soft power and to attract other nations, China must review its political values including its stance on minority rights, human rights, justice, media censorship and fair election processes.

Through the resources of 'public diplomacy', China attempts to reassure the world of its intentions of peaceful rise and promoting its images through launching cultural centers and media tools abroad, promoting the Chinese languages, hosting foreign international students, welcoming important world-wide renown events, etc. Nonetheless, its international glory is overshadowed by its internal political repression (Meyer, 2018). The scholar argues that such system used by China reduces greatly the contribution of civil society to Chinese soft power's development whereas, through other cultural superpowers, these private contributions are essential in numerous domains such as literature, arts, cinema, etc. It has been estimated that Beijing pours over $USD10 billions of dollars per year on its soft power efforts but that there is still progress to be able to achieve an organic emulation from other countries.

CHARACTERISING CHINA'S NEW DIPLOMATIC RHETORIC

There have been arguments arising that China's new strategies in soft power are different from its public diplomacy efforts. As such, Shambaugh characterizes the Chinese strategy in promoting its soft power overseas as more of a 'public diplomacy' rather than 'soft power'. He highlights what he believes to be an important distinction in the English language, in the field of international relations, and even in the Chinese language. Shambaugh argues that almost every government in the world and its foreign ministry engage in public diplomacy and its attempt to make the "government's views and policies are known more widely abroad and to persuade other public – and this is why it is called 'public diplomacy' – in the virtue [of said] government's policies" (2016, video). However, in the case of China, it is rather "governmental-level public diplomacy program" (2016,

video). In the Chinese language, this is known as '*dui wai xuan chuan*': the literal translation meaning 'external propaganda work'. His position articulates that the Chinese government has taken domestic propaganda template and tried to globalize it. Shambaugh continues by saying that China has engaged itself in a competition of discourse wars with the West and saturated people with airwaves, media, information (2016, video). He advances that people can make up their own mind in the West and supports his argumentation quoting Nye who believed that soft power is when others want to emulate, respect you, and value your political system and want to be like you. Finally, soft power comes rather from society (bottom-up approach) and not entirely from the government: in the case of China, however, the Chinese government is funding its soft power practices through top-down approaches instead, says Shambaugh (2016, video).

In relation to the argument put forward by Shambaugh, Meyer (2018) contends that Chinese civil society has a "repressed creativity." In particular, there is a gap in Chinese imagine of its contemporary culture either in literature, cinema, pop culture, etc. Especially visible in pop culture, Meyer (2018) compares and contrasts China to its neighbouring countries in the East, Japan and South Korea. Japanese soft power rests on multiple elements, notably, its democratic institutions, its development model and its pop culture spread in Asia but also across the world. The development of new methods of consumption is particularly striking in Japan in the industries of electronic products and digital content. Japanese *mangas* (comics) is a successful element of Japanese soft power where it is tightly linked to Japanese citizens' creativity. This style, born from the masses, is rapidly promoted by endorsed by the government to integrate it into its cultural policies and gain economic benefits especially in exporting its pop culture products (Meyer, 2018). Similarly, in South

Korea, the country has been very successful in exporting its own soft power of the *Hallyu* (Korean wave) especially with Korean pop music (known was K-pop). This new musical genre has swept Asia and the world through the well-known viral example of *Gangnam Style*, paving its way for other Korean artists to break through the mainstream Western market.

The absence of a pop culture that is uniquely Chinese foster the imports of foreign cultural content into China and takes a toll on China's competition on creative industries with the rest of the world (Meyer, 2018). Meyer (2018) advocates that, despite extraordinary resources to promote and enhance its image through its enriched cultural heritage and its talented artists, China has not quite reached its soft power essence. Despite receiving praise from developing countries, especially from an ambitious economic diplomacy, China uses almost exclusively government means and methods. Meyer (2018) reminds that the soft power cannot be bought but should be organically won over.

As mentioned previously, Economy suggests that there is a clear divide between soft power and public diplomacy exist for most countries. Soft power is organic and inherent within the political culture: the values and ideals are embraced by the population at large that are attractive. The art, music, and culture should stem from people's creativity instead. The government should be the one promoting organic soft power through public diplomacy (2016, video). But her position varies from Shambaugh's; she argues that a different situation is present in China: the government is concerned with both defining and constructing the political and cultural narratives that organic development within the society is not to its full potential (2016, video). In the Chinese case, the lines are blurred between soft power and public diplomacy.

Finally, most understanding rests on the notion that public diplomacy is a manifestation of soft power similar to what the Father of soft power Joseph S. Nye would say. Public diplomacy is an instrument of soft power as it is one of the varieties of things you can achieve to promote your branding and level of attractiveness (Nye, 2016, video). Nonetheless, when it comes to China, the country has unveiled its own style that is tailored to its diplomacy practices. When Nye coined the term soft power, he excluded elements like investment and trade and formal diplomacy and aid – elements he considered more concrete carrots and sticks (Kurlantzick, 2007). "Soft power is not merely the same as influence," Nye wrote. "After all, influence can also rest on the hard power of threats or payments." Nye focused purely on the attractiveness of a nation's brand, on its values and ideals and norms (Kurlantzick, 2007). But soft power has changed. In the context of China, both the Chinese government and many nations influenced by China enunciate a broader idea of soft power than did Nye. It is important to note that original 'soft power' concept proposed by its founding father Joseph Nye separates the role of economic resources into the realm of 'hard power' thanks to the extent of the military budget and its tangible assets that depend on financial resources (Meyer, 2018). However, Meyer (2018) suggests that in the advent of globalisation and increasing inter-connectivity between nations, the realm of economic resources becomes a hybrid power because the economic and financial power of a State also increases its soft power. The financial dimension, either loans, investments, development aid to other countries, etc., allows a State to gain the benevolence of another which receives such financial assistance.

Per Meyer (2018), Chinese soft power is different than the original definition developed by Nye, especially in the "cultural" sense of the term, on the role of economic

power and on the importance of politics. For Nye, "culture" means essentially current cultural industries and their tangible and intangible products – an everyday culture – whereas China understood "culture" in its holistic definition: including in heritage, traditional, modern, popular, etc. (Meyer, 2018). This divergence in understanding can be rationalised through the differences between the two worlds' history: recent culture in one hand and long-standing culture on the other. Meyer (2018) posits that for China, economic power reveals itself to be an important tool for soft power when for Nye, economic power falls into the rhetoric of hard power. As for the role of politics, either ideology, values, institutions, Meyer writes that there is a tendency to diminish its importance in Chinese literature writing about soft power.

For the Chinese, soft power means anything outside of the military and security realm, including not only popular culture and public diplomacy but also more economic and diplomatic levers like aid and investment and participation in multilateral organizations—Nye's carrots and sticks. Kurlantzick continues, "indeed, Beijing offers the charm of a lion, not of a mouse: it can threaten other nations with these sticks if they do not help China achieve its goals, but it can offer sizable carrots if they do" (2007). Essentially, China has consolidated two significant tools into 'smart power', cultural diffusion and economic power through business. China has upgraded its public diplomacy, which has focused on selling the idea that China will not be a threat to other nations. 'High soft power' is directed at elites in a country whereas 'low' is aimed at the public and all these forms exist within the Chinese definition of soft power. It can emerge from "governments and nongovernmental actors, businesspeople and Peace Corps volunteers and pop music stars, as well as politicians and leaders" (Kurlantzick, 2007). Nongovernmental actors do not

necessarily operate in concert with the state, and no state can be said to have a completely coherent foreign policy. What David Shambaugh failed to see is that the Chinese have understood the notion of public diplomacy and soft power; Beijing sometimes uses its soft power to assist in harder goals and has geared toward a style of diplomacy tailored to its own understanding.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR CHINESE SOFT POWER

In 2006, Kurlantzick asked what China's "charm offensive" means in the long run, for Southeast Asia and for the United States. There are signs that China's rising power, and its engagement with the world, will prompt Beijing to wield its soft influence responsibly. China has begun to mediate other nations' disputes—a task of responsible great powers. After anti-Thai riots in Phnom Penh in Cambodia led to a serious break in relations between Cambodia and Thailand in 2003, Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Yi called in the Thai and Cambodian representatives in Beijing and helped them lay out their grievances. In private the Chinese minister then warned the neighbours to normalize relations as soon as possible. Chastened, the two sides began to patch up their relationship.

China also has proved influential on non-traditional security issues, working with the Southeast Asian states to address drug trafficking and human trafficking. Regional experts on human trafficking lauded Beijing for taking progressive stances on human trafficking education—stances that have put pressure on governments in Cambodia and Laos to do the same. Some of China's soft power hardly comes at America's expense (Kurlantzick, 2006). The United States continues to receive strong cooperation on many issues from major nations like the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand. The

United States and Japan remain the major investors in Southeast Asia. America is still the region's premier hard power. It also stands as the biggest source of foreign films, television, popular music, and books in the region. As Catharin E. Dalpino of Georgetown University found that Indonesia remained the world's biggest market for MTV even "during waves of virulent anti-Americanism in Indonesia" (Kurlantzick, 2006).

Most importantly, Kurlantzick posits that the United States still offers a political and social model that appeals to average people in the region, even if Washington itself does not always live up to American values. China's values—non-interference, respect for other nations' internal affairs, economic gradualism—enjoy appeal as well. But they appeal only to specific groups: elites in authoritarian nations like Vietnam; average people in countries like Indonesia that equate the American model with the financial crisis; public in some states willing to trade some degree of political freedom if they could obtain Chinese-style growth rates (Kurlantzick, 2006). In surveys of Asian publics taken by the East Asia Barometer and published by the *Journal of Democracy,* majorities in every country say they desire democracy rather than any other type of political system.

On the other hand, soft power, being an inherently democratic notion according to Meyer (2018), is the power of seducing and attracting that emulate freedom and liberty. Meyer asks whether the essence of what soft power is ultimately compatible with an authoritarian regime. In this case, China intends to exercise and implement a new shape of soft power in which, democratic institutions, which is considered like an alternate form of government system amongst others, would be secondary or even absent (Meyer, 2018). This would be an issue where a confrontation between Western countries and China rests on not only from an economical and strategical point of view but also cultural and political.

Chinese's soft power growth in the world could be met with more obstacles and resistance from other international actors.

As China's soft power grows, it could begin to encounter blowback—particularly in Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam that historically have had the most troubled relations with China. As China becomes more powerful, other nations will begin to see beyond its benign face to a more complicated reality. They will realize that despite China's promises of non-interference, when it comes to core interests, China, like any great power, will put its priorities ahead of others. China ultimately could use its soft influence to push nations to make a more explicit choice between it and the United States. This could threaten us alliances and other close bilateral relationships, undermine America's forces, and hurt its standing in international organizations. Across Southeast Asia, as China has become more popular, it has been able to create a web of multilateral groups that put China at the centre of the region.

These organizations could exclude the United States, like the recent East Asia summit in Malaysia, which eventually could turn into a forum for important security issues. Indeed, in some respects, China is already trying to draw on its charm to push back against American power. When Dennis Blair, commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, proposed "security communities" in which the United States would increase its defence cooperation with several Asian nations, many countries rejected the idea, in part because China "quietly applied pressure on them to reject it." (Kurlantzick, 2006) In early 2004, Blair's successor, Thomas Fargo, suggested that American marines or Special Forces could be stationed in Southeast Asia to patrol the Straits of Malacca, the narrow waterway between Malaysia and Indonesia that serves as a vital shipping channel. China gingerly leaned on other countries

in Asia to block the idea. Indonesian and Malaysian leaders spoke out against it, and the idea of posting U.S. Special Forces to the straits collapsed. China has the potential to prod countries like the Philippines or Thailand to downgrade their close relations with the United States, or push countries like Singapore to stop providing basing rights for America. It could also pressure them not to intervene if the United States and China went to war over Taiwan.

However, now in 2018, with the rise of protectionism and U.S. President Donald J. Trump's "America First" policy, the U.S. has pitted itself against its longstanding and strongest allies found in Canada, Mexico and the European countries. Will the U.S. lose its charm and power under the hands of Trump? Some scholars have argued that China is now starting the fill the gap left by the U.S since President Trump's inception (Biswas & Tortajada, 2018). In an article titled "China steps into soft power vacuum as the U.S. retreats under Trump", Biswas and Totajada write (2018) that American soft power is now in retreat. The asymmetry of views between leaders of the world's two soft powers has made Xi "the poster child for globalisation, free trade and international cooperation" (Biswas & Tortajada, 2018). During the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in November 2017, in Vietnam, Trump reconfirmed his "America first" policy. This approach will further decrease America's soft power. Meanwhile, Xi is singing from a different hymn sheet. Also in Vietnam, he noted in his speech that globalisation is an "irreversible historical trend" and championed multilateral trading regimes. He presented a vision of the future that is interconnected and invited "more countries to ride the fast train of Chinese development." China's rise as the world's leading soft power will not be without hurdles. It must tackle border issues with its neighbours; navigate the current South China Sea

disputes and find solutions to its extensive environmental pollution problems, among other things. Despite these challenges, the U.S.'s many missteps and China's demonstrated social and economic success – as well as its increasing use of soft power – might mean that the Asian giant is on the rise.

CONCLUSION

With the prevalence of China's rise as a global power, it is important to ask how to assess the reinforced positive attitude that foreign nations have about China. Is it due to its new diplomatic strategies? And if yes, how should we understand this renewed rhetoric? The premise of this paper started with Joseph Nye's original conception of soft power and attempted to understand it through his lenses. It also evaluated the theoretical conceptions concerning public diplomacy as there has been confusion concerning both terms. We have seen that there exist differences between these two terms with Nye's description, but in fact, public diplomacy falls within the realms of soft power: it is one of the tools to promote softer strategies for a nation-state.

Within China, literature has been inspired by Nye's conception to render a definition and perception unique to China's situation. Concerned that the western media prevailed the international narrative with no space for Chinese discourse, the Chinese government engaged in the desire of soft power to counteract a pervasive influence of Western power and particularly the United States' influence on Chinese society with its brands, music, literature, and values. Scholars in China have been critical of Nye's definition of soft power and its extensive work as it does not reflect properly the Chinese case. As a result, they

have been actively working to redefine China's conception of soft power and to promote a governmental position in official policy narratives.

Through a cultural perspective, we have witnessed China's diplomatic efforts with communication tools and media dissemination. Furthermore, China has also been leading its educational soft power efforts with the instigation of Confucius Institutes, the sending of Chinese teachers abroad and the incentive to attract foreign students to study in China. Finally, another aspect is the strategy of 'host diplomacy' where Beijing welcomed large and small multilateral and international conferences to appeal to the foreign audience. Through this approach, they also want to foster young leaders, future trailblazers of the world to gain an attractive impression of China that might prove to be useful in future diplomatic negotiations.

From a business perspective, China had the opportunity to play a key role in the programs of development assistance and government investment in many countries. In the last decade, its economy has become increasingly integrated with more than 93 countries around the world, "for both the benefit of the recipients and its own interests" (Wolf & Warner, 2013). Therefore, Arif contends that it is obvious that the ability of the country to make alliances and closer ties with other countries is a sign of increasing Chinese influence in the world (2017). These relationships are significant for both countries in terms of economic and technological cooperation; it helps the recipients to build their countries' infrastructures and to develop their economy (Arif, 2017).

In conclusion, despite arguments of soft power versus public diplomacy in China, it has been analysed throughout this paper that China has engaged in a nuanced diplomatic style – personalised to its own domestic and foreign policy discourse. A lot still remains to

be done by the government and through its civil society to fully engage in its soft power potential to the rest of the world. It is promoting its attractiveness and appeal through public diplomacy while encompassing soft power components that can be said as *smart*. Lines are indeed blurred between soft power and public diplomacy invalidating the fact they are mutually exclusive. Instead, they work together to foster a nation's desire to render itself appealing. Thus, China's own definition of soft power is not binding by that of Joseph Nye's; rather, it is utilizing the soft power spectrum ranging from high to low, to affect and influence all levels of citizens in the world.

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