

**THE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES
AND CHINA'S EVOLVING FOREIGN
POLICY**

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Degree

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ABSTRACT

The Confucius Institutes (CIs) are part of a major new Chinese Government initiative promoting the learning of the Chinese language and culture internationally. They operate through a network of institutes located in learning institutions around the world, and while they have an education focus, they also reflect political changes in China's relationship with the rest of the world. A transformation in China's approach to foreign relations has been evident since the belligerence and self-sufficiency of the Mao era, and cautious engagement of the Deng era. In the early 21st century, China's new foreign policy is more confident and engaged behaviour than it has ever been. The conceptual sources of China's foreign policy have broadened from Marxism-Leninism to include some contemporary international values and traditional Chinese norms. However, managing the sphere of ideas both domestically and externally, and securing the nation's economic development, are the main means the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) maintains its legitimacy in the early 21st century. While China's leadership has given the CIs considerable political independence, they are part of the Party's propaganda system. Despite some foreign concerns about the Confucius Institutes being a propaganda tool, many other countries have similar programmes; the difference is China's political system. Through the CIs, China is building the architecture of a major power, and has succeeded in improving its international influence. But because of the lack of international attractiveness of China's political system, this is likely to be slow. The CIs reflect a more confident and effective Chinese foreign policy; and one that offers greater opportunities for engagement.

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¹ Quoted in Nu Tang Truong, *Journal of a Vietcong* (London Cape, 1986). p. 174.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

“you peng zi yuangfang lai, bu yi le hu”

Translation: To have friends coming from afar: is this not a delight?²

Kongzi (Confucius)

Background

The words of Confucius on welcoming visitors from afar could be an appropriate question for universities around the world to ask when they are faced with a proposal to host one of China’s contemporary language and cultural centres known as the Confucius Institutes (CIs). The CIs focus on the promotion of the Chinese language³ and culture internationally, and one of their aims is “deepening friendly relations between China and other countries.”⁴ In the context of China’s rise as a world economic power, there is scholarly interest in how China will deal with concerns that its rise will disrupt the existing international system. Begun in 2004, the CIs are ostensibly joint ventures between a host university, a Chinese university and a leading organisation connected to China’s state bureaucracy with some foreign representatives. However, some concerns have been raised about the CIs being a subversive means to influence foreign public opinion and a threat to academic independence. Chinese foreign policy since 1949 was noted for its revolutionary socialism but since the 1990s it is evolving towards greater engagement and stability as a precondition for economic development. The location of the CIs reflects China’s trading relationships rather than its previous

² Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. Simon Lyes (New York; London, [U.K.] W.W. Norton, 1997), p. 9.

³ There are many different languages spoken the People’s Republic of China, and Taiwan where there are 56 official ethnicities, many of whom have their own languages, and there are at least six mutually unintelligible dialects within the majority Han ethnicity. The language most widely spoken and promoted by the national government is Modern Standard Mandarin, henceforth called “the Chinese language.”

⁴ Confucius Institutes “Introduction to the Confucius Institutes,” http://college.chinese.cn/en/article/2009-08/29/content_22308.htm (Accessed October 16, 2009).

socialist ideological alliances, and the extent to which they reflect a new approach to dealing with the rest of the world is the focus of this thesis. The era of globalisation has produced many changes in international relations, such as the increased importance of culture, and there is interest from scholars and policy makers as to how China will turn its cultural resources into political influence. As China continues its rise as an economic power, the CIs are rapidly developing a network to encourage the learning of the Chinese language, which may have major implications for China and the rest of the world. This thesis is part of a larger project on China's propaganda system,⁵ and one of the issues it will address is the role of the CIs in China's modernised foreign propaganda.

A problem this thesis investigates is the disjunct between critics of the CIs who argue that they are a tool for CCP propaganda and a threat to academic independence of learning institutions, and some of those involved with the CIs who emphasise that they have more benign intentions. According to Zhao Guocheng, Deputy Chief Executive of Hanban (the Chinese state organisation which helps promote the Chinese language internationally), "the CIs' core work is not to promote certain values, but to respond to the demands of foreign countries, and supply services and information about China to those who are interested in it."⁶ In the light of China's modernisation and transformation since 1978, its rise as a major world power, and concerns that this represents a threat to global stability and other major powers, the basic question of this thesis is, "To what extent do the CIs represent change in China's foreign policy?" The Conclusion will show that the CIs reflect China's new foreign policies in the 21st century which have evolved to be much more confident, effective and engaged than at any time in its history.

This thesis also discusses the relationship between language and power, as throughout history, a common language has long been associated with hegemonic power.⁷ Major powers such as the Greeks, Romans, ancient Chinese, Arab, Russians, Malay, Portuguese, Spanish, French, English and Russians, have all promoted their languages

⁵ For more information on the project "Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China, see: http://www.saps.canterbury.ac.nz/pols/research/marsden_brady.shtml (Accessed October 19, 2009).

⁶ Ni Yanshuo, "Confucius Around the World" *Beijing Review* 2008, http://www.bjreview.com.cn/nation/txt/2008-03/04/content_102406.htm (Accessed March 4, 2009).

⁷ Sheng Ding and Robert Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language," *East Asia* 23, no. 2 (2006) p. 1.

as a tool for unity across time and space.⁸ The CIs have an educational appearance, and this has tended to obscure their potential as a tool of political influence. While much attention is focused on the rise of China as an economic and military power, less attention has been focused on the rise of China as a cultural power, and how its literature, films, music, art, customs and sport (as well as its language), are practised beyond its borders.

The operation of the CIs

The CIs seek to support and develop the interest of non-Mandarin-speaking foreigners and overseas Chinese in learning the Chinese language. Much of this interest has been stimulated by China's re-emergence as an economic power. The fundamental purpose of the CIs is to promote the Chinese language and culture. According to their Constitution, they devote themselves to;

- Satisfying the demands of people from different countries and regions in the world who learn the Chinese language,
- Enhancing understanding of the Chinese language and culture by these peoples,
- Strengthening educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other countries,
- Deepening friendly relationships with other nations,
- Promoting the development of multi-culturalism,
- and creating a harmonious world.⁹

Outwardly, the CIs are governed by the 33 member CI Leadership Council, comprising of a senior Chinese politician, state bureaucracy representatives, educational agencies and foreign representatives. An educational focus is apparent from the CI website,¹⁰ but

⁸ Ibid. p. 2.

⁹ Confucius Institutes, "Constitution and Bylaws of the Confucius Institutes," http://college.chinese.cn/en/article/2009-08/29/content_22323.htm (Accessed October 16, 2009).

¹⁰ <http://www.confuciusinstitute.net/> Accessed August 16, 2009.

Chinese leaders such as President Hu Jintao also support their work and link it to China's rise as a world power.¹¹

CIIs operate with three models of operation; they can be wholly operated by the Beijing headquarters (like British Council branches), joint ventures with local partners (like Spain's *Instituto Cervantes* branches), or wholly locally run offices licensed by the Beijing headquarters (like many Alliance Française branches).¹² Most CIIs fall into the second category, which is less expensive to maintain. *Beijing Review* notes that according to the Hanban schedule, China aims to develop 500 CIIs by the end of 2010,¹³ and one report mentioned the intention to establish 1000 by 2020.¹⁴ Most of the CI Directors are not directly appointed by China, but are appointed by the local CI board which consists of local people who are Chinese language specialists, and an appointee from the CI Leadership Council.

Most CIIs are joint ventures between a Chinese university and a foreign learning institution, usually a university but sometimes another type of education organisation. They are individually governed by representatives from the host institution and Chinese representatives who devise individual programmes suited to the local area. The Constitution of the CI programme state that they are guided by the Leadership Council and must respect local, as well as Chinese, laws and customs.¹⁵ The Chinese university partner supplies language teachers, who can train local teachers, while the host partner supplies office space and additional staff. The institutes are a centre to learn standard Mandarin, hear about doing business with China, as well as listen to various guest speakers, and learn about Chinese culture.

The choice of Chinese universities involved in CI partnerships appears to follow a pattern of existing links. According to Xiaolin Guo, personal contacts of Chinese scholars play a role and existing exchange agreements between Chinese and foreign

¹¹ Xinhua *Hu Jintao Calls for Enhancing 'Soft Power' of Chinese Culture*.
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/15/content_6883748.htm (November 24, 2008).

¹² Don Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," *European Journal of Education* 44, no. 1 (2009) p. 70.

¹³ Beijing Review, "More Confucius Institutes Founded." January 4, 2007
http://www.bjreview.com/culture/txt/2007-01/04/content_52327.htm (Accessed September 6, 2008).

¹⁴ Xinhuanet 2006 *Confucius Institute: Promoting Language, Culture and Friendliness*
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-10/02/content_5521722.htm (Accessed June 12, 2008).

¹⁵ The Confucius Institute, Constitution and Bylaws, Sections 1.6 and 3.12,
http://college.chinese.cn/en/article/2009-08/29/content_22310.htm (Accessed October 18, 2009).

universities are often instrumental in facilitating ties.¹⁶ There is a regional emphasis for example, Yunnan University in southern China has facilitated the establishment of a CI in Bangladesh (North-South University Dhaka), and Lanzhou University in China's north-western Gansu province has sponsored CIs in Central Asian countries. Likewise Auckland University has established a CI with Fudan University in its sister-city of Shanghai. In a few cases one Chinese university (such as Beijing University of Foreign Languages) may be involved in setting up more than a dozen CIs, but in the majority of cases each university may only be responsible for managing one CI in one or two foreign countries.

CIs do not teach Confucian philosophy, but use his image to promote Chinese language and culture. Confucius is the Latinised form of *Kongzi*, who was a statesman, philosopher and educator who lived 550-476 B.C. during a transitional period when China developed from a slave society to a feudal society.¹⁷ The philosophy he developed stands for order, hierarchy and tradition.¹⁸ Confucius maintained that only if the nation's men conformed to correct rules of conduct can social order be maintained, and the correct adherence to rites signifies commitment and deference to authority. While radical intellectuals have criticised him because his doctrines stand in opposition to ideologies of change, on the other hand, Confucius has also been useful to those in authority,¹⁹ and he, and his teachings, are currently experiencing a revival of interest in China.²⁰

Literature review

Although the CIs have only been in operation since 2004, they are already the specific subject of several studies, and other literature discusses them in the context of related subjects such as modern Chinese foreign policy and diplomacy. Jocelyn Chey's study²¹ highlights concerns about the CIs threatening academic independence and suggests that

¹⁶ Xiaolin Guo *Repackaging Confucius: PRC Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power* Institute for Security and Development Policy, <http://www.isdp.eu/files/publications/ap/08/xg08repackagingconfucius.pdf> (Accessed January 4, 2009). p. 31.

¹⁷ Tong Zhang and Barry Schwartz, "Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A Study in Collective Memory," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 11, no. 2 (1997) p. 193.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Daniel Bell, "From Marx to Confucius: Changing Discourses on China's Political Future." *Dissent* <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=767> (Accessed June 12, 2008).

²¹ Jocelyn Chey, "Chinese 'Soft Power' Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes," *The Sydney Papers* 20, no. 1 (2008).

they could be a propaganda tool for the CCP. While in contrast, Don Starr states that many of the foreigners working with the CIs have a relaxed view of such issues, but are more concerned about long-term administrative issues such as financial viability.²² James Paradise writes that the CIs are part of Chinese attempts to win international support for its development, rather than more subversive intentions.²³ Some authors such as Starr argue the CIs mark a new era in Chinese foreign relations and describe their establishment in 2004 as beginning a “new phase in China’s political self-confidence,”²⁴ while Guo describes the CIs as part of a major Chinese effort in international image management.²⁵

Since the mid-1990s, China has been adopting a new, more cooperative and more effective foreign policy than at any time in the history of the People’s Republic. Several recent studies of China’s foreign policy since the rise of a fourth generation of Chinese leaders, note a distinct change in both the processes,²⁶ and the outcomes.²⁷ They point to a savvier and more effective China in international relations in the 21st century, one that wants to be a great power, but needs stability in the world system to continue its growth. Joshua Kurlantzick sounds a note of alarm with his book “Charm Offensive,” in which he argues China’s new foreign policies are subtly winning friends and changing the world.²⁸

Power is a central concept in the study of politics, and international relations theory that recognises less tangible sources of power such as influence, rather than the traditional realist focus on the coercive aspects power, form the viewpoint on which this thesis is based. “Soft Power” as it is described by Joseph Nye,²⁹ contrasts with the “hard power” of military and economic aspects of power, and relates to the ability to get people to do what you want them to do through influence and attraction rather than through force. The concept has been used in both Chinese and foreign discussion of the CIs. The role

²² Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes."

²³ James F. Paradise, "China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power," *Asian Survey* 49, no. 4 (2009). p. 662.

²⁴ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p. 1.

²⁵ Xiaolin Guo, *Repackaging Confucius: PRC Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power* Institute for Security and Development Policy, <http://www.isdp.eu/files/publications/ap/08/xg08repackagingconfucius.pdf>

²⁶ Bonnie Glaser and Evan Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of Peaceful Rise?," *The China Quarterly* 190, no. -1 (2007).

²⁷ Evan Medeiros and Taylor Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (2003).

²⁸ Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World* (Binghamton, New York Vail-Ballou Press 2007).

²⁹ Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics* (Cambridge, MA Public Affairs, 2004).

of cultures in world politics in addition to state actors, is receiving more recognition in the contemporary era of globalisation, and Sheng Ding has described how Chinese attempts in promoting the Chinese language and culture form a major part of recent attempts to gain soft power.³⁰ He argues that such an approach to diplomacy has been embedded in Chinese foreign relations for centuries.

Many factors, such as the recent “war on terror,” have led to increased interest in how international actors can strategically influence foreign public opinion. This requires less coercion through military and economic forces, and more persuasive publicity (or propaganda) tactics. Nicholas Cull has sought to categorise the various government activities to influence foreign audiences, such as broadcasting, exchanges and cultural programmes, into the relatively new term “public diplomacy.”³¹ While China’s re-emergence as an economic power is widely recognised, Ingrid d’Hooghe discusses the rapid rise of China’s public diplomacy activities which aim to improve its soft power.³² An assessment of China’s soft power is that it is rapidly growing through a series of measures aiming to woo the world through subtle means.³³

In order to discuss the political influences on the CIs it is necessary to consider China’s Party-State system. Kenneth Lieberthal, in *Governing China*,³⁴ notes the reforms in China’s political system, and discusses the picture from the outside and the quite different internal functioning of authority. Since 1949, China has moved from totalitarianism to authoritarianism in which the CCP dominates political decision making. One study by Anne-Marie Brady,³⁵ discusses the institutions of the Party’s propaganda system with its domestic and external spheres, arguing that they are central to the Party’s sophisticated attempts to manage power.

A consensus among several authors is that China’s soft power drive through the CIs may lack effectiveness. James Paradise argues that China may find it easier to win

³⁰ Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language."

³¹ Nicholas Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," *American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 616 (2008).

³² Ingrid d'Hooghe *The Rise of China's Public Diplomacy* Netherlands Institute of International Relations, http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2007/20070700_cdsp_paper_hooghe.pdf (Accessed October 1, 2009).

³³ Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World*.

³⁴ Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*, 2nd ed. (New York W.W. Norton, 2005).

³⁵ Ibid.

friends in developing countries with whom it shares political values.³⁶ Ding concludes that current Chinese efforts, while raising China's soft power, are limited by the lack of attractiveness of the CCP's record of governance.³⁷ Bates Gill and Yanzhong Huang agree that China's international influence is increasing, but measures such as the CIs will lack effectiveness due to the lack of attractiveness of its political system.³⁸ They argue that China should be encouraged where its efforts coincide with international norms.

What isn't known

A historical discussion is necessary to background past foreign relations of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and efforts to promote the teaching of the Chinese language to foreigners. To this extent, a central question this thesis will address is the extent to which China's approach to foreign relations has evolved, especially since the foundation of the PRC in 1949 when it pursued an anti-imperialist foreign policy. Criticism of the CIs has argued that they are a subversive Chinese attempt to influence foreign public opinion, and are not analogous to the cultural diplomacy of other nations. This will be investigated.

International relations theory can provide a lens through which to view China's changing foreign policy and to understand its conceptual sources. One question that will be investigated in this area is the theoretical basis for the CIs. If China is moving away from Marxism-Leninism as a guide to international relations, the theories it bases its new contemporary behaviour on need to be discussed.

The relationship between the culture of the country and the political system from where the diplomacy originated is important when culture is used in diplomacy. The third question that is not significantly dealt with by existing research is, how independent are the CIs from the Chinese political system? Debate about whether the CIs are equivalents of European cultural diplomacy like the British Council and the Goethe Institute has focused on the degree of political independence which various cultural diplomacy programmes have. Margret Wyszomirski has sought to compare the various

³⁶ Paradise, "China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power." p. 664.

³⁷ Sheng Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power* (Plymouth, United Kingdom: Rowman and Littlefield 2008), p. 91.

³⁸ Bates Gill and Yanzhong Huang, "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power'," *Survival* 48, no. 2 (2006).

cultural diplomacy programmes of selected nations in a study,³⁹ but a detailed comparison with China is lacking, a gap this study aims to fill. How the CIs are governed and financed will indicate the channels of control over them.

The development of the CIs has been met with concerns in the West that they are a threat, however some argue for a more benign assessment. There are some difference between studies with concerns about the CIs as threats to academic independence,⁴⁰ and those who take a more relaxed view.⁴¹ The views of those working with the CIs in foreign countries, and their supporters are considered by asking “Are the CIs a tool for subversion or a bridge for understanding?”

Thesis statement

This thesis seeks to test the hypothesis that the CIs do constitute a major change in China’s foreign policy. Although they appear to be a goodwill gesture to promote Chinese language and culture, they are actually part of a strategy to manage China’s international image, and to assist its rise to become a great power. An evolution in China’s foreign policy from belligerence and self-sufficiency during the Cold War, to confidence and engagement in the era of globalisation, is apparent. The CIs appear to have a high degree of political independence, but functionally have a complex relationship with China’s Party-State system. The CIs may detract from the academic independence of learning institutions, but also contribute to the institutions achieving their goals; particularly those that seek to expand Chinese language teaching capabilities in their communities. The CIs are likely to grow and contribute to the growth of Chinese as a world language. However, the China’s goal of growing its soft power may lack effectiveness due to the negative international image of China’s political system.

Why are these issues important?

While China’s rise as an economic and military power receives much attention, the ability to influence the minds of the world, is also an aspect of China’s growing power that deserves attention. Military and economic factors continue to be important sources

³⁹ Margaret J. Wyszomirski, Christopher Burgess, and Catherine Peila *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison* Arts International, Center for Arts and Culture, <http://www.culturalpolicy.org/pdf/MJWpaper.pdf> (Accessed 26 February 2009).

⁴⁰ Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes." p. 44.

⁴¹ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes." p. 79.

of national power in international relations, but less tangible aspects of power such as the ability to influence the agenda of public discussion, are becoming better understood. One of the main manifestations of globalisation has been cultural fluidity, and factors such as culture, education, skills and ideology have become more important than natural resources, geography and population in the contemporary era of globalisation.⁴² Although military capability and economic resources are still important factors in a state's national power, persuasion - getting people to want the policy outcomes that you want, is becoming a more effective means of achieving one's goals than coercing them.⁴³

Many nations are developing programmes influenced by marketing and public relations theory directed at foreign audiences by harnessing the power of their culture, domestic values and policies to achieve foreign policy goals. Because of the relative intangibility of the power of influence as opposed to coercive capability, China's soft power activities are less obvious.⁴⁴ Sheng Ding describes China's soft power activities, especially the global promotion of the Chinese language, with the title of his book; "The Dragon's Hidden Wings."⁴⁵

China has undergone different eras in its foreign relations since the revolution in 1949, and a significant transformation has been apparent since the early 1990s. The need to develop China and adapt to the era of globalisation has required the adoption of new policies. According to a recent study the CCP is seeking to extend and strengthen its rule over China,⁴⁶ a task made more challenging given the information revolution and spread of democracy. The CCP severely attacked Confucianism as an "old idea" during the Mao era, so it is a considerable change for it to be using the image of Confucius at the forefront of this world-wide programme. The CCP may be seeking to introduce its version of Chinese language and culture on the world, but China may become influenced by global values in the process. The engagement process could lead to major

⁴² Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language," p. 10.

⁴³ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*. p. 2.

⁴⁴ Gill and Huang, "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power'," p. 32.

⁴⁵ Sheng Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power* (Plymouth, United Kingdom Rowman and Littlefield 2008).

⁴⁶ Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham, Maryland Rowman and Littlefield, 2008). p. 2.

changes to China itself, as foreigners who speak the Chinese language participate in China's social discourse.

There is debate whether the CIs are neutral and scholarly institutions, or an attempt by the CCP to control what people know about China (as one Chinese dissident⁴⁷ has stated). The CIs are growing rapidly, and there will be 500 by 2010 according to projections.⁴⁸ China has a different political history than the existing powerful states, and is less tolerant of dissent than developed democracies, so it is important to understand how the CIs will handle persons and groups that have a different point of view to the CCP. A question worth asking is whether the CIs are a gift horse or a Trojan horse?

Research sources

The sources of this qualitative study consisted of at least 200 separate items, including academic journal articles and texts, as well as reports, web sources and oral interviews with China studies specialists. Primary research into the opinions of directors of Confucius Institutes to criticism of the CIs relating to academic freedom and political independence was attempted, but it was not possible to obtain responses from a representative sample. A list of 10 questions was formulated, and 122 subjects were contacted (half the CIs existing at the time), with 19 replies or 15.6 % of the sample (and 7% of the total CIs) being received. The low sample of the total CIs diminished the scientific reliability of the results. Nevertheless, the results of this primary research (not replicated elsewhere at the time) offers an insight into the perspective of some individual CI directors. A field trip to the CI at Auckland University in August 2008, enabled first-hand observation, and interviews with staff.

Thesis outline

This Introduction contains a background of what is known about the subject from existing research, a discussion of what is not known, why it is important, and the methodology of my study. Chapter Two observes that China has used its vast cultural resources to influence foreigners and assimilate neighbouring societies in the ancient

⁴⁷ "The Current" June 15, 2007, Part 3 "Confucius Institutes: Critic", Canadian Broadcasting Service. Real Player file <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/2007/200706/20070615.html> Accessed 17 September, 2009.

⁴⁸ Beijing Review, "More Confucius Institutes Founded."

past.⁴⁹ Since 1949, China had a belligerent and diplomatically isolated relationship with many developed democracies, but in practise sought to influence matters it saw as important from behind the scenes. However, this began to change with reform and open policies from 1978. China's international behaviour is evolving with much savvier and more effective diplomacy that still seeks to achieve great power (but not hegemonic) status. This chapter argues that the CIs represent an expansion of Chinese language teaching efforts to foreigners, and they also represent a change in the goals and tactics of Chinese foreign policy.

Chapter Three discusses theories relevant to this study that help us understand power, culture and diplomacy in the contemporary world. The conceptual bases of CCP foreign policy have broadened from Marxism-Leninism to include contemporary global values and traditional Chinese concepts (such as harmony). International relations theories such as Neoliberalism, argue that while military capabilities, natural resources and geography have been important in the past, in the contemporary era, national power is increasingly made up by factors such as institutions, education, technology and influence. Culture has also become recognised as an important factor in international relations, on both the behaviour of states and on their domestic politics. The proponents of the theories of soft power and public diplomacy argue that both will be increasingly important and contested in the globalised era, and these have been adopted into China's foreign policy. Other nations have language institutes that are similar to the CIs as part of their cultural diplomacy, which is one aspect of a public diplomacy strategy.

Chapter Four considers the independence of the CIs from the Chinese political system. The language institutes operating as part of the cultural diplomacy of other nations are found on comparison, to all have some form of connection to the political systems they represent. Ostensibly the CIs are governed by representatives from China's state bureaucracy and foreign partners, but in the Chinese political system, the Party dominates, and tends to conceal the extent of its deep influence. Through various mechanisms such as appointing Party officials to state positions, and hidden bureaucratic networks, the Party ensures that its priorities are carried out. Propaganda is an important source of legitimacy for the Party, and the CIs are part of this system that

⁴⁹ Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*, p.65.

is directed at external audiences. However, the guidance on the CIs from the CCP is compromised with influence from the foreign partners.

Chapter Five details the concerns expressed about the CIs. The concerns that they are a threat to academic independence and a form of political influence have some validity, however, many of those working with CIs are concerned less about such issues, but rather are more concerned with their long-term viability and financial stability. For some universities (especially those with a high academic ranking) the costs of hosting a CI are too high, but for many others the benefits outweigh the negatives. Academic independence is a relative term, and is one of the many factors learning institutions can take into account when deciding whether a CI would assist in achieving the institutions goals. It is generally accepted that the CIs do amount to a form of soft power directed at influencing foreign public opinion to form positive views about a rising China, and there is a need to see them as such, and recognise that other nations are also involved in similar activities.

Chapter Six concludes that China is growing in international influence because of the modernisation of its diplomacy aimed at influencing foreign public opinion. The CIs form a major part of this strategy and will grow larger in the future. However they are likely to be less effective because China's efforts fail to address the international image of the CCP's poor record of political governance. Nevertheless, China's moves towards internationally accepted values of international relations allow greater opportunities for engagement.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to provide a better understanding of the CIs and the role they play in China's engagement with the rest of the world. The CIs can be better understood by an examination of the history and conceptual sources of China's foreign relations. Although the CCP remains in power, it has moved away from its socialist origins, and a new hybrid model is emerging which combines Marxism-Leninism, traditional Chinese values (such as Confucianism) and contemporary international values. China has opened up to the world more, but new forms of Party political influence are emerging that emphasise persuasion rather than coercion. In short, China is relating to the rest of the world in a way that much more effectively maximises its interests without disrupting the world system. The CIs are a useful component of China's international cultural diplomacy, and while they are likely to be restricted in

their effectiveness, they reflect a large and diverse nation gaining more confidence in its relationship with the rest of the world in the 21st century, than has been seen in the last century.

Chapter Two

FROM EXPORTING REVOLUTION TO EXPORTING CULTURE

Introduction

Contemporary China is deploying a new foreign policy that is markedly different in scope and tactics to those deployed by the People's Republic 60 years ago. This chapter seeks to answer the question "To what extent has Chinese foreign policy and teaching of the Chinese language to foreigners changed since 1949?" As China has transformed from a weak economic position in the mid 20th century, to be one of the major global economic powers of the 21st century, its approach to the international system has also transformed. During the Mao era China adopted economic self-sufficiency and a revolutionary socialist path which won it few friends in the West. However, a less ideological and more pragmatic approach emerged under Deng from 1978, which saw gradually expanding ties with former ideological enemies and rapid economic development within China. The current fourth generation of Chinese communist leaders have developed a strategy that seeks to maintain a stable world system in which China can both grow, and maintain favourable domestic conditions. Since 2002, China's new foreign diplomacy has become more engaged and cooperative than at any time in its history.

The CIs are part of a new package of measures aimed at promoting Chinese culture to foreigners, and reassuring the world that China's re-emergence will be peaceful. In this sense, the CIs are representative of the fundamental changes in thinking and behaviour towards foreign relations by China's leaders, however they retain some distinctive features that have not changed. This chapter will outline eras in China's foreign relations, a history of China's promotion of the Chinese language to foreigners and the apparent revival of Confucianism in China.

Throughout the periods of confrontation and engagement, Chinese leaders have been seeking to maintain the country's security. According to Denny Roy Beijing has had

three enduring foreign policy goals; wealth, power and status.⁵⁰ Power is described as the ability to influence other governments to positions that China favours, wealth equates to an improved standard of living for Chinese citizens, and status describes increasing international respect for China.⁵¹ China is striving to retain its position in the world as a great power, and recently its foreign affairs behaviour has become more about developing its economic interests than trying to make its own path towards socialist utopia. The establishment of the CIs in 2004 represents an attempt to harness the enduring image of Confucius as a cultural icon, and the prominence given to Confucianism within China marks the development of a new nationalism which incorporates traditional values.

Foreign affairs behaviour

Traditional Chinese values (including Confucianism and Taoism) have played an important role in the evolution of China's international behaviour. Chinese classical thinkers placed less emphasis on the use of force as a means of maintaining social and political order, and this extended to inter-state affairs, - which contrasts with European intellectuals Machiavelli and Hobbes who emphasized that war was absolutely necessary to bring about order and stability.⁵² Another central tenant was the Confucian view of foreign policy that leaders should lead by moral example and promote social harmony.⁵³ Ancient Chinese strategists preferred diplomatic manoeuvring over military confrontation and these patterns continue to influence modern day foreign relations.⁵⁴

CCP and foreign affairs

The CCP has traditionally had an extremely broad view of external relations that gave it the ability to manage all aspects of China's relations with the rest of the world. Policies that determined China's state to state relations, Chinese people's relations with individual foreigners, and what foreigners could do in China, were all covered by the term *waishi*, which can be loosely translated as "foreign affairs". It is a much broader

⁵⁰ Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations* (Lanham, Maryland Rowman & Littlefield, 1998). p. 22.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Qingxin Wang, "Cultural Norms and the Conduct of Chinese Foreign Policy," in *China's International Relations in the 21st Century: Dynamics of Paradigm Shifts*, ed. Weixing Hu, Gerald Chan, and Daojiong Zha (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000), p. 150.

⁵³ Bell, "From Marx to Confucius: Changing Discourses on China's Political Future."

⁵⁴ Sheng Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power* (Plymouth, United Kingdom: Rowman and Littlefield 2008), p. 24.

view of foreign affairs than a Western definition, and includes state-to-state relations, people-to-people diplomacy, foreign propaganda and the promotion of foreign friends.⁵⁵ In addition to the broad view of foreign relations, a wide-ranging system encompassing many organisations has been developed to manage it. The *waishi* system reflects the CCP desire to manage China's relationship with the rest of the world and it continues with CCP rule.

The Mao era

Mao's path of development for China meant strong relations with socialist nations and relatively weak relations with the West during the 1949-1978 period. Having fought a bitter war of against Japan and a divisive civil war against the Nationalists, the CCP's foreign policy under Zhou Enlai sought to gain political independence and national security in China's relations with the rest of the world. Zhou and Mao created a foreign policy that was influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology and was not averse to becoming militarily involved in Cold War conflicts, such as in Korea in the early 1950s. China leaned to the side of the Soviet Union from 1949 to the early 1960s, and its belligerent attitude towards the West and support for insurgencies created disdain for China and difficulties for ethnic Chinese living abroad. A lean toward the Soviet Union was evident in the foreign policy orientation of China's international relations between 1959 and the early 1960s. After disputes with the Soviet Union in the 1960s, China leant to the centre between the US and USSR, and aligned itself with the developing world.⁵⁶

During this period Chinese diplomats were ideologically rigid and ineffective with the result that Chinese foreign policies made few friends. China's foreign relations in this period were also marked by relative isolation from international organisations, and economic self-sufficiency.⁵⁷ As the country was racked by internal turmoil during the Cultural Revolution from 1966-76 it withdrew further from the world system and at one stage in 1968 had only one ambassador stationed abroad, in Egypt.⁵⁸ During the turmoil corpses were discovered floating down the Pearl River into Hong Kong harbour, and some foreign embassies were attacked, which resulted in nations withdrawing their

⁵⁵ Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic Asia/Pacific/Perspectives* (Lanham Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003). p. 2.

⁵⁶ Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*. p. 28.

⁵⁷ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," p. 24.

⁵⁸ Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*.

ambassadors from Beijing. The international image of Mao's China was largely negative and from the perspective of many of its neighbouring countries and the much Western world, it was a dangerous and unpredictable country and its foreign policy did not have any attractiveness at all.⁵⁹ The promotion of so-called "liberation movements" in states involved in civil wars was part of a policy of "exporting revolution" which was designed to support the freedom of oppressed peoples.⁶⁰ However many developed nations found these actions deeply threatening, and the results of the civil wars were often inconclusive for Beijing. During the Cultural Revolution from 1966-76 China was preoccupied by domestic developments and designing a coherent foreign policy was downgraded on the agenda for the country.⁶¹

An important model for Chinese conduct in foreign relations was the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence agreed on with other developing nations in 1954. It emphasised "non-interference in internal affairs" of other nations, (however in practise China often worked quietly behind the scenes to resolve problems).⁶² This statement remains an important influence on Chinese foreign policy. Early foreign policy under Mao, regarded the world as in transition from capitalism to communism, and emphasised self-reliance to avoid vulnerability created by international trade. The evolution of Chinese foreign relations within the Mao era involved China moving gradually from being a close ally of the Soviet Union, to a more independent international stance, and towards improving relations with the United States.

Personalised foreign relations

China has developed a distinctive tendency to personalise international relations.⁶³ This emerged as one way to conduct diplomacy because early in the CCP's rule, the country was diplomatically isolated. From the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to recent times, all its senior leaders have made statements describing China's external relations as "half state-to-state diplomacy and half people's diplomacy."⁶⁴ This

⁵⁹ Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*. p. 97.

⁶⁰ Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*. p. 25.

⁶¹ Barbara Barnouin and Changgen Yu, *Chinese Foreign Policy During the Cultural Revolution* (London ; New York, NY, USA Kegan Paul International; Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1998). p. 120.

⁶² Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*. p. 22.

⁶³ Yong Deng, "Escaping the Periphery: China's National Identity in World Politics," in *China's International Relations in the 21st Century: Dynamics and Paradigm Shifts*, ed. Weixing Hu, Gerald Chan, and Daojiong Zha (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000, p. 53.

⁶⁴ Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic*. p. 24.

distinctive approach has been described as neither cultural diplomacy as it is usually defined, nor a simple name for standard diplomatic practice, but is a “remarkably effective approach for dealing with the outside world.”⁶⁵ The CCP’s “friendship diplomacy” has focused on breaking out of diplomatic isolation, attempting to influence public opinion in the West, splitting power blocs opposed to the China, creating symbolic solidarity with the people of the world, and affirming China’s global status.⁶⁶ This distinctive diplomacy was based on foreign friends and friendship organisations and is of some similarity to the CIs of the 21st century.

People to people diplomacy, despite its name, does not involve ordinary Chinese citizens becoming diplomats, but rather means that the government uses a wide range of “officially nonofficial” contacts with other countries to expand its influence.⁶⁷ In 1954 the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) was set up to improve China’s image and to facilitate non-official contact between people of other countries. The first ‘friendship association’ was the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association. Such ‘friendship organisations’, ‘ping-pong diplomacy’ (where ping-pong teams were exchanged with the United States in the early 1970s), and people’s exchanges with developing countries were hallmarks of Chinese attempts to break out of diplomatic isolation during the Cold War.

Post 1978: The Reform and Open era

China’s foreign policy radicalism was adjusted and even reversed under the post-Mao leadership, which adopted a policy of being more open to the rest of the world, and promoting security through national development. Deng Xiaoping took China in the direction of engagement with the international community with the aim of promoting economic modernisation. China gradually reduced support for revolutionary movements, and in 1979 ended its war with Vietnam, factors which improved ties with many countries. Economic development took priority over promoting ideology as the country urgently needed the assistance of foreign technology and investment to speed up its modernisation process.⁶⁸ Foreign propaganda was still regarded as an essential

⁶⁵ Ibid. p.23.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p.191.

part of China's modernization process and would now aim to "overcome foreign suspicions" and "suit foreign tastes" rather than praising Mao.⁶⁹

The economic reform era ushered in by Deng Xiaoping encouraged more specialisation and professionalism in China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Improving ties with other countries resulted in more ambassadors being appointed who have mainly been career diplomats rather than former military officers, and a new recruitment policy for the MFA which resulted in a staff pool who were committed to reforms.⁷⁰ Changes resulted in a reworking of the diplomatic process, in favour of flexibility and adaptation.⁷¹

Deng's policies ushered in a new era of being more open to the outside world, while retaining the CCP's dominance in domestic politics. His policies encouraged foreign trade and investment, and China began sending students to Western universities. Additionally, Chinese writers and journalists were encouraged to set up joint ventures with foreign television, radio and film groups.⁷² Cultural, educational and sporting exchange visits became useful for promoting understanding of a Chinese perspective, and likewise understanding Western attitudes. These measures led to an enthusiasm about China moving to rapid political reform by some members of Chinese society, especially students, which tragically proved premature.

"Lying Low"

In June 1989, the Chinese leadership violently suppressed a pro-democracy movement that had raised international hope of further political liberalisation. These events were also a traumatic upheaval for the Chinese ruling elite. The resulting bloodshed caused major damage to China's international image with the result that many Western countries downgraded economic ties with China, and while Deng's leadership survived, China's economic development was threatened. Chinese leaders searched for a way out of the situation, and Deng persuaded elites that economic reform and openness would continue without change to the political system, but increased emphasis needed to be placed on conveying the messages of the leadership to the public, both domestically and externally. He used the term "seize with both hands, and both hands must be strong" to

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ K. Rana, "The Structure and Operation of China's Diplomatic System," *China Report* 41, no. 3 (2005). p. 218.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 219.

⁷² Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic*. p. 192.

describe how the central leadership would ensure stability by tightly managing two aspects: the economy and the propaganda system.⁷³

As a result of the isolation experienced by China in the wake of the crushing of the pro-democracy movement, China adopted a strategy of “lying low” in international affairs.⁷⁴ Deng stressed the need to maintain relationships with those nations that held misgivings about China, and while the West continued to be perceived as hostile, neighbouring Asian nations became the focus of attention.⁷⁵ Also, the leadership urgently underwent a change in its model of communicating its message to domestic and foreign audiences. In November 1989, new leader Jiang Zemin reminded elites that Party policy stated that in a socialist society, all aspects, including culture were part of the ideological sphere that must be managed in the interests of the people.⁷⁶

Following the June 1989 turmoil the CCP was further shaken by the collapse of communism in East European countries and the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1989-1991. As a result of the latter, the CCP underwent a comprehensive process of self-examination of what had gone wrong in the birthplace of Marxism-Leninism, and what it needed to do to avoid the same fate. Chinese assessments were conducted by numerous research organisations such as the Central Party School, and looked at systematic causes as compared to Western analyses which tended to focus on immediate causes.⁷⁷ The assessments indicated that if the CCP did not undergo significant reform it would go the same way as the other communist regimes.

Failings identified from the fall of European communism were described in Chinese assessments as; economic stagnation due to the command economic system, totalitarian leadership leading to terror among the population, poor ideological discipline and peaceful undermining of the system from the West.⁷⁸ During the 1990s, the reports found that the CCP needed to improve economic fundamentals, provide its citizens with opportunities to improve their standard of living, and improve the legitimacy of the Party among the population. This began an urgent process whereby considerable effort

⁷³ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, p. 44.

⁷⁴ Guo *Repackaging Confucius: PRC Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power*. p. 14.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 28.

⁷⁷ David L. Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington, D.C. Berkeley Woodrow Wilson Center Press ;University of California Press, 2008).p. 41.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

was devoted to developing China's market economy, improving the communication of the Party's ideological message, and increasing inner-Party democracy. For example, an extensive process was undertaken whereby corrupt Party members were dismissed, Party educational standards were increased and the commitment of members to ideological fundamentals was tested.⁷⁹

The Party also recognised it needed to improve its communication with foreign publics. The CCP's reforms have been fundamental in scope and belie the general image in the West that there has been no political reform in China since 1989, and that the Chinese system will inevitably succumb to the march of democracy.⁸⁰ Chinese leaders began to adapt their ideology, and more effective means were devoted to managing information and the media. Following the June 1989 disturbances, senior propagandist Zhu Muzhi noted a peak of anti-China sentiment in Western media, and urged China to "step up the battle for world public opinion".⁸¹ A 1998 propaganda booklet for Chinese officials argued that Western powers were using powerful tools of propaganda and public opinion to denigrate China's image on issues such as human rights, and China needed to adopt new measures to combat this.⁸²

During the 1990s China sought to rebuild its international image through more effective diplomacy. Chinese foreign policy debates began to involve a wider range of contributors, and even a more public dimension.⁸³ Analysts and officials began to realise that coercive actions such as seizing the Mischief Reef in 1995, and military exercises in the Taiwan Strait in the mid-1990s raised concerns among China's neighbours and hampered other foreign affairs goals such as repatriating Hong Kong. As a result Chinese leaders attempted to address these concerns by adjusting China's regional diplomacy to focus more on engagement, confidence building exercises and reassurance.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Muzhi Zhu, in *Zhu Muzhi Lun Duiwai xuanchuan* (in Chinese) quoted in Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, p. 154.

⁸² Shandong Sheng duiwai xuanchuan gonzuo huibian ziliao 1992-1998 (Shandong Province Foreign Propaganda Work Reference Manuals 1992-1998) quoted in Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, p. 155.

⁸³ Glaser and Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of Peaceful Rise?," p. 307.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 293.

China's "peaceful rise"

As China has begun to make economic gains, it has begun to play a greater role in international affairs, and has sought to reassure the rest of the world, that its rise as a global power will be peaceful. China's re-emergence as an economic power has been accompanied by concerns that it will be a threat to existing powers and the rest of the world, and Chinese elites have become more aware of the damage negative international public image can have on the drive for economic development and stability. In 2003, the "peaceful rise" (*heping jueqi*) theory promoted by Party theorist Zheng Bijian became influential. He identified pervasive uncertainty and polarized views in the United States about China's future, that had the potential to further complicate US-China relations, and undermine Beijing's pursuit of great power status.⁸⁵ Peaceful rise holds that the process of raising the living standards of the Chinese people can be achieved without destabilizing the international order or oppressing its neighbours.⁸⁶ Zheng advocated promoting Chinese culture abroad as a means of overcoming hostility towards communism and negative images created by the behaviour of Chinese citizens abroad.⁸⁷

The peaceful rise strategy regards a peaceful world environment as essential for China's deep social, economic and political reform.⁸⁸ Beijing has sought to promote good relations wherever it has a strategic interest, which has meant aligning itself with developed as well as developing nations. Regional conferences organised by China in Africa in 2007 and the Pacific in 2006 have provided these regions with alternatives to economic assistance packages offered by other developed nations and generate new political allegiances. After three years of using the term peaceful rise, Chinese leaders are using the term less, in favour of "peaceful development" which fundamentally seeks to serve the same purpose of reassuring the rest of the world, while giving China more flexibility in such fields as military modernisation and deterring Taiwanese independence.⁸⁹ The peaceful development strategy forms part of the foreign policy platform of President Hu Jintao who became President in 2003. While economic

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 295.

⁸⁷ Guo *Repackaging Confucius: PRC Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power*. p. 26.

⁸⁸ Guoli Liu, "The Dialectic Relationship between Peaceful Development and China's Reform," in *China's "Peaceful Rise" in the 21st Century: Domestic and International Conditions*, ed. Guo Sujian (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2006. p. 17

⁸⁹ Glaser and Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of Peaceful Rise?," p. 303.

diplomacy – the practise of promoting commerce - remains low key, cultural diplomacy has shifted into top gear in 2008, and the targeting foreign publics remains a top priority.⁹⁰

Result of the evolution: China as an active international player

In recent years China has emerged as an active player in the international arena, taking a less confrontational, more sophisticated, more confident and sometimes, a more constructive approach to regional and global affairs.⁹¹ Citing Chinese steps to promote a settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue which involved threatening its former close ally North Korea, a *Foreign Affairs* article stated that the measures amounted to a “stark departure” from Chinese passivity and buck-passing on the issue.⁹² The changes have included expanding the depth of its bilateral relationships, deepening participation in key multilateral organisations, and playing an active part in resolving international security issues. Some foreign strategists are sceptical of these changes arguing that China still tries to maximise its interests at the expense of others, and stakes a claim to the moral high ground while riding on the actions of other major powers.⁹³ An undeniable reality however, cannot be ignored; since the mid 1990s, China’s foreign policy has become far more nimble and engaging than at any other time in its history.⁹⁴

China’s current foreign policy can be described as one of “balance”. It involves balancing the lying low policy of Deng with the great power ambitions of Jiang, playing one country or power bloc after another with the aim of establishing a multi-polar world, and balancing the socialist goal of third world friendship with the imperatives of securing national development and becoming a member of the first world.⁹⁵ Kurlantzick describes China’s contemporary goals as including maintaining the stability of its borders, portraying itself as a constructive actor, isolating Taiwan, becoming a model to other nations and demonstrating the possibility that it can become a great power.⁹⁶ Outlining the countries diplomatic priorities for 2009, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi stated that the over-arching objective was ensuring steady economic development

⁹⁰ Rana, "The Structure and Operation of China's Diplomatic System," p. 223.

⁹¹ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," p. 22.

⁹² Ibid. p. 22.

⁹³ Ibid. p. 23.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Willy Lam *Beijing's New "balanced" Foreign Policy: An Assessment* China Brief, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=3626 (Accessed April 12, 2009).

⁹⁶ Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World*. pp. 37-60

in China, while safeguarding China's territorial and security interests, pursuing cultural diplomacy, and strengthening the rights and interests of Chinese nationals abroad.⁹⁷ However, according to Sheng Ding, many analysts believe China's real objective is to maximise its power and influence at regional and global levels or as Jiang Zemin stated to "increase China's national greatness".⁹⁸

Historical suspicions of China, particularly in Asia, may also be an obstacle to China achieving its goals of peaceful development. For many South-East Asian countries the chance of Chinese influence raising local Chinese consciousness in their own communities is a cause of concern.⁹⁹ In Japan, Chinese culture has had a major influence, but the relationship has become more complicated in recent years. In the eyes of many Japanese, China has lost its moral standing due to Beijing's criticism of Tokyo's attitude towards the history of World War II and demands for humiliating apologies for past offenses.¹⁰⁰ Despite this, the Chinese language is becoming an important language in many parts of Asia.

China is undergoing rapid development in its diplomacy and has selectively adopted contemporary diplomatic tools of influence in the economic and cultural fields. Joshua Kurlantzick describes Chinese use of foreign economic assistance, and the promotion of Chinese culture to foreign audiences as a "charm offensive."¹⁰¹ Not only has Beijing adjusted the strategic perspective of its foreign policy, but it also has put many new initiatives in place.¹⁰² In a short time, Beijing has adopted a systematic coherent strategy and a set of tools to implement it. These include assisting Chinese businesses abroad, improved foreign broadcasting, more effective media briefings, assistance for student exchanges and the promotion of the Chinese culture and language abroad. Through these measures, China has increased its influence, but many nations have not recognised the downsides such as the export of China's domestic problems. China's state-centred model of development and lack of political transparency are strengthening

⁹⁷ Beijing Review, "Foreign Policy Focus." March 19 p. 10 http://www.bjreview.com.cn/world/txt/2009-03/13/content_185060.htm (Accessed 2, 2009).

⁹⁸ Quoted in Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*, p. 114.

⁹⁹ Cheong Ching, "China's Revival of Confucianism Sparks Enthusiasm and Wariness" *The Straits Times* 2008, http://meltwaternews.com/prerobot/sph.asp?pub=ST&spurl=www.straitstimes.com/Our%2BColumnists/Column/STISStory_264585.html (Accessed August 15, 2008).

¹⁰⁰ Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language." p. 24

¹⁰¹ Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World*.

¹⁰² Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*. Chapter 8

authoritarian regimes and undermining attempts to promote better governance.¹⁰³ The changes have been subtle and slow, but their significance for the rest of the world is immense.¹⁰⁴

Chinese language promotion to foreigners

As part of its new diplomacy, China has put more effort into promoting its language internationally. Efforts to promote the learning of the Chinese language by foreign non-native speakers have been in existence since the CCP came to power in 1949. Initial efforts focused on the Soviet bloc of countries. In 1950 Tsinghua University in Beijing instituted an exchange for Eastern European students to study the Chinese language as a foreign language, and in 1962, the Higher Preparatory School for Foreign students was set up, becoming the Beijing Languages Institute, a base for teaching Chinese as a foreign language.¹⁰⁵ In the early 1960s China sent a number of language teachers to Egypt, Mali, Congo, Cambodia, Yemen and France, but during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) many international activities diminished and the Beijing Languages Institute was closed down and foreign students returned home. However, towards the end of the Cultural Revolution in the early 1970s cultural and sporting exchanges such as those with the US began to improve. Visitors in the form of foreign scholars from Western countries were permitted from the early 1970s, with many of the individuals involved going on to careers as specialist China scholars outside China.

After the 1978 reform and opening up policies began, teaching Chinese as a foreign language underwent a new stage of development, even though China had been actively promoting cultural exchanges with many countries for several years. The third-world countries had been traditional cultural exchange partners, but cultural exchanges began to increase with other countries also. Language policies such as encouraging the speaking of English within China and teaching the Chinese language to foreigners, especially in Western countries, aimed to reduce the language barriers faced by international investors and to attract foreign capital. Supporters of this strategy argued that foreigners who invest time in learning the Chinese language were likely to “establish normal, long-lasting relationships with [China] and they will develop a

¹⁰³ Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World*. pp. 172-175.

¹⁰⁴ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy." p. 23.

¹⁰⁵ Ministry of Education n.d. *About Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language*
<http://www.moe.edu.cn/edoas/website18/39/info12239.htm> (Accessed 29 January, 2009).

special feeling, *ganqing* [towards China]. This will be very useful in the long run.”¹⁰⁶ In July 1987, China’s State Council, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, the Beijing Languages Institute and other state departments, set up the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (known as Hanban).

Since its establishment, Hanban has launched many campaigns to reach out to the world by promoting interest in the Chinese language. In the 1980s the Chinese government began to refocus its propaganda activities to promote economic development. China opened up to more joint ventures with foreign media companies, as well as with journalists and foreign social science researchers.¹⁰⁷ One of the results was that Chinese universities were able to open themselves to a number of foreign fee-paying students.¹⁰⁸ From 1985 China Radio International began to broadcast Chinese language teaching programs in a variety of languages, and in 1987 a World Society for the Teaching of Chinese was set up.¹⁰⁹ The Chinese language proficiency test for non-native speakers, *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* (HSK) was initiated in 1990 as the standardised test of Chinese linguistic ability for foreigners and domestic minorities whose mother tongue is a non-Chinese language.¹¹⁰ In addition, qualifications for teachers of Mandarin to foreigners were established.¹¹¹ Foreign locations used for HSK tests began to develop into a network.¹¹²

The establishment of Chinese cultural centres beginning in the 1980s was an early step in Beijing’s cultural promotion activities. The first one was in Mauritius, where a Chinese Cultural Centre was established by the Chinese Government in 1989. By 2009 there were seven, with plans to open five more.¹¹³ Rumi Aoyama draws attention to the dominant approach of cultural diplomacy between China and Europe, where since the early 1990s, China would establish a framework based on inter-governmental agreements such as “cultural exchange agreements” to establish cultural exchange

¹⁰⁶ Zhu Muzhi, “Ba duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo tigao yibu,” 22 June 1986, Zhu Muzhi lun duiwai xuanchuan quoted in Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People’s Republic*. p. 193.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 194.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Chen Wang, “Let the World Understand the Chinese Language.” *Beijing Review* November 11-17, p. 13.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Hanban 2007, <http://english.hanban.edu.cn/market/HanBanE/413810.htm> (Accessed October 9, 2008)

¹¹² Wang, “Let the World Understand the Chinese Language.”

¹¹³ Li Xing, “Hu: “Culture important for ties”” *People’s Daily* http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-02/17/content_7485848.htm (Accessed October 22, 2009).

centres in each other's countries.¹¹⁴ In 1992, Hanban established Chinese cultural centres in Russia (in Moscow and St. Petersburg), and later, another such centre was established in Kazakhstan. The Chinese Ministry of Education has been cooperating with the State of Lower Saxony in Germany since 1997 on the construction of a Chinese centre in its state capital Hanover. These cultural centres focused on Chinese language promotion, inter-cultural training and special talents training.¹¹⁵ In 2003, cultural festivals and centres were established in exchange with countries such as France, Germany and Italy. A increasing feature of China's cultural activities with Europe is that they are carried out under government initiative and on a reciprocal basis.¹¹⁶

The Chinese Bridge Project

In October 2004, a decision of the State Council established the CIs with the approval of Hanban's proposed "Chinese Bridge project" (*Hanyu qiao*), comprising of a package of measures to promote the speaking of the Chinese language internationally.¹¹⁷ The measures included standardising requirements for teachers of Chinese, expansion of HSK language proficiency test locations, improvement of audio visual resources, and the establishment of the CIs. Hanban would provide administrative support for the CIs and they would be led by Hanban's Leadership Council of state bureaucracy representatives. These measures marked an major expansion of activities aimed at promoting the teaching of the Chinese language to foreigners.

After a pilot scheme in Tashkent, Uzbekistan which began in the June 2004, the first Confucius Institute was established in Seoul, South Korea in November 2004.¹¹⁸ This reflects the importance of neighbouring countries to China which desires peace and stability on its borders, and the popularity of the Chinese language in South Korea, where it rivals English as the second most spoken language.¹¹⁹ Initially, the goal was for 100 institutes, but officials appear to have been surprised by the demand as this target was achieved within three years, and it was raised upwards to achieve 500 by 2010.

¹¹⁴ Rumi Aoyama *China's Public Diplomacy* Waseda University, http://dSPACE.wul.waseda.ac.jp/dSPACE/bitstream/2065/12795/1/41_070321-Aoyama-e.pdf (Accessed 12 June, 2008).

¹¹⁵ Yanshuo, "Confucius Around the World".

¹¹⁶ Aoyama *China's Public Diplomacy*.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p. 1.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

In December 2007, a CI Leadership Council was created to manage the rapidly growing network, replacing the leadership from Hanban. This council consists of a chair, three vice-chairs nominated by the State Council, 15 representatives of relevant Chinese government departments, 10 committee members who are the chair of the board of a foreign CI, and the remaining 5 being positions for Chinese educational partners.¹²⁰ The State Council is the highest authority in the state bureaucratic system, and functions as a cabinet, although the highest organisation in China's political system is the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP.¹²¹

While the Chinese language is the world's most widely spoken language, it is likely to lag behind Western languages such as English, Spanish and French in terms of popularity as a globally accepted means of communication for some time. This is a result of the current global structure of cultural power distribution which favours nations with systems that are closer to international norms. United States culture is still vastly popular in terms of global high and popular culture, and in cinema for example, Chinese-language movies' share of the global box-office was 1.6 percent in recent years, compared to 54.2 percent for English-language movies.¹²²

After a century of semi-colonial status and 50 years of third world membership, with the establishment of the first CI in Seoul, China was joining a first world club.¹²³ The location of the first CI in South Korea reflects the Chinese government's sense of history, as Korea was the last part of China's traditional cultural empire which was forcibly removed by Japan following their 1894-5 war. Korea has a strong affinity with Chinese culture and North Korea students were welcomed to China in the 1980s, as well as South Koreans who have been enthusiastically taking up opportunities to learn the Chinese language. The Chinese characters for China; 中 or *Zhong guo* translate as "central state"¹²⁴ reflecting the era when China was the source of culture and commerce in the world, and was surrounded by tributary states.

¹²⁰ Ying Wang 2007 *Council Created for Confucius Institutes*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2007-12/13/content_6317610.htm (Accessed 8 January 2009).

¹²¹ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. pp. 175,177

¹²² Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language," p. 16.

¹²³ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes."

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 1.

Rejection and rise of Confucianism

China chose Confucius to be the figurehead of its language institute for the association with traditional culture in line with some other cultural institutes such as Germany's Goethe Institute, and Russia's Pushkin Institute. "Confucius" is actually a latinization of the Chinese characters 孔 • or *Kongzi*, and this was translated by the early Catholic Missionary Matteo Ricci.¹²⁵ In fact, Lionel Jensen has argued that what the West knows as "Confucius" is quite different to the cultural hero revered by Chinese as *Kongzi*.¹²⁶ *Kongzi* was an itinerant philosopher who lived 551-479 BC when much of China was in turmoil and stood for reverence for traditions and respect for authority.

The wide-ranging ideas of Confucianism have three core features; it was a strongly conservative ideology, it valued social hierarchy, and emphasised that people should understand the "correct" conduct demanded by each type of relationship.¹²⁷ A Confucian world view values governance by virtue, where leaders legitimacy is established through their superior moral values.¹²⁸ In this concept, leadership was based on meritocracy in which leaders were selected by exams which tested their care and understanding of the People, rather than on popular vote. The Confucian concept of harmony (*he*), where an individual accepts their place in the family, society, nation, and world is also crucial to the philosophy and has been useful to Chinese leaders. However, the Confucian doctrines of self-restraint and conformity stand in opposition to ideologies of change and have been criticised by radical intellectuals who favour such change.¹²⁹

During the intellectual movement that sought out new ideas for China following the collapse of the Imperial system in 1911, and the popular discontent over the 1919 Versailles Conference (which handed German concessions in China to Japan), Confucianism was subject to heavy criticism. The May Fourth (1919) Movement was an intellectual revolution and socio-political reform movement which attacked

¹²⁵ Don Starr. *Creating a World Language: Chinese Government Policy and the Confucius Institute Programme viewed from a British Perspective* Paper given at conference: Rising China in the Age of Globalisation University College, Dublin Ireland August 16, 2007.

¹²⁶ Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization* (Durham Duke University Press, 1997), p. 5.

¹²⁷ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*, p. 7.

¹²⁸ Qing Cao, "Confucian Vision of a New World Order? Culturalist Discourse, Foreign Policy and the Press in Contemporary China," *The International Communication Gazette* 69, no. 5 (2007) p. 436.

¹²⁹ Zhang and Schwartz, "Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A Study in Collective Memory," p. 194.

traditional Confucian ideas and exalted Western ideas, particularly science and democracy. The reformers inquiry into liberalism, socialism and nationalism led them to criticise Chinese ethics, religion and social and political institutions.¹³⁰

The CCP was both drawn to and repelled by Confucianism because on the one hand it legitimated hegemony and, on the other, it was opposed to revolution. Mao himself spent his life fighting the kind of society that Confucianism produced.¹³¹ He rejected Confucian notions of the absolute value of harmony, and the sense of dependency that the resulting hierarchical society nurtured. From 1949 to 1966, the Party undertook policies of agricultural “reform” which resulted in land redistribution and massive famine, but the Confucian doctrine of asceticism (obtaining a high personal spiritual state through self-denial) was useful during this period of indescribable suffering.¹³²

As the Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1976) progressed, attitudes towards Confucius became more radical. A campaign was launched by Mao to remove anything “old” and replace it with the “new”, in a campaign that resonated with “bourgeois” vs. “proletariat”. Traditional Confucian ideals that valued family devotion were attacked as preserving the order of slavehood. Initially Confucian ideals were criticised but later Confucius became history’s greatest villain and every aspect of Confucianism was attacked. Although not officially sanctioned, the cultural revolutionaries tried to destroy every relic of Confucius such as temples, monuments and sacred texts, to express their contempt for the old system’s corruptness.¹³³ When Mao criticised wayward political leaders such as Lin Biao it made sense to link them with Confucius, and Mao’s attacks on Confucius was also used to deal with critics of his own policies and record.¹³⁴

As the excesses of the Cultural Revolution led to it being discredited, so did its targets begin to be revived, and Confucian prestige rose to a higher level than it had been before the Cultural Revolution. In 1976 Mao died and Deng Xiaoping gained power, bringing China into a new period of development. The new authority punished the “Gang of Four” for their excesses including their attacks on Confucius, restored

¹³⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica n.d. *May Fourth Movement*,

<http://www.search.eb.com.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/eb/article-9051570> (Accessed March 14, 2009).

¹³¹ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. p. 6.

¹³² Zhang and Schwartz, "Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A Study in Collective Memory," p. 194.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* p.198.

Confucian shrines damaged by Red Guards, and punished vandals.¹³⁵ As China's economy opened up to external trade, many young scholars thought the only way for China to survive was to embrace western liberalism, however the regime made a conscious effort to merge the traditional with the modern.¹³⁶ New Confucianists insisted that reformed governmental, business and family ethics would preserve tradition as China modernised.¹³⁷

There has been an increase in Confucian concepts and nationalism in the discourse of Chinese leaders both domestically and internationally, and an increase in public interest in the subject as well. However, China is still an authoritarian society, in which elites largely control a linear pattern of political communication.¹³⁸ The CCP rules through control over the administrative machinery, its coercive power, and a pervasive campaign of propaganda to condition the public for uniform thinking. This "discursive colonisation" gives it the ability to maintain control over a fast-changing society.¹³⁹ It is clear that a revival of popular interest in Chinese traditions is supported by the Party.

Nationalism and Confucian concepts such as harmony have been used to underpin the current fourth generation of communist leaders' policy innovation, and promote domestic and global stability. However, with the Chinese system combining a market economy and a one-party state resulting in the popular rejection of Marxism-Leninism, Confucianism is increasingly being promoted to reduce social tensions and present the image of a peaceful, rising China. The Confucian rhetoric of *he bu tong* (harmonious but different) and *he wei gui* (peace as the ultimate objective), is increasingly being used to project a pacifist cultural image to the world which serves as a direct response to the "China threat" thesis,¹⁴⁰ (which argues that China's re-emergence should not be welcomed because it will be threatening to others). According to Cao, the promotion of Confucian concepts in international relations represents a challenge to the established international political culture of the 21st century.¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 203

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Cao, "Confucian Vision of a New World Order? Culturalist Discourse, Foreign Policy and the Press in Contemporary China." p. 433.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 440.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 432.

In contemporary China, Marxism-Leninism is so discredited by its use during the Mao era to justify excesses such as the Cultural Revolution that it no longer has significant legitimacy in contemporary Chinese society, and the government has encouraged a revival of Confucianism as a political model for the future.¹⁴² In 1995, for the first time, CCP leaders celebrated the 2545th anniversary of the birth of Confucius, and especially since the 16th Party Congress in 2002, President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao have been stressing an integrated cultural approach to a wide range of issues. In 2003 Premier Wen Jiabao gave an address at Harvard University where he stated “applying *he bu tong* [harmonious but different] to resolving problems is conducive to treating neighbouring countries with civility and leads to a successful resolution of conflict in the international community”.¹⁴³ In other words, he was saying different cultures can exist side by side if they respect each other. This offers a defence of China’s model of development against the Washington-based model involving economic liberalisation and Liberal Democracy.

While there is some debate in China about how to define the country’s contemporary culture, Confucianism is a hot topic. Externally China is promoting a “pacifist cultural image” in response to the argument that China is a threat.¹⁴⁴ However Cao argues that it will be a long way to go for the political elite in China to resolve the contradictions between the different value systems: Confucian traditions, “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and democracy and the rule of law.¹⁴⁵ However, Bell argues that such is the enthusiasm of the uptake of Confucianism, that it provides a direction for contemporary China, and it is not impossible that the CCP will be renamed the Confucius Party in the future.¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the evolution of China’s foreign policies and the role that this has played in the establishment of the CIs. According to Andrew Nathan and Robert Ross, in the 160 years that China has been involved in the international system, its foreign relations have reflected a number of persistent features that include

¹⁴² Bell, "From Marx to Confucius: Changing Discourses on China’s Political Future." p. 2.

¹⁴³ Cao, "Confucian Vision of a New World Order? Culturalist Discourse, Foreign Policy and the Press in Contemporary China," p. 437.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p.447.

¹⁴⁶ Bell, "From Marx to Confucius: Changing Discourses on China’s Political Future." p. 2.

the idea of China as a central state with a self-sufficient civilisation, a tendency to encourage others to resolve disputes peacefully, combined with frequent defensive uses of force in its neighbourhood, a moralist approach to international relations, skill at balancing between other powers and concern about the impact of foreign ties.¹⁴⁷ Historically, traditions that emphasise a cultural approach to diplomacy have also influenced the foreign policies of successive Chinese leaders. To that extent, the CIs are a continuation of historical Chinese patterns of international relations.

Language policies have consistently been used by successive Chinese governments to promote national unity and improve literacy. The expansion of Chinese language teaching is an example of the continued importance of cultural diplomacy to China's foreign policy, and the CIs represent a major expansion of previous language teaching efforts targeted at foreigners. China has been slow to develop Chinese language teaching programmes targeted at foreigners and its diaspora compared with Western European nations, but coordinated efforts began in the 1980s, and got a kick start with the establishment of the CI programme in 2004. The CIs are part of a package of measures to harness China's national language and to promote a positive feeling among foreigners over the long term, which is part of a recent policy to promote the civilised side of Chinese culture to overcome negative publicity.

It is for good reason that Chinese leaders have chosen to use the image and name of Confucius to be new face of Chinese cultural diplomacy. The revival of Confucianism has occurred domestically, and the image of Confucius in the CIs represents its applicability as a cultural symbol for a new China. Confucianism, which values harmony, respect for authority and stability, was promoted at a time of instability in traditional China but, it has been denigrated by revolutionaries such as Mao because it was seen as standing in opposition to ideologies of radical change. However there has been an increase in Confucian discourse in the 21st century, especially among China's leaders who see it as offering a guiding set of values for the contemporary era both domestically and internationally. There is a certain discrepancy between the various ideological choices China faces including socialism with Chinese characteristics, Confucianism and liberal democracy.

¹⁴⁷ Andrew J Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and The Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York W.W. Norton, 1997), p. 19.

Chinese foreign policy behaviour has evolved from belligerence and isolation to cooperation and engagement. New foreign policy tactics have been devised that are flexible rather than rigid, and aim to promote the country's economic development. In the 21st century, China's foreign policy has evolved into one that is "smarter and more sophisticated, but not necessarily kinder or gentler."¹⁴⁸ A package of measures has been devised to support China's growing political influence, and cultural diplomacy emphasising Confucius is now a major aspect China's new foreign relations. The CI programme has been appealing to Beijing because it accords with previous Chinese approaches to foreign policy that have involved the use of culture to achieve political goals. In addition, new factors such as the need to improve China's international image, and the rise of professionalism in its foreign affairs institutions, have paved the way for the programme to develop.

¹⁴⁸ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy." p. 24.

Chapter Three

THEORIES OF POWER, CULTURE AND DIPLOMACY

Introduction

Theories of international relations can provide a framework for understanding general patterns underlying seemingly unique events, and provide scholars with a means to predict outcomes. This chapter seeks to locate the study of the CIs and Chinese foreign policy within international relations theory, and finds that the CIs and China's "new" diplomacy¹⁴⁹ are the practical expressions of the broadening of the conceptual sources of Chinese foreign policy. In liberal academic literature on international relations theory, there is renewed interest in less tangible forms of power such as leadership, institutions and the ability to shape public opinion, – in contrast to realism's focus on coercive military and economic factors. Since 1978, China's conceptual sources of international relations behaviour have broadened from Marxism-Leninism to include international norms as well as traditional Chinese values. One example of this is the adoption of the theory which recognises new forms of power and strategies aimed at influencing foreign public opinion, on which the CIs are based.

According to Western studies, China's foreign affairs behaviour does show a degree of predictability within mainstream theoretical constraints, although reference to China's particular strategic and social circumstances also is important.¹⁵⁰ Some theorists have found merit in describing China's foreign affairs behaviour in a realist frame; generally self-serving at the expense of others.¹⁵¹ However liberal values that emphasise cooperation, interdependence and a recognition of less tangible forms of power are increasingly being recognised in China's foreign policy. This thesis discusses the CIs in relation to the theories of soft power and public diplomacy. In addition, traditional Chinese values such as; Sinocentrism (China at the centre of the world), the mandate of heaven (which legitimises leadership), and rule by virtue and morality (rather than by citizen choice), can also be a guide to China's international behaviour.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*. p. 44.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 229.

The (in)tangibility of power resources in the contemporary era

The evolving international environment is giving rise to new understandings of power - a concept central to the study of politics. Classical realist theory tells us that a state's interests are primarily shaped by its power, which is usually measured in terms of material resources and political influence.¹⁵² Realist scholars such as Hans J. Morgenthau regard tangible factors such as raw materials, population, geography and military capabilities as important in accessing a nation's power.¹⁵³ However, Morgenthau also mentioned national character, quality of diplomacy and quality of government as important considerations. Liberal scholars build on this to take a broader view of power that includes less tangible factors such as industrial development, national image, leadership and public support.

In the contemporary era of globalisation, power has become less coercive and less tangible, especially among the developed democracies.¹⁵⁴ Winning hearts and minds has always been strategic, and it is harder in the global information age, where the access to information is greater than before. Information is power and how the information is presented can have an influence on how it is perceived. Education, skills and technology have also become indications of a nation's power, as these factors have been able to overcome disadvantages in location and natural resources.

The "complex interdependence" of the world has made the pure exercise of military force problematic in the age of nuclear weapons and asymmetrical warfare. As former US House Speaker Newt Gingrich said of the US's policies in Iraq, "The real test is not how many enemies I kill, but how many friends and allies I grow."¹⁵⁵ China has realised that military solutions practised alone, such as towards Taiwan, can have a negative impact on public opinion in neighbouring nations where a positive image is important for investment.

¹⁵² Randall Schweller, "Managing the Rise of Great Powers: Theory and History," in *Engaging China : the Management of an Emerging Power*, ed. Alastair I. Johnston and Robert S. Ross (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁵³ Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language."p. 13.

¹⁵⁴ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*.p. 30.

¹⁵⁵ John Barry and Evan Thomas, "Dissent in the Bunker" *Newsweek* 2003, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=495160701&Fmt=7&clientId=13346&RQT=309&VName=PQD> (Accessed June 11, 2008).

To counter claims that the US was declining as a world power, Joseph Nye argued that it was still strong in the power to influence foreign audiences because of the appeal of its culture and attraction to its values.¹⁵⁶ Later the theory of soft power will be discussed, which describes the power to get people to do what you want through influence rather than coercion, which can be achieved by strategies known as public diplomacy. While tangible factors such as military capability and commerce remain important and continue to take up most of the attention, other sources of power (such as institutions designed to influence international public opinion) are less obvious, and may not be receiving sufficient attention. Governments can use their military capabilities to threaten or if necessary, impose their will on another political opponent. Similarly they can use economic power to achieve desired outcomes by freezing assets, distribute aid or apply economic sanctions. But the contemporary era, Joseph Nye argues that to be effective, nations must combine their military and economic tools with programmes to influence foreign public opinion.¹⁵⁷

Language and power

Language and power have always had a close relationship.¹⁵⁸ Language is also one of the most effective tools for spreading culture and a central element in cultural globalisation. The language one speaks is important towards shaping how one views the world around them. According to structural linguists like Ferdinand de Saussure,

The language one speaks actually determines the way an individual perceives the world around them, thus Farsi-, English-, and Thai-speakers, because of their linguistic differences, all possess different mental structures for organising the things they see around them.¹⁵⁹

Considering this deep and close relationship between language and perception, it is strategic for a nation that aspires to great power status, to promote its language. Although the English language remains the most global of languages, Mandarin Chinese has the largest number of native speakers, and is growing in popularity as China has grown in economic influence.

¹⁵⁶ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*.p. 32.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language," p. 1.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Ibid. p. 6.

In every period of globalisation, hegemonic powers have sought to promote unity by promoting their language.¹⁶⁰ Examples of this are Greek, Latin, classical Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English. In nearly every case, economic, social, and/or political power has tended to be related to the reasons for the wide-spread adoption of the new form of communication.¹⁶¹ As China grows in comprehensive national power, there is increased interest in how China may use cultural power to influence polities outside its borders. Several studies point to the increase in interest in learning the Chinese language related to China's economic re-emergence. According to Ding, in the second decade of the 21st century, the most important language to learn for job opportunities is likely to be Mandarin Chinese, given the large number of native speakers, and the rising status of China in the world economy and international politics.¹⁶²

Culture, globalisation and power

With the end of the Cold War, cultural factors, rather than ideologies have emerged as important influences in international relations. According to Ding and Saunders, culture often supersedes rational choice and diplomacy as the major force in international relations.¹⁶³ This relates to the way domestic culture influences national leaders, and the way international culture increasingly influences domestic politics. Culture is increasingly recognised as having an influence on decision-making at national and international levels. Culture can be viewed as a “filter of knowledge” through which publics and decision makers make decisions.¹⁶⁴ Cultural resources also influence national decision making, economic development, and social structure; as well as influencing global and local conflicts.¹⁶⁵

Culture is another less tangible factor that can influence how power is distributed. Culture is commonly defined as “a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of a society [that includes] ways of living together, values systems,

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 1.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 2.

¹⁶² Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*. p. 117.

¹⁶³ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 5.

traditions and beliefs.”¹⁶⁶ The Marxist theory of “cultural hegemony” has been expressed by Antonio Gramsci who argued that by having a culture that all classes look up to, is a means the bourgeoisie use to control other classes.¹⁶⁷

In a globalised world where cultures constantly intersect, cultural identity and competition are becoming more important. The fluid nature of culture is one of the most obvious manifestations of globalisation. Examples of this fluidity include the worldwide popularity of Hong Kong martial arts films, or the homogenisation of cultures shown by the 1000 Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets serving Chinese versions of American fast food throughout China.¹⁶⁸ Improved communications such as the internet and satellite broadcasting have enabled cultural products to be rapidly disseminated, assisting cultural fluidity.

As improved communications have broken down the boundaries of the nation-state, new forms of cultural identification have become more important for an individual’s identity. As Ding and Saunders observe, few manifestations of globalisation are as visible, persuasive and resonant than global cultural exchange.¹⁶⁹ National cultural autonomy has diminished as new transnational networks have formed around alliances, epistemic communities, and diasporic cultures, all of which have transformed the way international politics is conducted.¹⁷⁰ The breaking down of national boundaries has led to people seeking a culture to identify with, and international actors seeking new ways to influence them.

Diaspora groups based on a shared ethnicity and transnational communities have become more significant in world politics, and the 32 million overseas Chinese are also important to the Chinese Government. Overseas Chinese are an important link between China and the rest of the world, as investors and as a link to the public opinion in foreign countries.¹⁷¹ Given the importance of culture to international relations, it is

¹⁶⁶ UNESCO *Declaration on Cultural Diversity* General Conference of UNESCO, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf> (Accessed 2 June 2009).

¹⁶⁷ Steve Jones, *Antonio Gramsci* Routledge Critical Thinkers (London ; New York Routledge, 2006).

¹⁶⁸ Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language." p. 5.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language."

¹⁷¹ Amy Freedman, "Overseas Chinese and Political Change in China," in *International Migration and the Globalization of Domestic Politics*, ed. Ray Koslowski (London and New York: Routledge, 2005. p. 140.

logical that nations such as China are developing programmes like the CIs to promote their own culture to extend their influence abroad.

Soft Power

The attraction of a nation’s culture, institutions and policies in foreign public opinion, can make it easier for the country being represented to meet its foreign policy goals. The ability to get people to do what you want without resorting to coercive tactics but rather getting them to want what you want, is the basis of a broader understanding of power. Soft Power has been defined by Joseph Nye as “Getting what you want with attraction rather than coercion or payments”.¹⁷² It rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others, and may be a more effective technique to obtain the outcomes one wants than coercion. A large organisation may be difficult to run on commands alone because, “you need people to buy into your values”.¹⁷³ Nye describes the three types of power that nations must use to be effective in the contemporary international system in the following table.¹⁷⁴

Table 1 Three types of power

	Behaviours	Primary Currencies	Government Policies
Military Power	coercion deterrence protection	threats force	coercive diplomacy war alliances
Economic Power	inducement coercion	payments sanctions	Aid bribes sanctions
Soft Power	attraction	values culture institutions	public diplomacy bilateral and multilateral diplomacy

Nye also argues that soft power will become more important and contested in the “information age.”¹⁷⁵ The resources that produce soft power derive often from the culture of the country it originates from, the values a country champions in its behaviour at home and abroad, and in its domestic and foreign policies, all of which strongly influence the preferences of others. Nye argues that countries that are likely to be more attractive and gain soft power are those with multiple channels of

¹⁷² Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*. p. x.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 5.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 31.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 32.

communication that help frame issues, whose dominant culture is closer to international norms, and whose credibility is enhanced by their domestic and international policies.¹⁷⁶

There are many early examples of the use of soft power. Nye mentions attempts by French revolutionaries in the 18th century who sought to go over the heads of foreign governments to appeal directly to the populations of other countries with their revolutionary ideology.¹⁷⁷ He describes the formation of the Alliance Française in 1883 as an attempt by the French Government to overcome its defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, by repairing the nation's shattered prestige by promoting its language and culture.¹⁷⁸ Britain and Germany followed by founding cultural institutes in the 1930s. Noticing the negative results of German mass propaganda, Britain was more successful at using a soft sell and influencing US public opinion by emphasising the dignity and elegance of British culture.¹⁷⁹

In China there has been an upsurge in interest in soft power since 1993 and leaders have adopted it as the theoretical justification for the CIs. Chinese scholars realise that soft power is an element of becoming a global power and the CIs are evidence of Beijing's determination to develop the country's soft power.¹⁸⁰ President Hu stated at the 2007 Party Congress that China would continue to expand efforts to showcase its culture and language to the world.¹⁸¹ Chinese scholars also recognise that while the China model of development may create some admiration among foreign audiences, the country has a long way to go before it will have the international influence of great powers such as the US.¹⁸² Many liberal-minded intellectuals in China argue that the country will need more progress towards institution building in various fields – economic, social, cultural and political – to ensure the transition from the rule of men to the rule of law which would be appealing to developing states.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Mingjiang Li, *Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect* S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, <http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/WorkingPapers/WP165.pdf>

¹⁸¹ Xinhua *Hu Jintao Calls for Enhancing 'Soft Power' of Chinese Culture*.

¹⁸² Mingjiang Li *Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect* S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, <http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/WorkingPapers/WP165.pdf> (Accessed 1 September, 2008).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

The power of an attractive culture

When a country's culture is seen as attractive, vibrant and futuristic, it leads people to be more open to the policies of the government of that country. Narrow values and a culture limited in outlook are less likely to produce soft power. The flexibility and attraction of US popular culture outpaced the state-run Soviet cultural programmes and helped US foreign policy goals, such as victory in the Cold War.¹⁸⁴ Japanese leaders have noted that the popularity of Japanese cultural products such as *manga* comics represents a way to "grasp the hearts" of young people in many countries.¹⁸⁵ Liking the food or clothing of the US however, does not necessarily translate into political allegiance, and culture appreciated in Australia may have the opposite reaction in Saudi Arabia. However, polls show that popular culture has made the US seem exciting, rich, exotic, powerful, trend-setting, at the cutting edge of modernity and innovation.¹⁸⁶ Such images have the affect of attracting people to the American lifestyle.

There are many examples of Chinese cultural soft power. For much of its history, China was the strongest nation in the world – not just in military and economic terms, but in the cultural sphere as well.¹⁸⁷ In the fifth century, Admiral Zheng He's exploratory voyages demonstrated the power of Chinese civilisation and established important links between China and other nations.¹⁸⁸ Chinese cultural influence extended to tributary countries such as Japan, Korea and Vietnam, all of which took on aspects of Chinese language and culture. However, China's role as a cultural source suffered a downturn in the mid 19th century, and this continued into the late 20th century. However, since Deng Xiaoping's "open door" policy, Chinese culture has become again *en vogue* with traditional cultural products such as acupuncture, *feng shui*, and local cuisines, as well as modern arts such as music and acrobatics, finding new popularity around the world.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*. p. 49.

¹⁸⁵ George Nishiyama, 2006 *Japan Pitches Pop Culture for Diplomacy*
<http://www.tiscali.co.uk/news/newswire.php/news/reuters/2006/04/28/odd/japan-pitches-pop-culture-for-diplomacy.html> (Accessed March 1, 2009).

¹⁸⁶ Neal M. Rosendorf, "Social and Cultural Globalization: Concepts, History, and America's Role" in Joseph S. Nye and John D. Donahue, *Governance in a Globalizing World* (Cambridge, Mass. Washington, D.C. Visions of Governance for the 21st Century; Brookings Institution Press, 2000). p. 123.

¹⁸⁷ Gill and Huang, "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power'." p. 2.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*. p. 70.

In areas such as sports and entertainment, China is developing a popular following which translates into soft power. Chinese sports stars such as basketball player Yao Ming (who helped propel his team the Houston Rockets to the top of the US National Basketball League), have been positive ambassadors for their home country. Yao is China's premier athlete-ambassador who is the personification of Chinese soft power; strong, confident, and affable without being arrogant, just the image of the "new China" the government wants to project.¹⁹⁰ In addition, the success of Chinese films such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Hero* have contributed to an image of China that is successful and glamorous, and has nothing to do with the Cultural Revolution or Tiananmen massacres.¹⁹¹ There has also been an expansion of tourism to China to cultural sites, and popular culture from mainland China is now consumed by many in South-East Asia.

Foreign Policies as a source of attraction

Policies and actions towards others can also have an impact on the perceptions of a wider audience. Foreign policies may contribute to soft power when they are seen as legitimate or morally appealing and this gives them the opportunity to manipulate the agenda for public discussion.¹⁹² Many nations have gained soft power as a result of their foreign policies which have gained international admiration. Norway is one country that has played a mediating role in trying to resolve conflicts such as the civil war in Sri Lanka. This role has led to respect for Norway in the international arena out of proportion to its size of five million people. According to one Norwegian politician his country's policies gives his country "certain access", and explained that its presence at so many negotiating tables elevates its usefulness to larger countries.¹⁹³ The human rights policies of US President Jimmy Carter were rejected by military governments in Argentina in the 1970s, but led to considerable soft power for the US twenty years later when individuals who had been imprisoned there subsequently came to power.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language," p. 15.

¹⁹¹ Brook Larmer, "The Center of the World." *Foreign Policy* p. 74.

¹⁹² Gill and Huang, "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power'," p. 21.

¹⁹³ Frank Bruni, "A Nation that Exports Oil, Herring and Peace" *New York Times* December 21 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/21/world/a-nation-that-exports-oil-herring-and-peace.html> (Accessed December 17, 2008).

¹⁹⁴ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*. p. 13.

At the beginning of the 21st century, China's "new diplomacy," which adopts a less confrontational, more sophisticated, and at times more constructive approach to international affairs,¹⁹⁵ is a more effective means of winning international influence than previous Chinese foreign policy. An example of this is China's efforts to settle or alleviate long-standing territorial disputes with nearly all its neighbours, and its participation in regional organisations such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). According to official Chinese spokespeople, this new approach seeks to support widely recognised norms governing international relations, peaceful settlement of international disputes, mutually beneficial ties, combating non-traditional security threats such as terrorism and transnational crime, and effective disarmament and arms control.¹⁹⁶ This is a complete change from Maoist foreign policy which was often framed in unappealing and controversial terms in an attempt to "export revolution" to the Third World.¹⁹⁷ China's diplomacy since 2003 has included hosting the Six Party Talks aimed at reducing tension over North Korea's nuclear programme, which has been seen as constructive by many Western nations especially the US.

The power of domestic values

The domestic values a nation champions and is identified with can influence foreign public opinion and affect the achievement of its international goals. Swiss efforts in promoting citizen political participation, and Japan's domestic efforts to promote peace and human rights, have affected the image of these countries to foreign audiences. A nation's values can also work at cross-purposes to official government policy, as shown by Hollywood movies that present libertine values towards sexuality but are outside the control of the US government, and undercut attempts to improve relations with conservative Islamic nations.¹⁹⁸ South Africa's racially discriminatory domestic policies became increasingly at odds with international values, and the country was subject to increasing international isolation eventually forcing the redistribution of power within the country.

China became acutely aware of the affect domestic policies can have on international public opinion. When its image went into freefall following the violent suppression of

¹⁹⁵ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy." p. 23.

¹⁹⁶ Quoted in Gill and Huang, "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power'," p. 21.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*. p. 14.

the pro-democracy movement in 1989, international goodwill was harmed and economic development slowed as a result. The transformation of the Chinese economy is generating improved living standards for its population, and is a conspicuous example of success for many. Ramo has argued that China's economic miracle presents the developing world a recipe for success which he calls the "Beijing Consensus,"¹⁹⁹ which emphasises development according to a country's characteristics and willingness to experiment. It can be seen as an alternative to the "Washington Consensus" of International Monetary Fund Loans, liberal democracy, and market economics. Although Beijing does not officially use the term Beijing Consensus, it is clear that it does promote China's model of development to other countries, and this has generated interest in countries such as Iran and in the former Soviet republics.

Soft power: part of the assessment of a nation's power

As has been demonstrated, intangible sources of power are being recognised as important in the contemporary globalised era, although coercive and economic power still remain important in any assessment of a nation's power. All three sources of power are interrelated; China has been growing economically and this has allowed it to develop its military capabilities, but it recognises that it needs to develop a positive international image if it is to truly protect its national security. In the wake of the suppression of the 1989 democracy movement, foreign criticism and sanctions threatened to derail China's modernisation efforts, and senior Chinese propaganda officials stressed that Western powers were attempting to undermine and divide China "using their powerful tools of propaganda and public opinion".²⁰⁰ To fight this foreign hostility, China had to try to create a more positive image that reflected changes in Chinese society, they argued.²⁰¹

Chinese scholars and policy makers have become more conscious of China's soft power since Nye proposed it, but a soft power approach has been evident to Chinese foreign policy for centuries. In his address to the 17th Party Conference in October 2007, President Hu Jintao emphasised the need to build cultural soft power, as a means of

¹⁹⁹ Joshua Cooper Ramo *The Beijing Consensus* Foreign Policy Centre, <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/244.pdf> (Accessed 2 April, 2008).

²⁰⁰ *Shandong Sheng duiwai xuanchuan gonzuo huibian ziliao 1992-1998* (Shandong Province Foreign Propaganda Work Reference Manuals 1992-1998) quoted in Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, p. 155.

²⁰¹ Brady, p. 155.

promoting domestic harmony and increasing international competition.²⁰² It has been suggested that the concept (and the CIs themselves) has become popular in China because it corresponds principles of foreign relations of “non-interference” in internal affairs adopted in the 1950s, and China’s practise of working quietly behind the scenes to resolve international problems.²⁰³ While there has been a high level of interest in the concept of soft power, Sheng Ding argues that the concept has been embedded in Chinese foreign policy for centuries, as China’s cultural power frequently “conquered” neighbouring regions through assimilation rather than military victory.²⁰⁴

Many Chinese foreign policy scholars are conscious of soft power, and while it is apparent the country has made great headway, many feel that China has a long way to go to match the soft power of the West.²⁰⁵ Chinese intellectuals regard building both hard and soft power as an important task that the country faces if it is to reclaim its status as a global power. Since 2001 Chinese strategists have been abandoning a victim mentality focusing on China’s ill-treatment by Western imperialists, and emphasising acquiring great power status as a top foreign policy priority.²⁰⁶ Zhao Qizheng, the former director of the State Council Information Office stated that China should regard reviving its culture and strengthening cultural communication with the rest of the world as an important task for the nation’s future.²⁰⁷ The fact China is developing the CIs is evidence of its intention to develop its soft power.

China is becoming more adept at using both hard and soft power instruments in unison to achieve strategic objectives. In 2005 China launched a successful “charm offensive” aimed at the people of Taiwan to dissuade moves toward independence from the mainland. China assisted visits of officials from the Kuomintang opposition party which was less supportive of independence, as well as extending tuition benefits to Taiwanese students and offering export incentives to farmers in the south of the island (traditionally a pro-Taiwan independence stronghold). The strategy was combined with

²⁰² Xinhua *Hu Jintao Calls for Enhancing 'Soft Power' of Chinese Culture.*

²⁰³ Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes," p. 35.

²⁰⁴ Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*, p. 66.

²⁰⁵ Li *Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect.* p. 11.

²⁰⁶ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy." p. 32.

²⁰⁷ Shen Suru, “*Kaizhan ‘ruan shili’ yu dui wai chuanbo de yanjiu*” quoted in Li *Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect.* p. 11.

a military build-up along the Taiwan Strait, the combined effect being a curbing of the political fortunes of the pro-Taiwan independence movement for the time being.²⁰⁸

Public Diplomacy

Attempts to influence foreign public opinion have existed in the West since the 19th century, and early attempts have blurred the line between information and propaganda. The Committee on Public Information was established by President Wilson in 1917 and its Director George Creed established a government-run news service and ensured that motion picture producers portrayed America in a positive light. He insisted that his organisation did not constitute propaganda and was merely educational and informative.²⁰⁹ The office was disestablished soon after the peace of 1919, but in the lead-up to the Second World War foreign information services such as the State Department Division of Cultural Relations and the Office of Wartime Information were expanded.²¹⁰ During the Cold War, radio played a significant role with both sides conducting major programmes through their stations Radio Moscow and the Voice of America. Some in the US favoured a “tough minded” approach which did not shy away from aggressive anti-Communism, while the “tender minded” argued that changing foreign attitudes was a gradual process and should be mentioned in years.²¹¹

Since the end of the Cold War, a new kind of diplomacy that seeks to influence public opinion through a wider range of channels than traditional diplomacy has become more recognised as a means to achieve influence. This new public diplomacy is described 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.”²¹² Public diplomacy is growing in importance in international relations as nations seek to use persuasion as well as coercion, to achieve their foreign policy goals. The term “public diplomacy” came into prominence in the 1970s as the United States Information Agency (USIA) attempted to distinguish its work from the negative connotations associated with the term propaganda. Public diplomacy represents an attempt to harness the influence of a

²⁰⁸ Gill and Huang, "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power'," p.26.

²⁰⁹ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*. p. 101.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Terry L. Deibel and Walter R. Roberts, *Culture and Information: Two Foreign Policy Functions* Washington papers ; no. 40 (Beverly Hills [Published for] The Center for Strategic and International Studies [by] Sage, 1976). pp. 112-114.

²¹² Paul Sharp, "Revolutionary States, Outlaw Regimes and the Techniques of Public Diplomacy " in *The New Public Diplomacy*, ed. Jan Melissen (Basingstoke [UK]: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, p.106.

nation's culture, values and policies in the pursuit of its foreign policy goals. Individually such policies have been in existence for some time (and have been recognised as having political implications), but their recent bringing together under one term recognises their collective strategic importance in contemporary international relations. Many nations, including China have revamped their diplomatic systems since the Cold War, to include public diplomacy departments.

There has been renewed interest in public diplomacy, especially since the Islamic terrorist attacks on the US on September 11, 2001 as the competition for "hearts and minds" has entered a strategic dimension. Considerable developments are taking place around the world as nations seek to convert their soft power into tangible results. These include middle power nations such as the UK, Germany and Russia, as well minor states such as Venezuela or Norway and terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda, but the major effort by China in recent years to improve its image by promoting its language and culture is perhaps the best example.²¹³ In the view of Carnes Lord, victory over Islamic terrorism requires a comprehensive projection of American "strategic influence" the Middle East and beyond.²¹⁴ Public diplomacy is increasingly recognised as a tool to achieve soft power that nations must deploy to be successful in international relations.

The growth in interest in public diplomacy could be seen as a recognition that traditional Track One diplomacy has not kept pace with changes in technology and circumstances. Track One diplomacy refers to the official work of diplomats in their embassies, while Track Two diplomacy describes "official policy dialogue focused on problem solving, in which participants have some access to official policymaking circles".²¹⁵ Track Two diplomacy describes the often semi-formal efforts of academics, retired politicians, and officials who engage in dialogue that can bridge a gap that has grown insurmountable for official channels.²¹⁶ In contrast to the one-to-one level of traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy targets the totality of the a political body.

²¹³ Carnes Lord, *Losing Hearts and Minds?: Public Diplomacy and Strategic Influence in the Age of Terror* (Westport CT Praeger Security International, 2006). p. 16.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Dalia Dassa Kaye *Talking to the Enemy: Track Two Diplomacy in the Middle East and South Asia* RAND Corporation, http://rand.org/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG592.pdf (Accessed December 18, 2008).

²¹⁶ Ibid.

Some authors such as Harold Lasswell have argued that in modern industrialised societies, propaganda is more, not less relevant as an effective means of social control.²¹⁷ However the public has become more sensitised to disinformation, and credibility is an important factor in effective public diplomacy. In China's case, the CCP has adopted Western techniques of public relations and marketing to more effectively influence domestic and foreign publics.²¹⁸

Categories of Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is a term that attempts to bring together the variety of programmes that are used not just to promote understanding, but shape public opinion. Cull has established a broad classification for public diplomacy that separates it into the following areas; listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy and international broadcasting.²¹⁹ The following figure describes public diplomacy and the subset of cultural diplomacy;

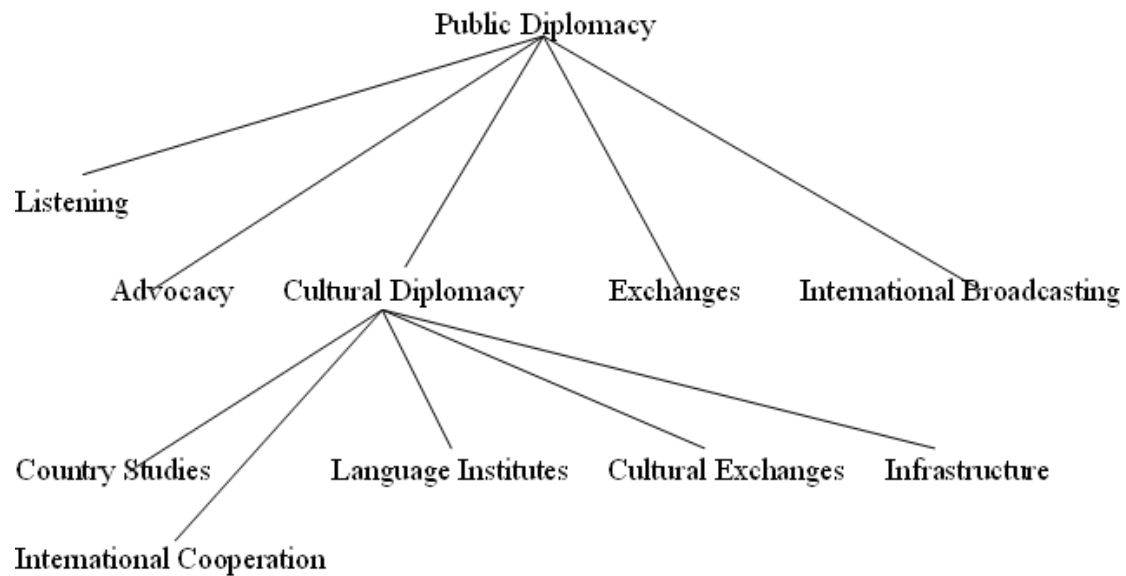


Figure 1 Aspects of public and cultural diplomacy

The CIs can be described by existing academic terminology: namely the language institutes of cultural diplomacy, which are part of public diplomacy. The strategic

²¹⁷ Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner, 1927), p. 17, quoted in Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, p. 3

²¹⁸ Daniel Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 200.

²¹⁹ Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," p. 32.

policy level concerns public diplomacy, whereas cultural diplomacy describes a variety of sponsored cultural themed activities such as “country weeks”, choral tours, and the infrastructure to support them. The CIs are larger than just language institutes as they cover business services, scholarships, cultural visits and language tuition. Their activity is similar to that of the British Council, Alliance Française and the Goethe Institute.

Listening is an aspect of public diplomacy described as an actor’s attempt to manage the international environment by collecting data about the opinions of their audience and using the data to redirect its policy.²²⁰ It can include government sponsored opinion polling and Switzerland has been a leader in this activity, although China certainly listens to international public opinion through its embassies.²²¹ Advocacy refers an actors attempt to manage the international environment by communication activities such as news conferences, and is a dominant concept in American public diplomacy.²²² China has strengthened this aspect after the External Propaganda Leading Group drafted a government spokesperson system in 1982.²²³ During the 1990s other Chinese government offices that were involved in foreign exchange activities, such as the Information Office of the State Council established new press briefing systems of their own, some of which were designed to boost the national government’s ability to establish a positive image of the state, and to internationally disseminate credible information about China.²²⁴

Exchange diplomacy is described as an international actor’s attempt to manage the international environment by sending its citizens abroad and accepting foreign citizens for a period of acculturation or study.²²⁵ This aspect of public diplomacy envisions that both parties will be transformed by the experience. China also participates in such activity which was focused on the communist bloc and third world during Mao’s reign. Exchanges increased during sensitive negotiations with nations such as Indonesia and Burma, and around national ceremonies such as May Day. They were mainly political

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Nicholas Cull *China’s Propaganda and Influence Operations, its Intelligence Activities that Target the United States and its Resulting Impacts on US National Security* US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2009hearings/written_testimonies/09_04_30_wrts/09_04_30_cull_statement.pdf (Accessed April 30, 2009).

²²² Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," p. 32.

²²³ Aoyama *China’s Public Diplomacy*.p. 12.

²²⁴ Ibid. p.13

²²⁵ Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," p. 33.

rather than educational in nature, and designed to create an impression of unity and national pride, and enabled the regime to claim it was internationally respected and accepted.²²⁶

Exchange diplomacy (and other forms of public diplomacy) are less under state control and can have negative as well as positive implications for a country's interests. The chance that exchange participants can draw the "wrong conclusions" from a public diplomacy point of view, is demonstrated by the Egyptian exchange students living in Germany who formed the "Hamburg Cell" and were instrumental in the 9/11 plot.²²⁷

International Broadcasting is an actor's attempt to manage the international environment by using communication technologies to engage with foreign publics and includes contemporary web-based technologies. Earlier strategies utilised radio broadcasting of news which introduced subsequent cultural programmes, and thanks to the BBC World Service, international broadcasting has been the most widely known element in British public diplomacy.²²⁸ In some cases international broadcasting can be a tool to promote cultural and language diplomacy. China has invested in expansion of its international broadcasting through China Central Television (CCTV) 4 and 9, and China Radio International, and in 2004 made it a high priority to carry out international publicity in a way more suited to the needs of foreign audiences.²²⁹

Cultural Diplomacy and the CIs

Cultural diplomacy is another aspect of public diplomacy describing an actor's attempt to manage the international environment by spreading its cultural resources and facilitating cultural transmission abroad.²³⁰ As nations seek to project their image, they presume that cultural resources can be used to generate social resources and foster trust, cooperation and collaboration. Discomfort with overt diplomatic goals have led some cultural diplomacy organisations such as The British Council to describe their work as "cultural relations," however their core tools of exchanges and teaching fall within the definition of cultural diplomacy.²³¹ The great spenders in cultural diplomacy have been

²²⁶ Herbert Passin, *China's Cultural Diplomacy* (London: China Quarterly, 1962).

²²⁷ Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," p. 40.

²²⁸ Ibid. p.34.

²²⁹ Aoyama *China's Public Diplomacy*. p. 10.

²³⁰ Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories." p. 33.

²³¹ Ibid.

the French, who have invested heavily in an international network of schools to sustain the French language, underscoring that French influence is largely tied to the survival of French speaking societies.²³²

State-sponsored academic country programmes such as American, South Asian or European studies, government sponsored sports events (such as the Beijing 2008 Olympics), artistic tours, international cooperation, and infrastructure support through embassies for cultural exchange and language institutes, are examples of cultural diplomacy. Financial support for academic country study programmes include the EU's support for research at the National Centre for Research at Canterbury University, for example. Cultural diplomacy can also include tours of artefacts, and a successful example would be the exhibition of the Terracotta Warriors of Xi'an (an archaeological discovery dating back centuries in China's history) which first toured the world in the 1980s. It drew large crowds and raised awareness of China's pre-communist history.

Language studies and the provision of language learning materials are a large part of many cultural diplomatic programmes and are often operated by a global network of semi-independent organisations. These organisations often generate substantial income in the form of student fees that add to funds provided by the foreign ministry and other government departments.²³³ Japan supports the Japan Exchange and Teaching scheme (JET) that serves to bring 6000 individuals to Japan to teach in Japanese schools, and promote international understanding.²³⁴ The United Kingdom, through the British Council employs 1,800 language teachers who conduct 1.1 million hours of language training abroad.²³⁵ France, through Alliance Française and the French Cultural Centres supports language and publishing programmes. Alliance Française was founded in 1893 as a non-political organisation dedicated to promotion of the literature, art, history and language of France.²³⁶

Not all cultural diplomacy organisations promote a language – Australia and the United States for example do not have a unique language to promote, but prefer to promote unique aspects of their identity with the aim of influencing foreign perceptions. While

²³² Wyszomirski, Burgess, and Peila *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*.p. 25.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ P. E. Lam, "Japan's Quest For "Soft Power": Attraction and limitation," *East Asia* 24, no. 4 (2007) p. 356.

²³⁵ Wyszomirski, Burgess, and Peila *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*.p. 26.

²³⁶ Alliance Française n.d. *History of the Alliance* <http://www.afphila.com/en/history/index.html> (Accessed 18 October, 2008).

China has been involved in cultural diplomacy such as sponsored artistic tours and exchanges in the past they lacked the central coordination of the CIs.

Cultural diplomacy can fail however, and an example is the efforts of the former Soviet Union to promote itself as it wanted to be seen, rather than it actually was during the Cold War.²³⁷ Soviet minorities were presented in external publishing as flourishing in their diversity when actually, the opposite was the case. Sports diplomacy, radio broadcasts and international publishing were used to build a picture of a Communist state that cultivated diversity, expression and excellence when actually this was not a true picture. The investment won friends in the short term, but could not counter the reality of political oppression and economic decline revealed in the 1980s,²³⁸ and the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Cultural diplomacy has been used in to achieve foreign policy goals before by China. Performing arts troupes, scholarly visits, and other cultural exchanges were hallmarks of Chinese attempts to break out of Cold War isolation. The objectives of such activities were recognised as “the promotion of China’s policies and position in the world.”²³⁹ The expansion of post Cold-War activities is aimed at influencing foreign public opinion, that a rising China will not be threatening, and to allow for further development as a global power. Although language institutes differ from country to country in areas such as funding and relationship to their government, the CIs have much more in common with the other language institutes than previous Chinese propaganda techniques which deployed friendship organisations, Peking Opera tours, and foreign friends, for example.

China has become increasingly conscious of the theories of public diplomacy and soft power. Unlike its English translation, in Chinese *xuanchuan* (propaganda) does not have a negative connotation, and is associated with benign activities such as the release of news, general shaping ideology and even advertising.²⁴⁰ The increasing use of the terms public diplomacy (and soft power) in official speeches has led to greater

²³⁷ Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," p. 45.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Passin, *China's Cultural Diplomacy*.p. 10.

²⁴⁰ Yiwei Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2008) p. 259.

professionalism in China's public diplomacy activities.²⁴¹ A new division of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs focusing on public diplomacy was set up in 2004, and officials stated its aim was to "win understanding and support for foreign policies".²⁴²

Theory of Chinese foreign policy

While the concepts of soft power and public diplomacy have been useful for international scholars to understand the CIs, the use of these terms by Chinese scholars reflect a broadening of the conceptual sources of China's foreign policy. For some time international relations theory was not taught in China, instead interpretations of the viewpoints of Marx, Lenin and Mao were the only theories of international politics.²⁴³ For Marxist scholars, class analysis is the basic method for understanding international relations; the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are the main actors, and the substance of international relations is nothing but class struggle.²⁴⁴ Chinese international relations scholars were constrained by ideological shackles which required them to quote Chinese leaders, promote socialism and justify government decisions.²⁴⁵

The study of international relations theory is becoming recognised by Chinese leaders as a vital aspect of social science research which could contribute to the development of effective foreign policies in serving China's interests. Chinese scholars began to adopt some contemporary liberal values of international relations that gave more emphasis to regional integration, multilateralism, human rights, and international legal order after 1978. However Chinese foreign policy remained strongly influenced by long-held CCP values that emphasise national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Chinese government (as with other governments) remains inclined to accept the values it likes and reject those it doesn't, but shifts in values continues to lead shifts in behaviour. Changes brought on by globalisation such as cultural fluidity and interdependency have been recognised in China, which has established new tactics to achieve foreign policy goals.

²⁴¹ d'Hooghe *The Rise of China's Public Diplomacy*.p. 3.

²⁴² Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power," p. 260.

²⁴³ Xinning Song and Gerald Chan, "International Relations Theory in China," in *China's International Relations in the 21st Century: Dynamics and Paradigm Shifts*, ed. Weixing Hu (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000, p. 17.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Song Xinning, "Building International Relations Theory with Chinese Characteristics," *Journal of Contemporary China* 10, no. 26 (2001) p. 72.

At the turn of the 21st century, more and more Chinese scholars are turning to traditional Chinese thinking and trying to find similarities and differences between Chinese and Western philosophical traditions to explain Chinese behaviour in international relations.²⁴⁶ There is increased interest in the role that domestic culture plays in the foreign policy decision making of other countries as well as China. Tradition Chinese values such as meritocracy in which leaders are selected by scholars (rather than by all citizens) on the basis of their virtue, and Sinocentrism which regards China as the political, economic and cultural centre of the world, can also be seen playing a part in the conceptual sources of Chinese foreign policy. Nationalism and Confucian concepts such as harmony, are increasingly being used to underpin the current generation of communist leaders' policy innovation, and promote domestic and global stability.

Conclusion

A broader conception of power is emerging in the post-Cold War era of globalisation that recognises traditional factors such as military and economic power, and adds education, technology, leadership, institutions and the ability to influence public opinion. Soft power represents the ability to influence an audience without resort to coercive tools and is becoming increasingly important and contested in the globalised era. The concept has been present in Chinese foreign policy for centuries and current government policies aim to improve this aspect of becoming a global power. Trade and investment in foreign countries, as well as strategies to improve international influence and image known as public diplomacy, can grow soft power.

The CIs represent a package of programmes designed to improve China's soft power, and are an example of the language institutes aspect of cultural diplomacy that is part of the public diplomacy that many nations practice. They are part of renewed interest in China and other nations in soft power and public diplomacy in the era of globalisation. Although public diplomacy attempts to distinguish itself from propaganda, the aim is the same: to influence foreign publics. China's public diplomacy is increasing the resonance of Chinese culture throughout the world, however, its focus on the cultural aspect of public diplomacy may limit the effectiveness of its public diplomacy while its

²⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 70.

political values (also important to international perceptions) remain far from international norms.

Chapter Four

POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND THE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES

Introduction

The relationship between culture and politics is always a complex one, and it is an important issue for state-sponsored cultural diplomacy. Many governments afford some political independence to their language institutes involved in cultural diplomacy such as Alliance Française and the Goethe Institute which have been perceived as politically independent,²⁴⁷ but as this chapter will show, there is rarely a complete separation. As chapter three discussed, language and cultural institutes are one aspect of cultural diplomacy, and cultural diplomacy is part of public diplomacy. Such activities are designed to achieve soft power. This chapter will compare China's cultural diplomacy with that of other countries, and discuss the relationship between the Chinese political system and the CIs. As will be described, the issue is not whether there is political influence on cultural diplomacy, but how transparent that influence is. Political decision making in China is largely controlled by the CCP, which has a complex relationship with the CIs.

Since it came to power, the CCP has deeply penetrated Chinese culture as a means of achieving its political goals. The Party also had a dominating, but outwardly hidden influence on the state bureaucracy. In foreign affairs, the Party has become more flexible in allowing organisations such as the CIs to represent China, but ultimately, it sets policy direction. Kenneth Lieberthal in his book on governance in China, describes that in China as with all other major political systems, the real layout of power and

²⁴⁷ Jessica Shepherd, "Not A Propaganda Tool." *The Guardian Weekly*
<http://education.guardian.co.uk/egweekly/story/0,,2205547,00.html> (Accessed September 1, 2008).

governance is different from the picture presented by formal descriptions and published rules of procedure.²⁴⁸

The Chinese political system is set up so that the Party can dominate the state bureaucracy, in a way that is entirely different from the way political parties operate in developed democracies. The system that developed after 1949 was influenced by imperial Chinese as well as Soviet systems, both of which stressed centralised control and bureaucratic administration, buttressed by ideology and leaving little room for private interests and organised opposition to the state.²⁴⁹ China's entire political system, including policy decision making, legislative power and policy implementation, is led by the CCP which has an interlocked relationship with the state bureaucratic sector. All key policy decisions are made outside the government and within the Party, and the term "Party-State" describes this relationship.²⁵⁰ The military functions separately to the state bureaucracy, but is also directly supervised by the Party. The Chinese political system has a certain amount of hidden operating procedures and is a highly personalised rather than institutionalised system.²⁵¹ The dominant position of the Party derived its role from in part, leading the successful communist revolution in 1949,²⁵² however in the contemporary era, it is finding new means to justify its continued rule.

Descriptions of the governing structure on the CI website²⁵³ present them as governed by a leadership council composed of Chinese state bureaucratic organisations and foreign representatives, but do not mention the CCP. A distinctive feature of the organisation of the CIs that are located in foreign countries is that they are not directly controlled from Beijing, but also have substantial local input. Being joint ventures between a foreign educational organisation, the CI Leadership Council and a Chinese university, the CIs are subject to several sources of influence. Many nations have

²⁴⁸ Lieberthal, p. 172.

²⁴⁹ Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), p. 171.

²⁵⁰ Sujian Guo, "The Party-State Relationship in Post-Mao China," *China Report* 37, no. 3 (2001) p. 1.

²⁵¹ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*.

²⁵² Guo, "The Party-State Relationship in Post-Mao China," p. 302.

²⁵³ <http://www.confuciusinstitute.net/college/colIndexContentShow.htm?indexContent.id=53> (Accessed August 12, 2009).

cultural diplomacy programmes that maintain some political independence, (such as the Goethe Institute) which also carry out activities on behalf of their nation’s government. However, the interlocked relationship between the Party and the state bureaucracy in China, adds a new dynamic to this situation.

International comparisons of cultural diplomacy

As the importance of culture in foreign policy has become more appreciated, a wide range of cultural diplomacy activities have developed throughout the world. Margret Wyszomirski compared the cultural diplomacy of several nations against the following dimensions; goals and priorities, structure, programme tools, and funding,²⁵⁴ and her study forms the basis of my comparison with China’s activity in this field. Language institutes are one aspect of cultural diplomacy and are compared in the following table taken from a presentation by Don Starr.²⁵⁵

Table 2 Leading language institutes

Name	Foundation date	Annual budget (Millions USD)	Status	Branches worldwide	Language/ culture	Aims
Alliance Franciase	1883	16.4	Independent branches	1081 in 35 countries	French	To widen access to French language and culture
Società Dante Alighieri	1889	Funded by members	Independent NGO	450	Italian	Promote the study of Italian language and culture throughout the world
Goethe Institute	1925	269	Government funded + sponsorship	125 in 76 countries	German	Promote the study of German and international cultural exchange
British Council	1934	736 269 from UK govt.	Government/ partnership	150 + 200 proposals	English	Build mutually beneficial relationships between people of the UK and other countries

²⁵⁴ Wyszomirski, Burgess, and Peila *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*.p. 10.

²⁵⁵ Don Starr, “Creating a World Language: Chinese Government Policy and the Confucius Institute Programme viewed from a British Perspective.” Paper given at conference: Rising China in the Age of Globalisation, University College Dublin, August 16, 2007.

Japan Foundation	1972	140	Government funded	19 in 18 countries	Japanese	Promotion of arts and cultural exchange
Instituto Cervantes	1991	109	Government funded	60 in 30 countries	Spanish	To promote the education, the study and the use of Spanish universally
Instituto Camões	1992		Government funded	Culture 60 Language 40	Portuguese	To promote the Portuguese language and culture worldwide
Confucius Institute	2004	12	Government/ partnership	300+	Mandarin Chinese	Aimed at promoting friendly relations with other countries and enhancing the understanding of Chinese language and culture

Other similar organisations include the “Association Polish Community”, The Czech Centres, Danish Cultural Institute, Estonian Institutes, Finnish Cultural and Academic Institutes, Hellenic Foundation for Culture (Greece), the Hungarian Centres, The Korea Foundation, the Pushkin Institute (Russia), and the Swedish Institute.

As well as language institutes in foreign countries, nations also use a variety of other cultural diplomacy tools. The following programme tools can be part of the repertoire of cultural diplomacy: the exchange of individuals for education and cultural purposes, sending exhibitions and performances abroad, sponsoring seminars and conferences, support for cultural centres abroad, country studies programmes, international cooperation on cultural projects and activities that are related to the trade in cultural products and services.²⁵⁶ Staff working in embassies and consulates also provide support for cultural diplomacy. Some countries such as Austria provide infrastructure in the form of Foreign Ministry personnel dedicated to managing cultural diplomacy, where it is estimated that approximately 25% of Austrian foreign ministerial staff are

²⁵⁶ Wyszomirski, Burgess, and Peila *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*.

engaged in cultural diplomacy activities.²⁵⁷ Many governments support the work of organisations engaged in cultural activities who may use seconded foreign service staff, private employees and foreign nationals. The United Kingdom employs the British Council in this regard, and France supports 151 French Cultural Centres and 219 Alliance Française offices. Like other nations, China maintains large education and cultural sections in its embassies, but the CIs are its flagship cultural diplomacy organisation.

Goals and Priorities

Many countries engaged in cultural diplomacy share a desire to project their image and values abroad, however each does this in a different way. Japan's cultural diplomacy aims to "introduce Japanese culture to people throughout the world."²⁵⁸ In contrast, the British Council aims to focus its activity on three areas of central importance to the international interests of the UK; intercultural dialogue - "especially with countries and communities where the UK is less trusted," supporting UK's creative and knowledge economy, and highlighting the case for tackling climate change.²⁵⁹ Canada's goals include fostering better understanding of Canada, and given its dual linguistic identity, it has a particular interest in other French speaking countries. Some nations have specific goals such as Australia, which seeks to project a positive image and "dispel the image of itself as an European-derivative culture" and replace it with an emphasis on its unique history and geography.²⁶⁰ French cultural diplomacy seeks to promote French culture with an emphasis on cultural diversity and cultural cooperation,²⁶¹ thereby supporting French influence in the Francophone world.

The central aim of China's contemporary public diplomacy (which includes cultural diplomacy) is to project the image that China's culture is admirable and that China's

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Martin Davidson *Annual Report* The British Council, http://www.britishcouncil.org/annual-report/introduction_chief.htm (Accessed December 22, 2008).

²⁶⁰ Wyszomirski, Burgess, and Peila *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*. p. 4

²⁶¹ Ibid.

intentions are benign.²⁶² Cultural diplomacy has been a part of China's diplomacy for some time, but in the 21st century it has become wider in scope and more professional. On coming to power in 1949 China began a large programme of cultural diplomacy, the purpose being the promotion of China's policies and position in the world.²⁶³ Broadly, China's contemporary public diplomacy aims to seek understanding of its political system and policies, convince the world that it does not have to be feared, show that is a good international citizen, and be acknowledged as having a respectable culture.²⁶⁴ The CIs aim to satisfy the demands of people wanting to learn the Chinese language and promoting understanding of Chinese culture.²⁶⁵

Funding

China spends substantially less on the CIs than many Western European counterparts spend on similar language institutes. Xu Lin, Chief Executive Officer of Hanban stated in 2006, "The British Council spends over 3 billion pounds [\$US 5 billion] a year" and China is only spending about \$US 12 million on the CIs.²⁶⁶ The Chinese Government actually spent a total of \$US 25 million in 2006, promoting the Chinese language internationally according one study.²⁶⁷ Xu Lin's claim could not be verified, but according to the 2007-8 annual report of the British Council, it received total income of \$US 838 million, \$US 281 coming from the British Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the rest coming from income generating activities such as English language tuition.²⁶⁸

The CIs share costs because they are joint ventures but China is investing substantially in establishing a global network. Partnerships between Chinese universities and foreign

²⁶² Cull *China's Propaganda and Influence Operations, its Intelligence Activities that Target the United States and its Resulting Impacts on US National Security*. p. 4.

²⁶³ Passin, *China's Cultural Diplomacy*. p. 9

²⁶⁴ d'Hooghe *The Rise of China's Public Diplomacy*.p. 18.

²⁶⁵ "Who are we?" <http://www.confuciusinstitute.net/college/index4Cache.htm> (Accessed August 12, 2009).

²⁶⁶ Howard French, "Another Chinese Export is All the Rage: China's Language" *The New York Times* 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/11/international/asia/11china.html> (Accessed January 10, 2009).p. 2.

²⁶⁷ Hongyi Lai *China's Cultural Diplomacy: Going for Soft Power* East Asia Institute, <http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/BB308.pdf> (Accessed 18 December, 2008).p. 10.

²⁶⁸ Davidson *Annual Report*. "Income trends"

learning institutions rather than sole government sponsorship put the CIs on a different economic basis than fully funded programmes. Instead of building offices in cities in which they operate, the CIs team up with local partners and take space in their buildings or get foreign governments to pay for their housing. Instead of sending teachers who instruct foreigners directly, partner Chinese universities send teacher trainers who can help upgrade the skills of local Chinese teachers, and the CI receives income from those who take their courses, similar to the British Council.²⁶⁹

The French government is the world's leading supporter of cultural diplomacy spending over a billion US dollars in the field in 2001,²⁷⁰ although most of this was on French Cultural Centres, not Alliance Française. The Alliance Française is a franchise operation generating most of its funding from course fees. The French Government subsidises Alliance Française headquarters, but has no financial input into local organisations which are entirely self-funding.²⁷¹ However, France is a major supporter of other aspects of cultural diplomacy, spending in 2001, \$US 667 million on exchanges, and \$US 378 million on infrastructure such as cultural centres.²⁷² France is also the highest spender on cultural diplomacy on a per capita basis, spending four times as much as its nearest rival Canada by this measure. The British Government was second in total expenditure on cultural diplomacy in 2001, spending a total of \$676 million (\$260 million on the British Council).²⁷³

Wyszomirski compared United States spending on cultural diplomacy and found that it had a minimal level of government expenditure in 2003. Activities identified were the Fulbright Program, the International Visitor Program and the Speakers Program, with funding that equated to \$184 million, well below France and \$25 million less than Japan.²⁷⁴ It should be noted that this does not include other aspects of public diplomacy,

²⁶⁹ French, "Another Chinese Export is All the Rage: China's Language".

²⁷⁰ Wyszomirski, Burgess, and Peila *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*.p. 15.

²⁷¹ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p. 71.

²⁷² Wyszomirski, Burgess, and Peila *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*.p. 15.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

which includes media advocacy and international broadcasting which the US has traditionally been strong in.

Structure

In most countries engaged in cultural diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has primary responsibility for such activity. In France, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs exerts primary direction over Alliance Française, l'Association Française d'Action Artistique (for cultural exchanges) and the French Cultural Centres, and communication with other ministries is limited, and largely informal.²⁷⁵ The British Council receives government funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (in addition to the majority income contribution from course fees) and has an independent governing board. In Japan cultural diplomacy falls under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, making it easier to integrate educational and cultural exchanges into existing similar administrative structures.²⁷⁶ Other nations have a stronger trade focus to their cultural diplomacy. In Australia, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade works through a quasi-nongovernmental organisation, the Australian International Cultural Council.²⁷⁷ Cultural diplomacy is rarely if ever separate from government structures. As will be discussed, several Chinese state (and Party) organisations are connected to the CI leadership structure.

Cultural diplomacy and political independence

There is a relationship between a nation's political system and its culture and this relationship affects the credibility of its cultural diplomacy. Diplomacy is a political activity, working in the international interests of a government, and cultural diplomacy also, seeks the influence that derives from greater understanding. For example, the Swedish Institute is a government agency that develops mutual relationships through awareness and interest in Sweden abroad, and works in close cooperation with foreign

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

partners and Swedish Embassies and consulates.²⁷⁸ In many cases of cultural diplomacy, staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are involved. The Goethe Institute receives full funding from the German Federal Government, but according to its New Zealand Director Judith Geare; its political independence is important and guaranteed, “because of Germany’s history”, and the German government now cannot tell the institute how to define or promote Germany’s language or culture.²⁷⁹ Yet its activities are aimed at influencing world public opinion in Germany’s favour.

Political independence in cultural diplomacy is important for both Germany and Italy, which have a history of manipulation of culture by fascist regimes. Their contemporary cultural diplomacy emphasises a separation between the government and the nation’s contemporary cultural diplomacy organisations. These nations’ cultural diplomacy was in existence prior to World War Two, but received a boost following their return to the pre-war international system as cultural, rather than military powers. A high degree of administrative independence from political structures is evident in Italy’s cultural diplomacy organisation the Dante Alighieri Society, where its branches are entirely independently financed.

China too, has sought to distance the CIs from political influence – at least in the image presented to foreign audiences. For example, the constitution of the Confucius Institutes Headquarters describes itself as “non-profit and having the status of an independent corporate body.”²⁸⁰ Staff of the CIs emphasise that their work is primarily educational, and not related to any political or security goals – despite the concerns of some foreign critics.

²⁷⁸ The Swedish Institute n.d. *About the Swedish Institute* <http://www.si.se/English/Navigation/About-the-Swedish-Institute/> (Accessed 2 April, 2009).

²⁷⁹ Judith Geare New Zealand Director of the Goethe Institute, telephone interview, April 21, 2008.

²⁸⁰ Confucius Institute New Zealand, *About us*; <http://www.confuciusinstitute.net/college/index4Cache.htm> (Accessed April 1, 2009).

China's Party-State system

China's political system has evolved considerably in the sixty years since 1949, but continues to preserve a central role for the CCP. The current Chinese system was influenced by its early connections to the Soviet Union, where the Party and the state were closely intertwined, and for which the term "party-state" has been created.²⁸¹ The CCP is the "state of the state," and all important policy decisions in China are made outside the government, but are entirely monopolised by the Party.²⁸² Moreover, the Party tends to conceal the extent of its influence.²⁸³ Although the current Chinese political system is in transition towards less hierarchy, greater regularity and a more meaningful division of responsibilities, it is far from shedding the features of its revolutionary origins, and Mao's legacy where a few powerful individuals had great power over many people.

During Mao's reign the political system did not tolerate any dissent and exercised totalitarian control over many aspects of life; Mao had earned such a position of fear and respect that his word had the effect of law.²⁸⁴ The state bureaucracy became a tool for carrying out Mao's directions, and the Party was responsible for supervising it. However, under the current system, the Party has recently been described as "popular authoritarianism."²⁸⁵ In this system, the Party maintains popular support by using a variety of methods of mass persuasion to mould public opinion into accepting the current system.

The system for governing the country established in 1949 is formally divided into three interlocked systems; the Party, the military and the state bureaucracy. As with many major political systems, the actual functioning of authority in China differs considerably from official organisational charts.²⁸⁶ The revolutionary origins of the People's Republic is one of the factors that have created a highly personalised rather

²⁸¹ Guo, "The Party-State Relationship in Post-Mao China." p. 1.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. p. 207.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 209.

²⁸⁵ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 200.

²⁸⁶ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. p. 172.

than an institutionalised political system.²⁸⁷ The Party has a dual identity with some powerful individuals holding important positions in the Party as well as executive positions in the state bureaucracy.²⁸⁸ In the current system, at the top of the political hierarchy is the Politburo of the Party and the State Council, the latter supervising all the government ministries. All major policy decisions are made in the Politburo, and the State Council translates strategic decisions into concrete policies.²⁸⁹

The xitong

The CCP has mechanisms to ensure dominance over the state bureaucracy, but tends to conceal its influence to the outside. Chinese state officials themselves have to follow the authority derived from Party systems, as well as that of their supervisors within their state organisation.²⁹⁰ The system of formally separate but functionally related organisations known as *xitong*, and is one way the leadership deals with broad tasks it wants achieved. Each *xitong* is led by a Small Leading Group headed by a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP.²⁹¹ Although they may represent a diverse group of public and private organisations from the outside, they are part of an interconnected system that must follow directives from the top. This system results from the CCP's origins as a revolutionary party when it was necessary to control many organisations covertly. The main *xitong* include areas that are of the most importance to the Party such as economic affairs, Party development, security and propaganda. One key concept of the *xitong* system is that all organisations within it must follow centrally established policies.²⁹² Chinese officials generally try to keep these key dimensions of the political system hidden from view.²⁹³

²⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 207.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 233.

²⁸⁹ Yasheng Huang, "Managing Chinese Bureaucrats: An Institutional Economics Perspective," *Political Studies* 50 (2002) p. 66.

²⁹⁰ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. p. 218.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), p. 12.

²⁹³ For a fuller description of the *xitong* system see Lieberthal, p. 218.

Nomenklatura

In addition, the Party has developed other systems for ensuring its policies are carried out by the state bureaucratic system. Other mechanisms the Party uses to control the bureaucracies are the *nomenklatura* system, and front organisations. *Nomenklatura* is a Russian word describing the system in which the Party exercises the power of appointment and dismissal of not only all senior appointments in the Party and government, but also in those in the judicial system, universities, and enterprises (but not the private sector).²⁹⁴ Through this system the Party can determine who reaches, and who stays in elite levels of society²⁹⁵ and can appoint CCP members (usually with expertise in the field) to state bureaucratic positions. It was described during the Mao era as *jianren* or “double hatting”²⁹⁶ and in the contemporary era as *yiba shou* or “hold everything in one hand.”²⁹⁷

Also, in some cases, key Party officials themselves directly take charge of state bodies. The CCP Organisational Department is responsible for supervising the appointment and dismissal of a large number of positions with the state sector and the Party. This means that even some positions that are specified as “elected” in the State Constitution, are subject to the Party’s *nomenklatura* system. The 1989 protests generated such broad support across Party and state units, that the top leaders increased the number of appointments that were subject to appointment in this way.²⁹⁸ In this system the same individual could participate in policy formulation within the Party and supervise its implementation wearing their other “hat” in their state sector.

²⁹⁴ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. p. 234.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Te-chi Yu, *Mass Persuasion in Communist China*, Cambridge, MA Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1964), p. 70. Cited in Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 10.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 10.

²⁹⁸ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. p. 297.

China's Propaganda and Education xitong

The CCP attaches great importance to propaganda, referring to it as the sphere of “guiding minds”.²⁹⁹ It is one of the two main means the Party uses to achieve legitimacy with the Chinese population in the contemporary era, alongside economic development. The Party’s response to the June 1989 disturbances was to reinforce its hold on power through economic development in one hand, and propaganda and thought work in the other.³⁰⁰ The term “propaganda” according to its Chinese translation *xuanchuan*, does not have the negative connotation of disinformation and distortion it does in the English language, referring instead to broadcasting, general shaping ideology and even public information. As a result of the negative perception in developed democracies, Chinese officials are increasingly using the term public diplomacy to describe foreign publicity activities.³⁰¹

The CCP’s Propaganda and Education *xitong* (system) is an extremely large network for managing the fields of information and education in the domestic society and beyond. An extensive range of organisations come under China’s propaganda and education *xitong* including all forms of broadcasting and publishing, the internet, education, and entertainment.³⁰² Some of the organisations in this system are led directly, others are less directly guided. The role of the propaganda system in China has been likened to the role of the Church in medieval Europe; having vast sway over society, but largely on moral grounds with little legal standing.³⁰³ These days, instructions are often issued verbally or in special secret internal bulletins.³⁰⁴

At the top of China’s propaganda *xitong* is a senior leader supervising all foreign and domestic propaganda who is a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo. The current holder of the position is Li Changchun, and the State President and CCP

²⁹⁹ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 9.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power," p. 259.

³⁰² David L. Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy," *The China Journal* 57 (2007). p. 27.

³⁰³ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 9.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

General Secretary (currently Hu Jintao) may also take an interest in propaganda work.³⁰⁵ At the next level are two “leading groups” made up of senior figures in the Party-State system: the CCP Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Group (which controls domestic ideological/information activities), and the Foreign Propaganda Leading Group (which works in an international environment where it must balance its influence with foreign interests).

External publicity/propaganda

As China has recognised the importance of international image and public opinion, “external propaganda work” has become more important to the leadership and as a tool of foreign policy.³⁰⁶ Foreign concepts such as public diplomacy have been adapted to this purpose. The CCP External Propaganda Leading Group (EPLG) supervises activities such as external broadcasting, foreign media liaison, public diplomacy, exchange organisations, and even international relations studies.³⁰⁷ China’s external propaganda has two separate foci: overseas Chinese whom Beijing regards as important as a source of political and economic support, and non-Chinese foreigners who represent a more diverse, but still important group.³⁰⁸

Chinese foreign publicity/propaganda aims to provide a Chinese perspective as much as manipulate foreign public opinion.³⁰⁹ The aims of China’s external propaganda are (1) to tell China’s story to the world and promote Chinese culture; (2) to counter hostile foreign propaganda (such as the “China threat” theory); (3) countering Taiwanese

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy." p. 47

³⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 48.

³⁰⁸ Anne-Marie Brady *China's Propaganda and Perception Management Efforts, Its Intelligence Activities that Target the United States, and the Resulting Impacts on U.S. National Security* US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2009hearings/written_testimonies/09_04_30_wrts/09_04_30_brady_statement.pdf (Accessed June 2, 2009).p. 1.

³⁰⁹ Judy Polumbaum *China's Propaganda and Influence Operations* US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2009hearings/written_testimonies/09_04_30_wrts/09_04_30_polumbaum_statement.pdf (Accessed 12 May, 2009).p. 5.

independence; and (4) propagating Chinese foreign policy.³¹⁰ The message it wishes to convey is associating China with modernisation, dynamism and global citizenship, while sensitivities include Tibet, human rights and Taiwan.³¹¹ Some of the results of Chinese involvement in the field of international publicity/propaganda is greater professionalism amongst Chinese officials and journalists involved, and growing engagement with the rest of the world.³¹²

Governance of the Confucius Institutes

Organisationally, the CI Leadership Council is a semi-independent decision-making body made up of Chinese state bureaucracy appointees with a minority of foreign representatives supervised by China's State Council, but functionally, it is led by the CCP's External Propaganda Leading Group. Between 2004 and 2007 the CIs in foreign countries were directed by Hanban and its own Leadership Council. The 33 member CI Leadership Council was introduced in December 2007 to "better manage" the CIs.³¹³ It includes a chair, five vice-chairs, 12 executive council members from related state departments, and 15 non-executive members (10 foreign representatives and 5 from partner Chinese universities). This is significant because it includes the presence of foreign individuals who head the boards of CIs in their countries, as well as representatives from Chinese universities and state departments. The links to several state departments, and the presence of a senior politician as the chair, reflect the importance given to "soft power" activities.³¹⁴ A representation of the leadership of the CIs taken from the CI website³¹⁵ follows;

³¹⁰ Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy," p. 49.

³¹¹ Polunbaum *China's Propaganda and Influence Operations*. p. 2-3.

³¹² *Ibid.* p. 8.

³¹³ Wang *Council Created for Confucius Institutes*.

³¹⁴ Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes," p. 39.

³¹⁵ <http://www.confuciusinstitute.net/college/colIndexContentShow.htm?indexContent.id=53> Accessed August 14, 2009

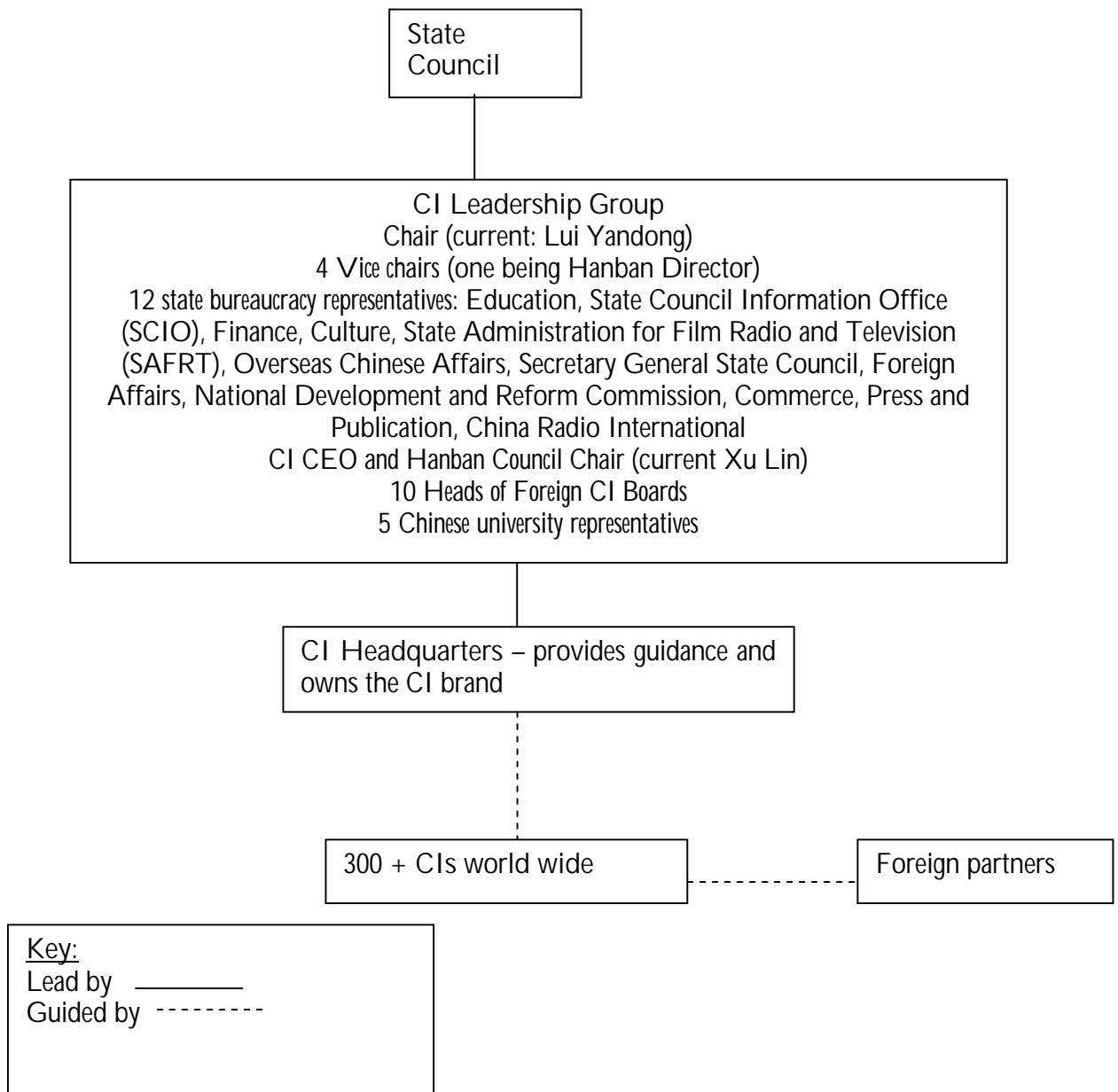


Figure 2 CIs and State administration

Actual functional system

External propaganda is an important area for the CCP, although the Party tends to conceal its influence on policy implementation. As with all major political systems, the

actual flow of authority is different from the image created by formal published charts and procedures.³¹⁶ The CI programme is ostensibly a joint venture between the Chinese state sector and foreign representatives, and in formal official descriptions, the CIs are led by the CI Leadership Group, which is ultimately supervised by the State Council. However, the CCP exercises such broad management of China's state sector and it has the ability to guide the CI Leadership Council in a variety of hidden mechanisms which include the *xitong* system, *nomenklatura* appointments, and front organisations. Through these mechanisms, the CCP can ensure that its priorities in the state system are implemented.

The CIs are subject to the influence of several *xitong*, with the Propaganda and Education *xitong* having the largest influence. The foreign affairs and finance *xitong* also have a presence on the CI Leadership Council in the form of departments that are subject to their ambit. The two highest authorities in this *xitong* are the two leading groups: Propaganda and Thought Work, and External Propaganda. The External Propaganda Leading Group (EPLG), is the leading authority in the Chinese system tasked with managing foreign public opinion. The State Council Information Office (SCIO) is outwardly responsible for external government publicity such as stating government policy, but as will be discussed subsequently, it actually functions as the CCP's Office of Foreign Propaganda (OFP). Many of the state organisations represented on the CI Leadership Council (such as the Ministries of Culture, and Publishing) are also subject to the authority of the domestically focused Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Group (and its administrative body the Central Propaganda Department). Actual political influence on the CIs is described by the following diagram;

³¹⁶ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. p. 172.

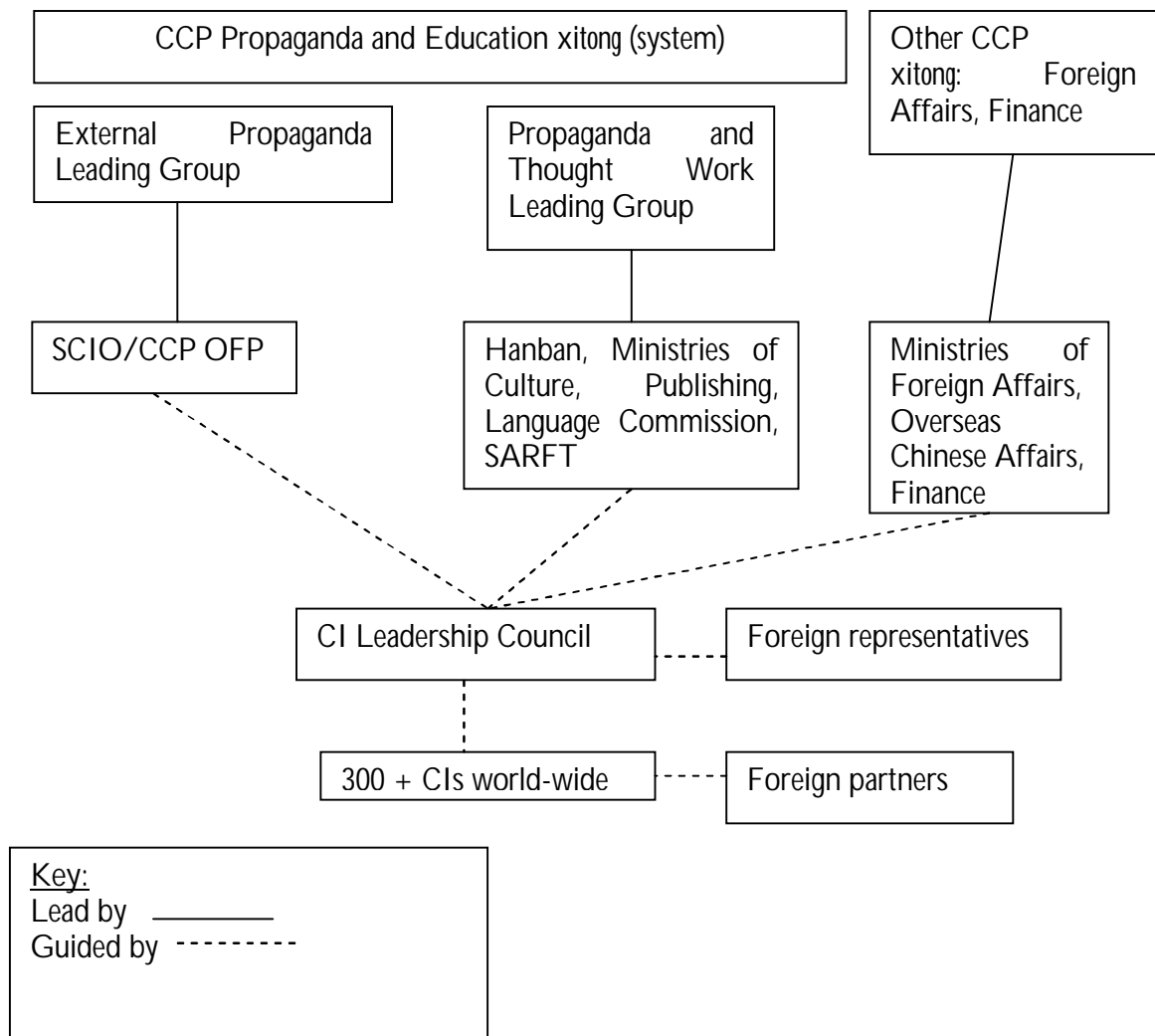


Figure 3 Functional political influence

The CI Leadership Council reflects the *nomenklatura* system where one person can wear a hat in both the Party and state bureaucracy. The Chair of the CI Leadership Council is Liu Yandong, who is also a member of the CCP’s Politburo as well as being a member of the State Council.³¹⁷ She is a long-term member of the CCP with a background in youth ideological education. She took over the chair of the CI Leadership Council from Chen Zhili: a senior Chinese leader with links to a faction of the CCP associated with former President Jiang Zemin, and also who has been a State

³¹⁷ Chinavita.com, n.d. Liu Yandong http://www.chinavita.com/biography/Liu_Yandong (Accessed December 3, 2008).

Councillor and member of the Central Committee of the CCP.³¹⁸ Liu was a Chinese counterpart to meetings with representatives of the Dali Lama, and restated the CCP's policy that Tibet is an inseparable part of China in meetings with leaders of Indian subcontinent countries during a visit in 2007.³¹⁹

The inclusion of foreign representatives on the CI Leadership Council in December 2007, can be seen as an attempt to improve the performance and the public perception of the network. In response to concerns about lack of direction and vision from Hanban the CI system has become more formalised and systematic. Additionally, foreign concerns about the CIs being a tool of the CCP, could be one reason for greater structural and physical autonomy of the CI Leadership Council.³²⁰ It could also reflect the increased workload of administering the CIs, and a separation from Hanban's other roles promoting the Chinese language to foreigners.

The cultural diplomacy of all nations are connected to the state sector of that country, often but not always the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Culture, and this is the case in China. The CIs are administratively connected to the State Council through the various ministry representatives that sit on its Leadership Council. However, through less than obvious mechanisms the CCP maintains guidance over the CIs, something that may not be clear in partnerships with foreign learning institutions. Other ministries represented on the CI leadership Council such as finance, broadcasting, and publishing may play a role in decision making relating to their area.

The State Council Information Office (SCIO) which is represented on the CI Leadership Council is a front organisation for the CCP's OFP.³²¹ This is one way the CCP can supervise the implementation of Party policy when it relates to sensitive areas relating to foreign publicity. The SCIO/OFP researches and develops China's foreign publicity activities, as well as monitoring and censoring all activities within China that

³¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chen_Zhili (Accessed June 18, 2009).

³¹⁹ Tibet Mirror n.d. *Liu Yandong (an enemy of free speech)* <http://tibetmirror.rsfblog.org/archive/2007/01/16/lu-yandong-a-enemy-of-free-speech.html> (Accessed May 26, 2009).

³²⁰ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p. 70.

³²¹ Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy." p. 48

fall within the foreign propaganda ambit such as foreign news briefing, social science research and controlling the internet.³²² It also manages China's public diplomacy which is directed at foreign audiences.³²³ The SCIO was set up in 1991 in order to improve the CCP government's international image in the wake of the events of 1989. China's external publicity/propaganda covers a wide and important sector encompassing external broadcasting, publishing and the CIs.³²⁴

The sources of funding for the CIs is officially from the Leadership Council and course fees, but there is indication of the "guiding hand"³²⁵ of the CCP's propaganda leadership operating as well. In an example of this process, David Shambaugh writing in *The China Journal*, stated that the CI establishment process typically involves foreign universities being approached by the Education Counsellor of the local Chinese Embassy offering "no strings attached" funds to establish a CI. The recipient is informed that the funding comes from China's Ministry of Education, but in fact, "it is laundered through the MOE from the CCPPD's External Propaganda Department. [the CCP's OFFP]".³²⁶

Senior Chinese leaders support the CIs in words and actions. Evidence of links between the Party and the CIs are the support in speeches of senior Chinese leaders such as President Hu Jintao,³²⁷ who has presided at CI opening ceremonies, and Standing Politburo member and propaganda chief Li Changchun who stated that the CIs are an important means to promote China to the world.³²⁸ In addition, the CIs constitution uses

³²² Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 23.

³²³ d'Hooghe *The Rise of China's Public Diplomacy*. p. 21.

³²⁴ Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy," p. 49.

³²⁵ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 9.

³²⁶ Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy," p. 50. In response to a query about the sources of this claim, Professor Shambaugh stated that the claim came from two Chinese sources, however other Chinese sources had claimed that funding came China's Ministry of Finance, and that he would investigate it further. Email to the author, November 23, 2009.

³²⁷ People's Daily, "President Hu visits Nairobi Confucius Institute", http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200604/30/eng20060430_262305.html Accessed October 10, 2008

³²⁸ Will Wachter 2007 *The Language of Chinese Soft Power in the US*, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/IE24Ad02.html> (Accessed 7 Aug 2008). See also Hanban, "Li Changchun Inspected Confucius Institute Headquarters while stressing on Chinese Language Promotion," <http://english.hanban.edu.cn/content.php?id=2670> Accessed November 4, 2009.

language which reflects official discourse, for example the goal to “construct a harmonious world”³²⁹ which mirrors the current Party line.

According to the Constitution of the Headquarters, each CI must abide by Chinese policies as well as local laws.³³⁰ Several CI directors who replied to email questions emphasised the lack of prescriptive guidelines from Hanban and political influence from China generally, although it is clear that some guidance exists. Foreign CI partners are required to adhere to the “one China policy” and must not have collaborative arrangements with Taiwanese universities or be part of any other terms that Beijing finds unacceptable.³³¹ However CIs also reflect the openness of the host society, as is the case of the Auckland University CI, which has welcomed Taiwanese delegations, but not Falun Gong³³² (which is an illegal organisation in China). CI class discussions may deal with matters that would be off limits for those within China, because the Chinese propaganda system is not as strong in foreign countries. Correspondence with 19 individual CI directors reveal that they came diverse backgrounds often linked to the local community, with at least one from Taiwan, and all possessing expertise in the Chinese language.

The CIs are a change in the way the CCP has allowed an organisation not completely under its control to be involved in the implementation of foreign policy. The CI follow earlier Chinese cultural diplomacy such as cultural centres in Europe and other locations such as the Maldives, which began in the 1980s and 90s, which were not located in learning institutions, and were apparently less successful.³³³ In order to gain credibility for its cultural diplomacy China has had to give the CIs an element of political independence, but like the cultural diplomacy of other nations, they are not completely separate from political influence.

³²⁹ Confucius Institutes, “*Who are we?*” n.d.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Lai *China's Cultural Diplomacy: Going for Soft Power*.p. 10.

³³² Interview with Director of Auckland University Confucius Institute, June 2008

³³³ Interview with Chinese language lecturer, June 2008.

Conclusion

None of the cultural diplomacy programmes of other countries are independent from political influence. They all have some form of political, administrative or financial ties which guide them in their country's interests. Britain for example, aims to improve its image in countries where it is not well trusted, while France aims to promote French influence by supporting French culture in the Francophone world. The Alliance Française is largely administratively independent from the French Government but receives direction from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while the Swedish Institutes operate with funding and support directly from Sweden's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. France and Britain spend much more money on public diplomacy than China; hundreds of millions of US dollars in both cases. Being joint ventures the CIs share the costs and leadership between China and a foreign partner, nevertheless, the CIs are an important part of the CCP attempts to manage China's international image.

The Chinese political system is defined by the unique way the Party is interlocked with the state bureaucratic sector, and organises bureaucracies to achieve a certain task the Party leadership determines. The Party in the contemporary era, derives its legitimacy to rule through management of economic development and the management of public information. Increasingly, policy discussion in China involves more diversity in representation and debate, but in important areas such as the sphere of ideas (propaganda and education), security and foreign policy decision-making, a few elites retain the power to decide of decisions that affect many. The CCP also exercises power in deciding on appointments to senior positions in the state sector, giving it another level of control over the Chinese bureaucracy that is often hidden from view to the outside.

The CIs are part of the CCP's propaganda system, in particular the external system managed by the EPLG. The CCP has increased the sophistication of its efforts in the realm of managing foreign perceptions and opinion. In cultural diplomacy, this has meant adopting some of the strategies used by other countries, and compromising in

areas that give foreign partners some influence, however this has not altered the Party's management of China's relations with the rest of the world. Official descriptions describe the CI Leadership Council as the ultimate decision-making body, when actually, policy decisions are made in leading groups of a few of the most senior Party and state officials. The Party leads many organisations involved in information, broadcasting and entertainment, and can guide others such as the CIs through special hidden systems called *xitong* and "double hatting," among other mechanisms. However, the model of the CIs does give some room for influence from foreigners, both in the CI Leadership Council, and local CI boards.

The CIs have a higher degree of political independence than if they were located in China, and they do have foreign influence, but the CCP retains a less than transparent means of influence. China has adapted foreign models of cultural diplomacy to produce the CIs, but the Party continues to manage Chinese cultural diplomacy with its own mechanisms. The CIs are analogous to the cultural diplomacy of other developed nations – all of which are subject to political influence, the key difference is the Chinese Party-State political system.

Chapter Five

A TOOL FOR SUBVERSION OR A GOODWILL GESTURE?

Introduction

China's attempt to promote its language and culture around the world through the CIs has expanded rapidly, but has also been subject to criticism. The criticisms can be grouped into the issues of academic freedom and political influence from China. This chapter discusses all these concerns in the light of the results of questions put to individual directors of CIs, interviews with China specialists, and academic literature. The results from these sources suggest that while some of the criticism cannot be substantiated, the CIs do present some administrative challenges for the foreign partners working with them, and while they represent an increasingly effective Chinese foreign policy, they are unlikely to be completely effective in growing China's soft power. However, contributions by CIs to local communities are also apparent; they help learning institutions meet their obligations to their communities, and they promote greater engagement between China and the rest of the world.

Research Methodology

The sources for this part of the thesis were taken from a wide variety of sources including academic publishing, several online newspapers, a radio broadcast, web discussion pages, a questionnaire and personal interviews. An attempt to gain the perspective of a representative sample of CI Directors was, unfortunately unsuccessful, with a only minority of those sent questionnaires actually responding with answers to the questions. A list of the email addresses of 122 CIs was compiled through inquiries, which amounted to 46% of the 260 CIs operating at the time (requests for a complete list though official sources were declined). Ten questions were sent to them which asked for example: "Who set up your institute? Do you feel you have academic independence?", and "In what way does your CI benefit the community?" Participation was voluntary and confidential, and involved a one month timeframe (May 2008) with two reminders sent at 15 days and three days before the end of the month. The result was that 15.6% of those surveyed actually replied, which represented 7% of total

directors of CIs existing at the time. A further 15 of the addresses or 12.3% proved to be invalid, and one director replied saying they were too busy to respond.

The directors who did reply to the questions stressed their independence from Chinese political influence, but the silent majority who did not reply also send a message as strong, if not stronger than those that did. There was an apparent reluctance on the part of many CI directors and of some interview subjects, to speak freely on matters concerning the Chinese Government. This makes it difficult to say that most CI directors feel independent from Chinese political influence.

Although the replies cannot be used as a representative sample of CI directors, they provide a valuable gauge of individuals' perspectives. Qualitative surveys with low response rates cannot be regarded as reliable enough to make generalisations, but they can still be useful indications of individual perceptions and experiences. According to Floyd Flowers' book on research methods, "Failure to collect data from a high percentage of those selected to be surveyed is a major potential source of survey error."³³⁴ Because the CIs are relatively new and little other comparative work analysing the views of CI directors exists, information gained from the responses can still be useful; as the results provide a rich and detailed picture of the experiences and perceptions of the individuals involved.

Criticisms relating to universities

Criticisms of the CIs portray them as a threat to the integrity of foreign universities. In a speech available online³³⁵ and a journal article, Jocelyn Chey argues that the CIs are a threat to academic freedom because of their "ever-expanding focus and links to the CCP", and it is important to protect universities from "contextual association and pressure" arising out of the CIs involvement in research, academic conferences and teaching.³³⁶ She states:

The CI programme insofar as it supports culture and outreach is most valuable. It would be when it seeks to engage in teaching or research as

³³⁴ Floyd J. Fowler, *Survey Research Methods*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks Sage Publications, 2009).

³³⁵ Jocelyn Chey 2007, *Chinese "Soft Power" – Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes*
<http://www.thesydneyinstitutepodcast.com/2007/11/20/JOCELYNCHEYCHINESESOFTPOWERDIPLOMACYANDTHECONFUCIUSINSTITUTE.aspx> (Accessed October 15, 2008).

³³⁶ Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes," p. 44.

part of universities main activities that academic colleagues should be aware of potential bias.³³⁷

As an example of how the Chinese Government uses the CIs to promote favourable points of view, Chey notes the Nordic CI in Stockholm University. It sponsored a seminar on “The Development of China and Its Role in the Globe” in November 2006, which was summarised in a report on the Hanban website as; “reaching a favourable conclusion to the question whether China’s development had brought threats or opportunities to the world.”³³⁸ Chey argues that academics should be wary of this kind of “contextual association and pressure.”³³⁹ She argues that scholars around the world research China from a variety of disciplines and generally reach fair, comprehensive and unbiased conclusions, but should the CIs develop more of a research focus such as the establishment of a research based CI at Waseda University in Japan,³⁴⁰ the result would be “at best be a dumbing down of research and, at worst, could produce propaganda.”³⁴¹

Chey was also concerned about the unequal power relationship between universities and the Chinese authorities when negotiating agreements, and why China has chosen to establish the CIs in learning institutions that were based on academic neutrality. The expansion is occurring at a time when many universities are under financial pressure and accepting a CI can be a means of cutting the costs of delivering Chinese language education and competing for the fees of international students, while the CIs were backed by the Chinese Party-State system. She asked, “Why do the CIs have to be in universities when Alliance Française and the Goethe Institute can function separately?”³⁴²

CI Directors who responded to my email questionnaire believed they could have academic independence although some acknowledged that they did feel constraints as a result of their relationship with China. According to one director, “In world CI meetings, some European universities have shared the experience of conflict between their CI and their Chinese Department. The latter can be critical of China, and they

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid. p. 44. The report was later removed from the site.

³³⁹ Ibid. p. 44.

³⁴⁰ http://www.gov.cn/english/2007-04/25/content_595582.htm (Accessed February 4, 2009).

³⁴¹ Chey, “Chinese “Soft Power” Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes,” p. 44.

³⁴² Jocelyn Chey, Telephone interview with the author, May 19, 2008.

wonder what perception will be created if their department/university criticises China in an academic forum, and at the same time host the CI.”³⁴³

Another director stated they had academic independence but, “it is clear that some topics are not dealt with (such as the Tibet or the Taiwan issue).”³⁴⁴ Another stated that in his publications he had never been very apologetic to the current Chinese Government and “once I’ve [sic] got a phone call from the Embassy asking what do I think about our university granting the Dalai Lama [an] Honorary Degree. I’ve answered that is none of my business, our CI is an apolitical unit.”³⁴⁵ One respondent answered that as Director he did not have complete academic independence as independence is a relative term;

From Hanban/the Chinese Government? Yes, absolutely. If the question refers to independence from my university, of course not. The CI has to fit into the academic and research priorities of the university. This does limit some of the projects we can get involved in, as we are employees of the university.³⁴⁶

While there appears to be some constraints on CI Directors due to their institutes’ relationship with China (and other partners), most of the 19 CI Directors who replied to my questionnaire felt that they certainly had operational independence and stated that they as Director, had responsibility for programme planning, financing, and staffing. Most CIs are primarily involved in community language tuition (while based in a learning institution) rather than academic social science research on China. The CIs constitution lists promoting Chinese language and culture as their main aim,³⁴⁷ while promoting academic research on China is not mentioned as one of its goals. Some universities have the same staff involved in academic China Studies as well as language teaching through the CI. One of them stated, “Academic freedom is not an issue because the focus of the Institute is the promotion of language and culture. For academic research, we do it under another “identity”, which is the University’s China Studies Programme.”³⁴⁸ A university Chinese language teacher interviewed supported the establishment of a CI within their department as a means of enhancing Chinese

³⁴³ Questionnaire response from CI director May, 2008.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Confucius Institutes n.d. *Constitution and Bylaws of the Confucius Institutes*.

³⁴⁸ Questionnaire response from CI director May, 2008.

language teaching in secondary schools in the locality. They went on to say that academic freedom was not a major issue because while China may be able to control one or two institutes, it would not be able to control them all, “and universities would not allow it.”³⁴⁹

China is not the only organisation competing for influence on academic staff and complicating their academic independence. In addition to the numerous commercial and state interests which collaborate with universities, several countries also have a cultural diplomacy presence on campuses worldwide in the form of language institutes, support for country studies and educational exchanges (such as the US-backed Fulbright Programme). Portugal’s *Instituto Camões* for example, uses a similar model to the CIs on a smaller scale.³⁵⁰ According to Professor of Chinese Studies Tim Wright, an executive board member of the CI at Sheffield University, China is a less democratic country than the UK or Germany and the relationship between universities and the government in China is less independent than in Europe. However, Wright stated that the CI he works with had been given a free rein to come to whatever conclusions about China that it wanted to.³⁵¹

While some foreigners working directly with CIs are not greatly troubled about academic independence issues, they are concerned about the institutes long-term survivability. Don Starr notes an online discussion on the public site H-Asia in June 2008, where academic staff involved with CIs at their institutions took a relaxed view towards the issue of academic freedom.³⁵² They stated that the textbooks provided by Hanban “were so transparent in their propaganda that they were no threat to student minds. Nor were they aware of any attempts to censor lectures or courses, which they felt would be counter-productive for the Chinese.”³⁵³ The staff working with CIs tended to have other concerns about the CIs however, focusing on finance, legal issues, relations with the Chinese university, and long-term support.

³⁴⁹ Interview with Chinese language lecturer June 30, 2008.

³⁵⁰ Don Starr *Creating a World Language: Chinese Government Policy and the Confucius Institutes Programme viewed from a British Perspective*. Paper given at conference “China in the Age of Globalisation” at the University College Dublin, August 16, 2007.

³⁵¹ Shepherd, “Not A Propaganda Tool.” p. 2.

³⁵² Starr, “Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes,” p. 79.

³⁵³ *Ibid.* .

Does the Chinese Government tell you how to teach the Chinese language?

Like the last section, the vocal minority of individual directors who responded to the question about interference from China on teaching did not think it was a major issue. Directors were asked to respond to the quote from G. Cameron Hurst, Director of the Centre for East Asia Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in the *Christian Science Monitor* of January 4, 2007, that he didn't want to be "in the business of the Chinese Government telling us how" to teach the Chinese language. This question brought detailed responses. The theme of the 19 directors who chose to comment was that the Chinese authorities did not interfere with teaching; "I don't look at their government telling us what to do – it's more of what we can do for each other."³⁵⁴ Another respondent emphasised their basic purpose: to promote the Chinese language throughout the world. Directors who were questioned said that there is no mandatory curriculum or method, and there is a wide variety of materials and methodologies available for each Confucius Institute to choose from, "To be fair to the CI headquarters, they are not "telling us how to teach Chinese" but only making all kinds of resources available to us."³⁵⁵

Several directors emphasised they were free to teach Chinese to their communities in whatever way they chose, but they were the minority who actually responded to a questionnaire. One Director stated that the Chinese Government had not infringed on their operational and educational approach; "We have made it clear we would not work under those conditions."³⁵⁶ However, for some universities, the chance to introduce a Chinese language service albeit with Chinese backing is better than none at all; "As a developing country, and one with very few human resources when it comes to teaching Mandarin Chinese, the assistance of Hanban is very welcome."³⁵⁷

Staff seconded from the Chinese partner university may not be familiar with local teaching methods. Another respondent stated that G. Cameron Hurst was "partially right" in that Chinese approach to teaching to foreigners "left much to be desired," and while Russian study of China had been undertaken for several centuries, China only

³⁵⁴ Questionnaire response from CI director May, 2008.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

stated producing learning systems for non-native speakers of Chinese in the 1980s.³⁵⁸

Further, another respondent said;

It is absolutely understandable that he does not want to commit himself to the activity which smacks of China's propaganda effort. And he is right. For us – and I believe most of the universities establishing CIs – it's a chance for developing our China studies. But we are all too aware how narrow our path is. We are, to some extent, seen as a propaganda tool. And in fact, we are ... So the problem is how true is the information provided by us. I believe we haven't compromised our academic position so far."³⁵⁹

One respondent thought it was inappropriate to frame the Confucius Institutes programme as government policy, rather than Ministry of Education policy. They continued "If he is really interested in teaching Chinese, then he will learn from all good ideas, whether they come from the Chinese Ministry of Education or not."³⁶⁰ The reality of the tight financial circumstances many Western universities find themselves in was touched on by the comment "Many of the institutions hosting CIs don't have [a lot] of money floating around, and the CI allows them to make significant investments in a programme that they might not otherwise be able to afford."³⁶¹

The changing role of universities

China's promotion of the CIs is occurring at a time of changing roles for learning institutions. Traditionally, universities were a source of education for the professions: theology, law and medicine, and were entrusted with the task of undertaking research for the social good, where academics were free to express any opinion in order to advance science or their discipline. With neo-liberal reforms in the beginning across the world in the 1980s and 90s, a more profit-orientated model has emerged, in which universities provide more of their own funding, compete with other educational institutions for students, and undertake commercially focused research. As Philip Altbach has described, the values existing in the market place have intruded onto the campus.³⁶² Universities and other tertiary learning institutions are expected to generate

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Philip Altbach, "Higher Education and the WTO: Globalization Run Amok," *International Higher Education* Spring, no. 23 (2001). p. 1.

more of their own funding; they have had to “think more like businesses and less like learning institutions.”³⁶³

Other foreign governments have also become involved in educational institutions through public diplomacy such as supporting country studies programmes and scholarships for language studies. One such example is the National Centre for Research on Europe at the University of Canterbury, where according to the Director Martin Holland, the European Union provide funds for research, with the aim to promote understanding, rather than direct a positive picture of Europe.³⁶⁴ Increasingly universities have partnerships with commercial organisations for whom the research opportunities can translate into commercial gain for the country, the company and the university.

According to Altbach, universities need to maintain an adequate degree of academic freedom and independence if they are to flourish, and every country needs to maintain control over their academic institutions.³⁶⁵ The diversification of funding of universities has not always led to an improvement in their performance also argues Fang Zhao.³⁶⁶ It is argued that the assessment of education quality should include the achievement of both economic and social goals, and both the achievement of short-term benefits and the long term interests of a nation.³⁶⁷ Traditionally universities were regarded as special institutions by society precisely because their goals went beyond everyday commerce.³⁶⁸ The changes that have allowed a diversification of funding sources have been controversial but have made universities become more efficient and made their research more socially and commercially relevant. This is one of factors that has allowed China to introduce the Confucius Institutes into universities, because of the extra funds they provide. Zhao argues that the real test should be whether or not an external funding source helps the university achieve short and long term social and economic goals.³⁶⁹

³⁶³ Ibid. p. 2.

³⁶⁴ Professor Martin Holland, Director National Centre for Research on Europe Canterbury University, interview March 7, 2008.

³⁶⁵ Altbach, "Higher Education and the WTO: Globalization Run Amok," p. 3.

³⁶⁶ Fang Zhao, "Impact of Diversification of Financing Sources on Higher Education Quality," *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 26, no. 5 (2001).p. 431-432.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Altbach, "Higher Education and the WTO: Globalization Run Amok."

³⁶⁹ Zhao, "Impact of Diversification of Financing Sources on Higher Education Quality," p. 434.

Administrative issues

For many foreigners working with CIs, the problems are not so much political or academic, but more everyday administrative issues. These include basic issues such as that the institutes could be a long-term financial risk to foreign learning institutions. Beijing has helped set up many joint venture CIs, but whether they have too much independence and may be unable to function without continued subsidies is an issue for many existing institutes. The start up funding from Hanban of \$US 50-100,000 covers the period of the initial five-year agreement,³⁷⁰ but the activities of most CIs do not produce an income stream sufficient to cover costs.³⁷¹ According to Professor Tim Wright of Sheffield University, the expectation that the institutes will self-fund after three years is unrealistic: "The Chinese Government has to accept that these institutes will require funding for a substantial period of time, 10 to 20 years perhaps."³⁷²

Practical concerns to do with legal issues and regulations dealing with relations between the foreign university and the Chinese university partner have also been expressed by some of those in working relationships with CIs. University managers have been persuaded that the CI arrangement will provide benefits such as prestige, new opportunities, research collaboration and fee-paying Chinese students, but if these do not eventuate, then there will be pressure to withdraw after the initial period.³⁷³ The visa and tax status of incoming teachers have been issues, and in some cases "they don't understand Western culture and different places, with the result that they can't teach in a way that reflects student's needs."³⁷⁴ The legal status of a CI which is subject to Chinese requirements, as well as having administrative and financial requirements to its foreign partner, may also be an issue.³⁷⁵

CIs location within universities

The CI programme establishes a partnership with foreign learning institutions (especially universities), because this relationship gives them more respectability than they would have if they were located elsewhere in local communities. Establishing the

³⁷⁰ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p. 71.

³⁷¹ Ibid. p. 78.

³⁷² Shepherd, "Not A Propaganda Tool." p.3.

³⁷³ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p. 78.

³⁷⁴ *Huanqui shibao* (2006) quoted in Ibid.p. 78.

³⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 78.

Auckland CI in a university gives it more “authority and kudos” than it would have if it was located anywhere else according to its director.³⁷⁶ However, in creating this model, China has had to meet requirements of the host country and universities. This has meant satisfying concerns about independence, freedom and authority. Professor of Political Science Wenran Jiang of Alberta University supports giving China a chance to put its perspective in the established format, while observing whether it does try to use the institutes coercively as critics have suggested.³⁷⁷

CIs operate with varying degrees of independence from academic Chinese language schools in the host university. Jocelyn Chey was especially concerned that the CI would be “integrated” with undergraduate and postgraduate programmes delivered by Sydney University, and this would compromise its academic integrity.³⁷⁸ Accordingly, the CI was housed in Sydney University’s Research Institute for Asia and the Pacific when it was opened in March 2008, physically separate from university Chinese teaching programmes. In other universities CIs have been involved in teaching university credit courses. Professor John Hearne, Sydney University’s deputy Vice Chancellor said that academic programmes of the Chinese Studies Department would continue unchanged, but left open the possibility of “innovation” as “people get more comfortable” with arrangements.³⁷⁹

Having a CI located in a university gives the institute greater integration into local communities than their predecessor Chinese cultural centres had. According to one source, earlier attempts by China to promote its language and culture through cultural centres located in foreign cities (Chinese cultural centres were established in Europe in the 1990s³⁸⁰), proved unsuccessful because they had few connections, and were unable to function.³⁸¹ The same source stated that Chinese universities were asked to promote CIs through their links with foreign universities, because foreign universities are seen as objective and having links with local communities.

³⁷⁶ Auckland CI Director Nora Yao, email to the author, 26 June, 2008.

³⁷⁷ “The Current” June 15, 2007, Part 3 “Confucius Institutes: Critic”, Canadian Broadcasting Service. Real Player file <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/2007/200706/20070615.html> (Accessed 17 September, 2009)

³⁷⁸ Bernard Lane, “Confucius Deal Close Despite Concerns.” *The Australian* 22 August <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,22284825-12332,00.html> (Accessed 12 August 2008).

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Agreements to establish Chinese cultural exchange centres during the 1990s in Europe are noted at pages 15-16 in Aoyama *China’s Public Diplomacy*.

³⁸¹ Interview with Chinese language lecturer June 10, 2008.

A potential for difficulties does appear to arise when CIs become closely integrated into a university's teaching programmes, especially where there are existing China studies programmes in place. According to a post by Dr. Michael Carl Brose of the University of Wyoming in the June 2008 H-Asia public discussion on the CIs and academic independence, CIs that have become involved in university credit teaching have run into problems.³⁸² These may include “turf wars” with existing Chinese courses, and difficulties in holding CI staff administratively and financially accountable.³⁸³ There are a number of cases where this appears to have been successfully achieved, but separating CIs from academic teaching and research while remaining with a university is the approach some institutions have taken.

Managing the establishment process

While the number of successful CI applications continues to grow, there has also been an even greater number of unsuccessful applications. The reasons have included restrictions placed by another CI, unwillingness to subject the learning institution to any form of control from China, and the establishment of alternative China studies facilities. A Chinese language lecturer stated that one CI was enough for a country such as New Zealand with a population of four million people, despite the efforts of several second and third tier Chinese universities that had been involved in trying to sell CIs partnerships to each New Zealand university.³⁸⁴ According to Xiaolin Guo, a real incentive for Chinese universities to undertake CI projects is to boost their academic credentials, because “international activities” serve as an index on which China's learning institutes are evaluated.³⁸⁵

Some of the most prestigious universities in the world have not established CIs. According to Starr,

The reasons for this are clear: the very top foreign universities do not need to encumber themselves with the negative aspects of a CI in the hope of

³⁸² Michael Carl Brose 2008, <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-asia&month=0806&week=b&msg=nbUkPoCqDsNL2OP44qGhbQ&user=&pw=> (Accessed May 13, 2009).

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Chinese language lecturer, email to the author June 26, 2008.

³⁸⁵ Guo *Repackaging Confucius: PRC Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power*. p. 32

gaining official favour and collaborative access to China's top universities; they can have these for their asking.³⁸⁶

For example, negotiations to establish a CI at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver Canada, ranked 33 in the world in the Times Education Supplement top 200 universities,³⁸⁷ were unsuccessful (despite the university's Chinese language department being involved in the writing of Hanban language teaching textbooks) because the University declined the application.³⁸⁸ However, a CI was later opened at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) also in Vancouver, which is not ranked at all in the Times Education Supplement top 200 universities.³⁸⁹

Cultural and linguistic concerns

The CIs have been criticised in the West by some sinologists for projecting a restricted view of Chinese culture. Although each CI is given substantial independence in how it organises its programme, there is some concern about what culture can be represented given the less than democratic political system existing in China. In personal communication with the author, a Senior Lecturer in Chinese expressed disquiet about the way a particular CI at has tended to undermine and compete with existing and often community based Chinese activities, and its tendency to portray itself as the sole authority on not just Chinese language but culture as well.³⁹⁰ This was "supremely ironic, given the plight of [Chinese culture] particularly in the PRC."³⁹¹ According to this scholar, "the issue boils down to one of who owns the Chinese language and the nature of discourse of Chinese history and culture."³⁹²

Chinese culture in the mainland has been closely connected to the political climate of the time. Scholar Geremie Barmé describes culture in the mainland since 1949 suffering and prospering according to the dictates of political leaders.³⁹³ The situation came about because the CCP regarded culture as merely another weapon in the war of class

³⁸⁶ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p.73.

³⁸⁷ The Times Educational Supplement *Top 200 Universities*

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/hybrid.asp?typeCode=144> (Accessed September 9 2008).

³⁸⁸ Janet Steffenhagen, "Has BCIT Sold Out to Chinese Propaganda?" *Vancouver Sun* 2008, p. 4

<http://www.canada.com/vancouver/news/westcoastnews/story.html?id=179b4e77-f0cf-4608-a8b7-a9943116f489> (Accessed April 2, 2008).

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Senior Lecturer in Chinese language, email to the author April 1, 2008.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Geremie Barmé, *In the Red: on Contemporary Chinese Culture* (New York Columbia University Press, 1999). p. 1.

struggle. CCP cultural policies were designed to support the “advanced culture” of Marxism-Leninism and destroy the “old culture” of traditional Chinese civilisation such as Confucianism. During the three decades of Mao’s rule, artists learned the great personal costs involved in becoming part of an elite given the task of educating and enlightening the masses; experiencing highs of exhalation and lows of repression. Culture in the mainland has operated in a “velvet prison”, the boundaries of which have expanded during the reform and open period.³⁹⁴ The post 1978 era has seen increased cultural freedom, however in the aftermath of the 1989 disturbances, Jiang Zemin sought to tighten management of culture.³⁹⁵ Subjects such as the Cultural Revolution, which occurred during the Party’s rule and resulted with widespread devastation, remain managed by authorities.³⁹⁶

Ownership of language

Efforts by successive governments to use language policies to unify the nation have been one of the tools to used govern China for centuries. The concept of the “Chinese language” encompasses linguistic phenomena so broad as to make the concept virtually meaningless except politically, because it actually consists of six mutually unintelligible languages.³⁹⁷ Mandarin or *Putonghua* (also known as *Hanyu*) is the largest with 679 million native speakers.³⁹⁸ Efforts to promote a national language were given impetus by the New Culture movement in 1916, and the Kuomintang (KMT) government “implemented sweeping language reforms that reflected the ideologies of the new era”.³⁹⁹ Both the CCP and the KMT promoted Mandarin in an effort to unify the country. The CCP’s language policies have had the effect of promoting the languages of the majority Han Chinese ethnicity over the languages of other Chinese ethnic groups, and promoting Mandarin over other Han languages such as Cantonese and Shanghaiese, even if this was not the official objective.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, p. 46.

³⁹⁶ On these points, I am indebted to Dr. He Yong post-doc fellow at Canterbury University and China Communication University, for helpful discussion.

³⁹⁷ H. Windrow, "From State to Nation: The Forging of the Han through Language Policy in the PRC and Taiwan," *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 37, no. 2 (2005) p.378. The author lists the other Chinese languages and their number of native speakers as; Wu (80 million) spoken in Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces, Yue [also known as Cantonese] (50 m) spoken in Guangdong Province and Hong Kong, Xiang (46 m) spoken in Hunan Province, Northern and Southern Min (39 m) spoken in Fujian and Hainan and in Taiwan, Hakka (35 m) spoken across southern China, and Gan (23 m) spoken in parts of Jiangxi, Hunan, Hubei and Fujian Provinces. In addition, there are the languages of China’s 55 official ethnic minorities.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 389.

Chinese dissident Chen Yonglin who defected from the Chinese embassy in Sydney Australia where he was stationed in 2005, stated that the use of simplified Chinese characters in the CIs was intended to promote a communist view of history, and that foreigners should be aware that China was using culture to penetrate mainstream society.⁴⁰⁰ However, this view that Chinese authorities were trying to control what people knew about China through the use of simplified characters did not have much credibility according to Professor Wenran Jiang of Alberta University who stated that many academics in China can read traditional characters, and that simplified characters are used because they are easier to learn.⁴⁰¹ Factors in favour of the CIs focus on standard Mandarin, are that it is spoken by the vast majority of Chinese, and the simplified characters have assisted with improving literacy in the mainland.

The politics of linguistic competition

While China has been successful in developing the popularity of Mandarin Chinese, it is not without its competition from other languages spoken in China and by overseas Chinese. Modern China is highly linguistically diverse with many different ethnic groups, and even more indistinguishable dialects. Hayden Windrow has discussed China's use of language policies to shape, and even create the self-awareness of the nation.⁴⁰² Successive Chinese regimes in the last century have sought to use linguistic policies to enforce their vision of Chinese nationalism. Prior to coming to power the CCP had a liberal policy on language favouring linguistic independence for China's non-Han people, the preservation of all Han languages, and using Mandarin only as a common language to ease communication.⁴⁰³ However, on coming to power in 1949 the CCP language policies have centralised authority through promoting Mandarin over other Han languages which officially became "barriers to national unity".⁴⁰⁴ Beijing's reformed language policy also involved the promotion of a simplified version of Chinese characters using the Roman alphabet called *pinyin* which was aimed at

⁴⁰⁰ Canadian Broadcasting Service, "*Confucius Institutes: Critic*"

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Windrow, "From State to Nation: The Forging of the Han through Language Policy in the PRC and Taiwan," p. 375.

⁴⁰³ John DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy* (Honolulu University of Hawaii Press, 1984).

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

improving literacy amongst Chinese, 90% of whom could not understand traditional characters in 1949.⁴⁰⁵

In mainland China there has been competition between Chinese language dialects. As Windrow has noted, the economic growth in China's wealthier regions such as Guangdong, Fujian and Shanghai has fostered growth in their languages, seemingly in opposition to the Chinese government attempts to promote Mandarin as the national language.⁴⁰⁶ However Beijing has legislated to promote the speaking of Mandarin, requiring its use in the government operations, and ensuring all civil servants pass a test of Mandarin ability.⁴⁰⁷ In the mainland, the future of other Han languages is bleak because of the government's pro-Mandarin policies.⁴⁰⁸

In Taiwan where the Nationalist Government had promoted Mandarin as the national language, democratisation since the 1980s has encouraged the long-suppressed use of non-Mandarin Chinese languages. During Taiwanese elections, whether a candidate can speak "local" languages was an indication of how sympathetic they are to the Taiwanese independence cause.⁴⁰⁹ The KMT imposed one party rule in Taiwan after 1949 but a multi-party political system developed in the 1980s. The Democratic Progressive Party has consistently pushed its cultural localisation (such as the speaking of local languages) as a means of advancing its goal of advancing an independent Taiwan.⁴¹⁰ This divergent trend is something the mainland government is determined to oppose.

The promotion of Mandarin is seen as a threat to the linguistic and cultural identities which have been fiercely guarded by diasporic Chinese communities, many of whom speak other Chinese languages. This especially true for Cantonese speakers in Vancouver, New York or San Francisco and other sites of early Chinese immigration where the introduction of Mandarin schools is seen as a threat to their century-old identities. This "dialectic maelstrom" may pose a continuous, if not insurmountable

⁴⁰⁵ Windrow, "From State to Nation: The Forging of the Han through Language Policy in the PRC and Taiwan," p. 396.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 407.

⁴⁰⁷ Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*, p. 126.

⁴⁰⁸ Windrow: p. 420.

⁴⁰⁹ Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*.p. 127.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

problem for the development of China's language policies.⁴¹¹ But many overseas Chinese from a non-Mandarin background are taking up learning Mandarin, adding to its global popularity. The CIs have a goal of creating 100 million non-native speakers of Mandarin by 2020.

Propaganda or public diplomacy?

Some critics do not regard the CIs as analogous to the language institutes which are part of the public diplomacy of other countries, such as Alliance Française or the Goethe Institute due to the degree of government control over administration and operations.⁴¹² Taiwanese and Falon Gong sources also describe the CIs as propaganda tools of the CCP.⁴¹³ While there are some differences such as structure and funding in the language institutes that are part of cultural diplomacy, the CIs have much in common with other language institutes.⁴¹⁴ Several of the 19 CI Directors who responded to my questionnaire indicated that Chinese authorities exercise only distant influence over the administration and operations of their CIs. Similarly according to one news story, "Some program [sic] directors (all American) joke that, for once, they want Hanban to provide more central guidance."⁴¹⁵

Several university staff involved with CIs in Britain dispute that the CIs are an outlet for CCP propaganda. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lampeter in the United Kingdom, Professor of Law Robert Pearce stated, "We have seen no evidence of the Chinese government using the university as a propaganda tool through the CI."⁴¹⁶ Similarly, according to Tim Wright, Professor of Chinese Studies and executive board member of the CI at Sheffield University, China is a less democratic country than Britain or Germany, but "We are given more or less a free reign to do what we want.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., p. 156.

⁴¹² Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes." p. 40.

⁴¹³ Steffenhagen, "Has BCIT Sold Out to Chinese Propaganda?". Mankina (2007), "*Be wary of China's Confucius Institutes*" <http://ahdu88.blogspot.com/2007/05/why-is-china-genu-flexing-to-confucius.html> (Accessed May 1, 2008), Cheng-hsiang Fan, "Official says Institutes are Propaganda Tools" *Taipei Times* 2008, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2008/01/31/2003399603> (Accessed October 1, 2008).

⁴¹⁴ See table 2 "Leading Language Institutes."

⁴¹⁵ Carol Huang, "Why China wants you to learn Chinese." *Christian Science Monitor* January 04 <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0104/p17s01-legn.htm> p. 2.

⁴¹⁶ Shepherd, "Not A Propaganda Tool." p. 2.

Someone who wished to undermine China may not be welcome at a CI, but the British Council doesn't exactly put on talks on the IRA."⁴¹⁷

There has been renewed interest in government activities to influence foreign public opinion (described as public diplomacy), but while techniques have changed from early propaganda, the only difference may be the political system that the activity represents. Aoyama argues that the two terms are different, as public diplomacy emphasises openness and accuracy of information provided, while propaganda conveys the image of distortion and coercion.⁴¹⁸ However, the effect of both activities is in fact the same, as both aim to influence audience opinion. According to Aoyama, information conveyed by a democratic government tends to be reviewed and debated by other domestic factors such as social groups and the media, while information conveyed by a authoritarian regime does not. As a result of such a check and balance process, public diplomacy builds trust and interactive communication.⁴¹⁹ The underlying political system therefore, has a mediating effect on any presentation a government makes about its national culture (and language).⁴²⁰ Public diplomacy emanating from countries with an authoritarian form of government that is less tolerant of social diversity, will not portray an as accurate picture of the country's culture, meaning that the public diplomacy/propaganda will be less effective.⁴²¹

Subversion

Some are concerned that China will use the CIs to conduct improper influence, industrial espionage and surveillance of Chinese living abroad.⁴²² The most public expression of such concern so far, was the raising of the issue in the Swedish Parliament in March 2008. This was a result of some staff at Stockholm University, where the Nordic CI is located claiming that the Chinese Embassy in Stockholm was using the CI to carry out political surveillance, covert propaganda and inhibit research on sensitive areas such as Falun Gong and Tibetan independence. The CI Director categorically refuted the suggestions, and the Rector of the university, on the basis on an independent assessment also rejected the claims that the CI was being used for

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Aoyama *China's Public Diplomacy*. p. 2.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p.79.

political purposes, however he accepted a suggestion that a different format for the CI within the University be explored. The issue was raised in the Swedish Parliament where a member compared the CIs to Mussolini's Italian Institutes of the 1930s and expressed extreme concern about the Nordic Institute.⁴²³

There was also controversy about the opening of a CI in Vancouver, Canada with some saying it is "part of a plot by an emerging superpower to infiltrate and influence foreign citizens and their governments" while others claimed it was a goodwill gesture by Beijing to teach the Chinese language and culture.⁴²⁴ A prominent Canadian lawyer who specialises in immigration and human rights law, David Matas, has argued that some CIs have become "spy citadels" for the Chinese Government, and others have been involved in trying to control protests and activities of certain groups such as Falun Gong and those of overseas Chinese.⁴²⁵ According to Matas,

Nominally, [the institutes] are just about Chinese studies . . . but informally they become a vehicle that the Chinese government uses to basically intimidate the academic institutions to run according to their guise and also as a vehicle for infiltration and spying into the campuses to find out what's going on hostile to their interest.⁴²⁶

There has been criticism that the CIs are an extension of Chinese government influence and an expression of Chinese soft power in a subversive manner. For example, a report by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) released to the Canadian Broadcasting Service (CBS) stated that the CIs were part of a Chinese effort to win Western hearts and minds as opposed to a goodwill gesture to teach Chinese language and culture.⁴²⁷ The report noted the establishment of CIs in Canada in the context of monitoring Chinese intelligence operations in the country, and stated that the institutes will play a greater role in China's foreign relations in the future.⁴²⁸

Industrial espionage has also been suggested to be one of the activities of CIs. A newspaper report noted that in many countries, discreet partners have been established between CIs and Chinese high technology groups, for example: Zheng Baoyong, vice-

⁴²³ Ibid. p. 79.

⁴²⁴ Steffenhagen, "Has BCIT Sold Out to Chinese Propaganda?". p. 1

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ "The Current" June 15, 2007, Part 3 "Confucius Institutes: Critic", Canadian Broadcasting Service. Real Player file <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/2007/200706/20070615.html> (Accessed 17 September, 2009)

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

president of China's Huawei Technologies sits on the Board of the CI at the University of Texas located in Dallas, a hub in the US technology sector.⁴²⁹ A French CI is located in Poitiers, a city associated with information technology, and according to the report the CI is backed by Chinese firm ZTE Technologies.⁴³⁰ The Poitiers CI has a partnership with Nanchang University where ZTE engineers are trained in China. According to the article, US counterintelligence has concerns that the CIs are being used as a link for the transfer of technology to China.⁴³¹

There is little evidence to support claims that the CIs are involved in subversion. Several academic studies do describe the CIs as having political implications but in the field of public diplomacy which works through persuasion rather than subversion.⁴³² The fact that many CI Directors are locals with a speciality in Chinese language, and the joint venture nature of CIs which contain a compliment of local people including host university, tends to count against their use for espionage.⁴³³ Rather than competing for industrial intelligence, the real competition appears to be in the field of influence on world public opinion.

Exclusion of dissidents

Some critics have questioned whether CIs would exclude Chinese dissidents,⁴³⁴ but it appears that such people would be extended freedoms similar to those existing in the local societies. 122 CI directors were asked what they would do if critics of the Chinese government such as Free Tibet, Falun Gong or pro-Taiwanese independence groups wanted to be involved in their institute. 19 Directors responded to this question, and while one said that they would not allow it, most of the replies stated that they work to maintain academic independence, and they would not stop members of such groups from attending classes (provided they did not use the CI to promote political arguments). According to one director, should dissidents attempt to raise their particular concerns in or using the institute, they would not be welcome;

⁴²⁹ Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, "Confronting Confucius" 2007, http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/opinion/columnists/datedlinedc/s_539659.html (Accessed June 3, 2008).

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² See for example d'Hooghe *The Rise of China's Public Diplomacy*. Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power." Aoyama *China's Public Diplomacy*.

⁴³³ For the membership of the Auckland CI see Confucius Institute New Zealand n.d. *About Us* <http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/departments/index.cfm?P=12187> (Accessed November 12, 2008).

⁴³⁴ Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes." p. 40.

If a faculty researcher wanted to draw upon resources of the institute to examine in academic research China's religious policy, for example, there would be no problem. If someone wanted to use the name of the institute to make political arguments, we wouldn't be able to allow it.⁴³⁵

One Director was more precise;

When I asked our co-operating university about co-operating with some activities with private institutions. They said that as long as these are not free Tybet [sic], FLG, or Free Taiwan groups [they] have no objections. We obviously cannot help them with their activities, but we are certainly not going to protest against them. Next week there is going to be a public debate about Tibet and I have been invited as one of the speakers.⁴³⁶

Chinese embassies in foreign capitals may be involved in more political issues such as those described by PRC embassy defector Chen Yonglin, who claimed much of his work as a Chinese embassy officer in Australia was spent targeting "the five evils": Falon Gong, Taiwan, democracy, Tibet, and the Uighur independence movement.⁴³⁷ However the CIs are not embassies, and have a completely different management structure. Another director responded that no university administration would allow itself to become involved with such political groups, with or without a CI;

The official positions of all major Western governments is that Tibet is a part of China and Taiwan is not an independent nation. Why would a university organization engage activities that are against the official policy of its own government politically? Academic studies of these campaigns are an entirely different matter and we should do what we want to do".⁴³⁸

It is clear that the CIs do recognise official Chinese government positions, but also that operating in foreign countries, CIs have more freedom than organisations within China would have in relating to foreign organisations and individuals, some of whom may hold views different to those of the CCP. This is style is reflected in language institutes of other nations.

⁴³⁵ Questionnaire response from CI director May, 2008.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Canadian Broadcasting Service, "*Confucius Institutes: Critic*".

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

An attempt to gain soft power?

Many educators in the Chinese language education field do not accept that the CIs are anything to do with politics or soft power, however some senior Chinese politicians do state that the CIs are part of Chinese attempts to gain soft power. This indicates a degree of sensitivity as to how the CIs are presented to the world.⁴³⁹ Many studies describe the CIs in the context of soft power diplomacy.⁴⁴⁰ However, individuals working with the CIs tended to see them in an educational context rather than a political one, as Allison Markin a spokesperson for the BCIT in Vancouver said “We are an educational institute, so its not something we look at in a political vein, or any sort of security vein. What we are really doing is providing education to people.”⁴⁴¹ Similarly, a director of an Australian CI stated in an email to the author the institutes had “no political agenda” as far as he was aware.⁴⁴²

In contrast to the directors, senior Chinese officials do recognise the CIs as part of China’s objective of national development and enhancement of its soft power. According to Du Ruiqing, former president of the Xi’an International Studies University, misconceptions that China’s development will be a threat to the rest of the world, will be overcome when foreigners are exposed to traditional Chinese culture which values harmony; “culture is a soft power that effectively penetrates to the quench misunderstanding and hostility between people of different races.”⁴⁴³ Hanban Director Xu Lin was also quoted as saying “the CIs would become a shining example of China’s

⁴³⁹ Paradise, "China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power." p. 659

⁴⁴⁰ Agence France Presse 2008 *China's 'Soft Power' Blitz No Major Concern: US study*, <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5gYrjjoI-EaaVsJhwRqpsPE0N5Lw> (Accessed August 21, 2008). Agence France Presse *China's 'Soft Power' Blitz No Major Concern: US study*. Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*. Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language." Gill and Huang, "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power'." Guo, *Repackaging Confucius: PRC Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power* Leong Weng Kam, "Projecting Soft Power, the Confucius Way" *The Straits Times* 2008, http://meltwaternews.com/prerobot/sph.asp?pub=ST&sphurl=www.straitstimes.com//Our%2BColumnists/Column/STISStory_261394.html (Accessed November 14, 2008). Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World*. Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power."

⁴⁴¹ The Monitor, "CSIS Say: Confucius Part of Chinese Bid to Win Over Western Hearts" 2007, <http://www.themonitor.ca/article-cp69319033-CSIS-say-Confucius-part-of-Chinese-bid-to-win-over-western-hearts.html> (Accessed August 3, 2008).

⁴⁴² Associate Professor Gary Sigley Director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Western Australia in Perth, Email to the author March 28, 2008.

⁴⁴³ Bijian Zheng, "China's Peaceful Development And Chinese Civilized Revival " *People's Daily* 2006, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200604/10/eng20060410_257308.html (Accessed November 24 2008).

soft power".⁴⁴⁴ During a visit to Hanban's office in Beijing, Li Changchun, one of the nine members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo (the apex of political authority in China), and in charge of ideology and propaganda, stated that the development of the CIs

Is an important channel to glorify Chinese culture, to help Chinese culture spread to the world [which is] part of Chinese's foreign propaganda strategy.⁴⁴⁵

Chinese officials involved with the CIs downplay claims that China is using the CIs to impose the China model of development on the rest of the world. In a recent statement, CI Leadership Council Chair Liu Yandong (also a CCP Politburo member), stated that some Western media and commentators have suggested that the CIs are part of a plan to infiltrate the Chinese model of development into other countries, but stated that this is not the case.⁴⁴⁶ Liu stated that the CIs are only promoting the Chinese language, and argued that each country is free to choose its own model of development - in accordance with the Confucian idea of *he er bu tong*; that different cultures can exist side by side.⁴⁴⁷ Lui stressed her view of soft power that is largely made up of cultural attractiveness.⁴⁴⁸

Given the dichotomy between Chinese language educators and senior Chinese politicians, it seems that China is taking great care about how it presents the CIs. Given the concerns about the threat posed to academic independence, marketing the CIs as purely educational, as many Chinese language educators see them, seems a safer approach than associating them with soft power or a conscious projection of Chinese political interests.⁴⁴⁹

Many assessments of the CIs recognise that they are part of a Chinese government effort to gain soft power, but have downplayed any threat that they may pose. The CSIS report from Canada observes that while academics debate the relative importance of

⁴⁴⁴ Shanshan Wang, "Modern Times Meet Ancient Philosophy." *China Daily* 9 May
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2007-05/09/content_868285.htm (Accessed 2 December 2008).

⁴⁴⁵ Wachter *The Language of Chinese Soft Power in the US*. p. 2

⁴⁴⁶ China News.com 2009 *Hanban Disproves Cultural Infiltration: Confucius Institute Don't and Won't Transmit Chinese Values* <http://www.chinanews.com.cn/hr/hwjy/news/2009/04-18/1652312.shtml> (Accessed April 20, 2009).

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Paradise, "China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power." p. 662.

hard versus soft power, China views the concept of soft power as very useful, and once the Beijing Olympics are over, the Confucius Institutes will “take a more prominent place in China’s efforts to increase its standing in the world”.⁴⁵⁰ A US Congressional Research Service (CRS) study notes China’s increasing soft power of cultural influence, increasing foreign investments and international aid, but stated that these investments are coming from a very low base and are still low compared to the US. According to then Senator Joseph Biden who commissioned the study, “Contrary to some projections of China’s ability to displace American influence, the CRS study indicates that China must grapple with many limitations on its influence.”⁴⁵¹

To many in Westernised countries, China still has a long way to go to achieve the level of soft power that would attract and influence much of the world’s population. Contemporary China has many problems associated with its international image associated with food safety, human rights and medical crises. The images of “tank man” defying People’s Liberation Army tanks not long after they had crushed student demonstrators on 4 June 1989,⁴⁵² is still in the minds of many foreigners when they think of China, something it is striving to address by presenting the “civilised” side of Chinese culture. Wenran Jiang of the University of Alberta argues that China has had an image problem in highly developed countries because of a “democracy deficit,”⁴⁵³ which is gradually improving. He does not see the CIs as propaganda tools, a term he describes as having secretive and subversive connotations in English; China is just trying to promote its perspective through its culture which is something many countries do.⁴⁵⁴

Positive contributions

There are clearly many ways the CIs benefit local communities according to the responses from several directors and university administrators, indicating their success in improving China’s image. One CI director stated that they provided the following services to the community; “Chinese language classes for people who could not get into

⁴⁵⁰ Quoted in The Monitor, “CSIS Say: Confucius Part of Chinese Bid to Win Over Western Hearts”.

⁴⁵¹ Agence France Presse *China’s ‘Soft Power’ Blitz No Major Concern: US study*.

⁴⁵² Public Broadcasting Service *Tank Man* The PBS documentary contained video footage which was widely publicised outside China <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tankman/> Accessed 20 July, 2008.

⁴⁵³ A democracy deficit “occurs when ostensibly democratic organizations or institutions in fact fall short of fulfilling what are believed to be the principles of democracy” Stafford Levinson, “How the United States contributes to a Democratic Deficit in America,” *Drake Law Review* 55 (2007) p. 859.

⁴⁵⁴ Canadian Broadcasting Service, “*The Confucius Institutes: Critic*”.

the university credit courses, translation and consulting services for people who do business or travel and study in China, setting up an information centre, and organising exchange programs for academic and business purposes.”⁴⁵⁵ Asked what benefits a CI would bring to his university, former University of Canterbury Vice-Chancellor Roy Sharp said that it would help the university provide educational services to its wider community (such as local businesspeople doing business with China), and further existing links with educational institutions in Christchurch’s Chinese sister-city, Wuhan. Another benefit would be helping the university’s Chinese language department work with local Chinese language high school teachers.

Responses from communication with a minority of CI directors provided a number of definitions of success. More than one respondent mentioned that their Confucius Institute provided services not otherwise available to the community, such as the CI brand, the opportunity to join summer camps in Chinese universities, a well balanced syllabus and the HSK language proficiency test; all in one place. The CI brand indicates a standard that has been reached and approval from the CI leadership council, something that is sold as membership as an elite club, particularly in the initial stages.⁴⁵⁶ Other CI directors mentioned such benefits to their communities as creating a meeting ground between local Chinese and their neighbours of other cultural heritages, demystifying Chinese culture, and improving understanding of Chinese society. Factors determining a CIs success included how many activities were staged and how the students perceive them;

All major events organised by CI [sic](master-class in Chinese calligraphy, Chinese martial arts show, Traditional [sic]music performance etc) are covered by local media. That gives people a notion that we are not just a language school, but something bigger.⁴⁵⁷

These responses gave an indication of the individual character each institute, because it has been allowed to develop individual programmes to suit its community. For one, success would be “if we significantly raise the capacity of the university to offer advanced Chinese language classes, raise the amount and quality of academic research on China within our university, and if we are able to build increased interest in

⁴⁵⁵ Questionnaire response from CI director May, 2008.

⁴⁵⁶ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p. 72.

⁴⁵⁷ Questionnaire response from CI director May, 2008.

engaging China.”⁴⁵⁸ Other responses stated that success could be measured by the training of local teachers so that they can offer Mandarin in their schools/colleges. A respondent stated that the relationship with the partner Chinese university has benefited students and teachers from both countries who have participated in exchanges. Another response was that the partnership benefited the university, and the country in terms of promoting Chinese language in mainstream society. Other measures of success would be an ability to generate an income, and raising the university profile. From the responses of a small number of directors who responded to my questionnaire, it is clear that the presence of a CI had deepened the level of engagement between China and their local communities.

Conclusion

The rapid development of the CIs across the world has been marked by some resistance. The issues of whether the CIs are a threat to academic independence and even a tool for Chinese political subversion, have met the expansion of the CIs into universities many developed democracies. Most scholarly assessments suggest that the CIs are designed to promote Chinese influence rather than subversion. Other concerns relating to the definition of Chinese language and culture, and financial stability once CIs are established have considerable foundation. The CCP attaches great importance to managing the sphere of people’s ideas, and the presentation of Chinese culture and language in the CIs is influenced by the domestic political context.

The location of CIs within universities has been the cause of some fear that the Chinese Government would use them to influence or control the study of China and its language. Universities were chosen in China’s CI model because they have an image of being independent and objective, this gives the CIs greater authority and connection to the community, something previous Chinese cultural centres lacked.⁴⁵⁹ In return for setting up CIs, China has had to accept obligations of host universities, such as protecting academic independence and the other objectives of each institution. While the CIs are not independent from the Chinese political system as chapter five showed, most universities world-wide are adapting to new roles involving the internationalisation of education, and a business model involving commercial

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ This was revealed in an interview with a university Chinese language lecturer, March 2008.

partnerships and diversified sources of funding. Independence is a relative term, and while universities in China may be less independent than in developed democracies, a CI is not independent from the priorities of the university in which it operates. Academic independence is but one of the many issues universities must take into account when deciding whether a CI will advance the institution's short and long term social and economic goals.

While academic independence is not considered to be an insurmountable issue for many of those Western academics working with CIs, it has been a factor in a few elite universities declining invitations to host a CI. But for those foreigners working with CIs, administrative issues such the long-term survival of the established institutes are a greater concern. These issues relate to the financial viability of the CIs to become self-supporting once initial support from China dries up, promised benefits to the host university which haven't eventuated, and problems with the partner university and the supplied teachers. All these point to the requirement of careful planning and negotiating mutually beneficial agreements.

With foreign critics expressing concerns about the CIs, and many Chinese language educators saying they are purely educational, senior Chinese officials have been exercising a degree of sensitivity about the presentation of the CIs.⁴⁶⁰ Chinese officials accept that the CIs are a means to improve China's international influence, and state that Chinese language and culture is not threatening to the rest of the world. While the CIs are expected to abide by some of China's political priorities, they certainly have more freedom than a Chinese Government agency such as a consulate or state broadcaster; members of dissident groups are permitted to attend classes, and foreigners (or Taiwanese) have become directors. There is little evidence of China attempting to engage in subversion by undermining local societies or suppressing dissident groups through the CIs. Yet, the CIs do appear to be a Chinese attempt to gain soft power and influence foreign public opinion, however it is doing this in a transparent way that is consistent with contemporary international norms.

Many studies view the CIs as an example of public diplomacy, rather than independent academic organisations or propaganda tools. An important issue for China and its

⁴⁶⁰ Paradise, "China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power." p. 662

foreign relations is how effective the CIs are at public diplomacy. While progress has been made in improving its influence, problems persist with the negative international image of China's political system, something that will hamper its soft power. China has worked hard to establish the CIs on terms that are acceptable to its foreign partners, and as a result, many foreigners stand to benefit from their services. While there is little evidence to support the claim that the CIs are tools for subversion, and while the term "a goodwill gesture" conceals the attempt to gain international influence for China, the CIs can be a tool for engagement between China and the rest of the world.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

Any nation's foreign policy would be expected to change in 60 years, and Chinese foreign policy has certainly undergone a transformation since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, as has the country itself. While the CIs do represent a more cooperative and engaged Chinese foreign policy, some aspects have not changed; such as the basic goal of achieving China's national development. There has been a broadening of Chinese thinking on international relations, as socialist ideology has lost some of its legitimacy, international values have been more accepted and there has been a revival of interest in traditional Chinese values. The CI programme is a major diplomatic initiative, which has raised some concerns especially among scholars in developed democracies. Accordingly, the method of this inquiry has been to discuss the evolution of contemporary Chinese foreign policy and the CIs from the perspective of four questions posed in the Introduction, which focused on history, theory, political independence and the concerns.

Language and culture in contemporary Chinese foreign policy

The first question was "To what extent has Chinese foreign policy changed in the last 60 years?" The answer is that it has undergone a substantial transformation. Before the CCP came to power, traditional Chinese values influenced the foreign policy thinking of subsequent Chinese leaders. These values viewed the country as the central state *Zhong guo*, the centre of the world as early Chinese knew it, in terms of culture, economics and politics.⁴⁶¹ Classical Chinese thinkers also preferred diplomacy over coercion in foreign relations.⁴⁶² Despite the period of revolutionary socialism during the Mao era, which threatened to destabilise the world, China has gradually become more effective at promoting its development and security within the international system. From its earliest days, the CCP tried to develop China through Marxist-Leninist ideology and it has tended to tightly manage China's relations with the rest of the world. Current foreign policies are more pragmatic and allow much greater engagement as long it does not threaten the Party's legitimacy.

⁴⁶¹ John R. Faust and Judith F. Kornberg, *China in World Politics* (Boulder, Colo. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005). p. 9.

⁴⁶² Wang, "Cultural Norms and the Conduct of Chinese Foreign Policy." p. 150.

Beijing established the CI programme because it accorded with previous CCP attitudes towards foreign relations. Among these is the principle of “non interference in internal affairs” which is defined as the avoidance of coercive military or economic measures against other states, and has guided Chinese foreign policy since 1949.⁴⁶³ However, during this time China attempted to bypass diplomatic isolation whenever possible through personal contacts and friendship organisations as it displayed a distinctive tendency to personalise international relations. In this aspect, China is well suited to participate in an increase in interest in public relations-type diplomacy that uses language and culture to influence foreign public opinion.

China’s international relationships have become more engaged with previous ideological enemies following the open and reform policies initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, and the political crisis in June, 1989 which resulted in urgent modernisation of China’s diplomacy. While the current political system can be described as a hybrid of one party rule and a liberal market economy, China’s foreign policies also reflect a mix of both Chinese and contemporary international values, although China is far from shedding characteristics of its authoritarian past. The Chinese elite has become much more sensitive to China’s international image, and a new strategy aims to play a greater role in world affairs and improve China’s international standing.

The CCP has undergone an extensive process of self-examination in the wake of the 1989 disturbances and the collapse of communism in Europe, with the aim of staying in power. The Party has sought to reform itself organisationally and ideologically, strengthening legitimacy with the Chinese people by improving accountability, tackling corruption, and creating more effective representation within its ranks.⁴⁶⁴ The Party has always regarded the sphere of ideas and public discussion as linked to the interests of a particular class, and in a socialist country they must be managed in the interests of the People.⁴⁶⁵ As a result of the 1989 crisis, the Party has expanded propaganda activities and economic development as a means of ensuring legitimacy with the Chinese people,⁴⁶⁶ and began to increase the sophistication of measures to manage China’s image in international public opinion. Corresponding with greater awareness of the role

⁴⁶³ Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes," p. 35.

⁴⁶⁴ Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation*. p. 138.

⁴⁶⁵ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 10.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

of diasporas and international public opinion in domestic politics, the CCP has adopted more effective Western techniques of information management such as public diplomacy. This amounts to a shift from coercive to persuasive information policies.

The People's Republic is adopting a foreign affairs strategy that aims to ensure stability in the world system rather than disrupting it, while advancing its own interests. Deng Xiaoping's "lying low" strategy from 1989 resulted in a low level of participation in the international system while continuing domestic economic modernisation.⁴⁶⁷ China's actions in the contemporary environment began to reflect its increased economic power and status and has become more engaged and confident. Hu Jintao has adopted the strategy of "peaceful development" as the main platform of foreign policy which reflects the view that China's development is tied to the stability of the world system. It is based on the position that China does not seek to disrupt the world system or threaten its neighbours while it continues to advance the interests of the Chinese people.

Senior Party theorist Zheng Bijian who developed the peaceful rise/development theory, proposed in 2003 that supporting interest in the Chinese language and culture among foreigners is a way of countering negative perceptions about the rise of China.⁴⁶⁸ As a result, Chinese outreach to foreign publics has gone into high gear and now includes a wider range of activities and organisations than in the past, such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics,⁴⁶⁹ and the flagship of contemporary Chinese cultural diplomacy, the CIs.⁴⁷⁰ Such efforts have succeeded in improving the resonance of Chinese culture and language abroad, especially in South-East Asia. International engagement through exchanges such as these provide opportunities for the international community to influence China, and urge reforms in domestic and foreign policies as well socialising China into the international community.⁴⁷¹

The CIs are a major expansion of Chinese language teaching, although China has been involved in promoting the Chinese language to foreigners since 1949. Initial efforts were focused on the Soviet bloc and the third world, and became part of Deng's refocus on economic development since 1978, as it was felt that foreigners who develop an

⁴⁶⁷ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," p. 24.

⁴⁶⁸ Guo, *Repackaging Confucius: PRC Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power*

⁴⁶⁹ Ingrid d'Hooghe, "Into High Gear: China's Public Diplomacy," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 3 (2008) p. 56.

⁴⁷⁰ Guo, *Repackaging Confucius: PRC Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power*

⁴⁷¹ d'Hooghe, "Into High Gear: China's Public Diplomacy," p. 55.

interest in learning the Chinese language are more likely to develop positive feelings toward China in the future.⁴⁷² In the mid-1990s China's diplomatic service became more professional as a result of better education,⁴⁷³ and this led to an increase in effectiveness in promoting the country's interests. Chinese officials realised that coercive foreign policies such as firing missiles over Taiwan, could inadvertently isolate foreign audiences and were counter-productive towards national economic development.⁴⁷⁴

The CIs use the image of Confucius, an ancient contributor to traditional Chinese values, and this underlies a revival of Chinese cultural traditions and Confucianism within China. Confucianism derives from the ancient hero *Kongzi* who stood for harmony and stability, and has undergone highs and lows according to the political climate in China. Suppressed during the Mao era, there has been a revival of interest in Confucianism in China at a time when Marxism-Leninism has lost much of its legitimacy with the Chinese people. An increase in Confucian concepts such as *he* or harmony in the discourse of China's most senior leaders on the international scene, reflects a fresh but dominant approach to international relations.⁴⁷⁵ Although the CI's orientate themselves toward teaching the Chinese language and culture rather than passing on Confucian values, the image of Confucius, an ancient if somewhat manufactured, Chinese cultural icon⁴⁷⁶ has been chosen to maximise the global appeal of China itself. The CIs themselves reflects a new stage of confidence in Chinese foreign policy.

The CIs, soft power and public diplomacy

The initial question asked "To what extent does international relations theory provide a framework to describe the CIs?" This raises the concepts of soft power and public diplomacy which have been discussed by scholars in relation to the CIs. Contemporary international relations theory is being incorporated into the conceptual basis of Chinese foreign policy, away from a rigid adherence to confrontational Marxist-Leninism. Neoliberal international relations theory offers a broader understanding of a nation's

⁴⁷² Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 193.

⁴⁷³ Rana, "The Structure and Operation of China's Diplomatic System," p. 234.

⁴⁷⁴ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," p. 28.

⁴⁷⁵ Cao, "Confucian Vision of a New World Order? Culturalist Discourse, Foreign Policy and the Press in Contemporary China," p. 445.

⁴⁷⁶ Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization*. p. 1.

power which has led to recognition of less tangible sources of power, in addition to more coercive means of achieving one's goals. Neoliberalism recognises less tangible sources of power such as education, leadership and technology will become more relevant in the contemporary international environment of interdependence, multilateralism, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. The recognition in international relations theory of the importance of values, image, and institutions in international relations, reflects the importance of propaganda, and is also useful to this study. Chinese values such as Sinocentrism are giving way to greater acceptance of Westernisation and globalisation, so that the conceptual gap between China and the outside world is being narrowed.⁴⁷⁷

In addition to the coercive and economic aspects of a nation's power, the ability to influence foreign public opinion to support the goals of one's own country is increasingly being recognised as an important aspect of power. Soft power is likely to become more important and contested in the era of globalisation, and many in China think that the country needs to develop its soft power to become a global power. Soft power includes having an attractive culture, sporting success, a hold on the world of literature and entertainment, and a "strong" global language,⁴⁷⁸ which makes audiences more willing to accept the goals of that country. In addition, soft power also includes international respect for the social and political values practised domestically, and a foreign policy that has high legitimacy with its recipients.⁴⁷⁹ The concept of soft power has become popular in China, and the government has used it as the theoretical basis for the international promotion of China's language and culture. There are many and growing examples of Chinese soft power, due to China's rising economic status which has led to an increase in interest in China's language and culture among foreigners.

Public diplomacy is a contemporary term used to distinguish persuasive efforts to influence foreign public opinion, from the negative connotations of "propaganda." It describes strategies to achieve soft power and consists of listening to international public opinion, international broadcasting, exchange diplomacy, and cultural

⁴⁷⁷ Weixing Hu, Gerald Chan, and Daojiong Zha, "Understanding China's Behaviour in World Politics: An Introduction," in *China's International Relations in the 21st Century: Dynamics of Paradigm Shifts*, ed. Weixing Hu, Gerald Chan, and Daojiong Zha (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000). p. 2

⁴⁷⁸ "Strong languages" refers to languages that are widely spoken and are associated with influential cultures such as those of many European powers: Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*. Chapter 7

⁴⁷⁹ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*. p. 31

diplomacy.⁴⁸⁰ Many other nations in the contemporary era are adopting programmes of strategic influence known as public diplomacy in an effort to gain soft power. Government sponsored cultural exchanges, language promotion, and cultural centres are examples of cultural diplomacy within the wider term public diplomacy, and this terminology best describes the CIs, rather than the term propaganda which has negative connotations of distortion. Additionally, authors have argued that the aim of both public diplomacy and propaganda is the same: to influence public opinion.⁴⁸¹

Soft power and public diplomacy can be used to describe the CIs. While Nye developed the theory of soft power relatively recently, the concept of using culture to attract foreigners and influence them has been embedded in Chinese classical thinking for centuries.⁴⁸² The principle of “non interference in internal affairs” has been an important CCP policy since the 1950s, and in practise, this meant working quietly behind the scenes to achieve China’s goals.⁴⁸³ Liberalism, with its recognition of less tangible sources of power in addition to the coercive aspects, has given rise to soft power which has been enthusiastically adopted as a theoretical justification of the CIs. Together, these three elements reflect the broader conceptual sources of Chinese foreign policy, so that the conceptual gap between China and the outside world has narrowed.⁴⁸⁴

Cultural diplomacy, political independence and the CIs

How independent the CIs are from Chinese political influence is an important question, because the relationship between culture and politics is always a complex one when talking about cultural diplomacy. Traditionally, cultural diplomacy such as Alliance Française and the Goethe Institute were seen as independent,⁴⁸⁵ and critics of the CIs have suggested that they could be tools the CCP.⁴⁸⁶ However, while cultural diplomacy from many European nations is generally independent from universities, it is very much part of their country’s bureaucracy and subject to government direction. The Chinese

⁴⁸⁰ Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," p. 2.

⁴⁸¹ Aoyama *China's Public Diplomacy*. p.2

⁴⁸² Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*. p. 59

⁴⁸³ Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes," p. 35.

⁴⁸⁴ Song Xinning, "International Relations Theory in China," in *China's International Relations in the 21st Century Dynamics of Paradigm Shifts*, ed. Weixing Hu, Gerald Chan, and Daojiong Zha (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000, p. 34.

⁴⁸⁵ Wachter *The Language of Chinese Soft Power in the US*.

⁴⁸⁶ Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes," p. 44.

government has conceded some of the direction of the CIs to that of their partners, although a relationship between the CIs and China's Party-State system does exist. Language institutes within various cultural diplomacy programmes use a variety of financial and administrative arrangements, but the CIs are analogous to the language institutes of other nations, the difference is China's political system.

France invests the most in the world in its cultural diplomacy spending over a billion US dollars annually supporting its programmes, although Alliance Française is largely self-supporting.⁴⁸⁷ The British Council operates with a government/course fee income-generating model, and it exists to provide cultural support for Britain's foreign interests. The British Government supports it by around \$US 260 million a year.⁴⁸⁸ Many international actors have public diplomacy programmes, and each one reflects that actors goals. For example, one of the aims of British public diplomacy is to improve trust where it is less trusted, and France seeks to continue its influence where the French language is spoken. China's public diplomacy seeks understanding for its policies and political system, aims to convince audiences it does not have to be feared, and seeks trust and respect.⁴⁸⁹ The credibility of public diplomacy amongst the target audience ultimately determines their success in influencing public opinion, and it is against this measure that the CIs may struggle to compete.

Despite adopting some Western techniques of diplomacy, China has a different political system than liberal democratic regimes and different means of leading the state bureaucracy. The CCP is the sole governing party, and it is interlocked with the state bureaucracy in ways which tend to conceal its influence. Ostensibly, the CIs are administratively connected to China's state bureaucracy and led by a leadership council (which has foreign representatives). Functionally however, the Party has mechanisms to ensure that its political priorities are carried out by the state bureaucracy; such as the *nomenklatura* system, the *xitong* (translation: system), and front organisations.

These mechanisms reflect the dominance of the Party over the state bureaucracy, and the importance it attaches to propaganda activities. Managing the sphere of public discussion is, along with managing economic development, the main means the Party

⁴⁸⁷ Wyszomirski, Burgess, and Peila *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*. p. 15

⁴⁸⁸ Davidson *Annual Report*.

⁴⁸⁹ d'Hooghe *The Rise of China's Public Diplomacy*. p. 17

uses to ensure its legitimacy in the absence of an electoral mandate.⁴⁹⁰ Chinese leaders have recognised that cultural differences can be a factor in difficulties they have had in the international area, and are becoming better at communicating their message.

Despite the influence from China, the CIs are generally joint ventures and foreigners are represented on the CI Leadership Council, and local organisations. The CI Leadership Council has five out of thirty-three positions reserved for foreigners and the CIs around the world are generally governed by a majority of representatives from the local community. Directors interviewed by Jessica Shepherd stated that China lets local institutes run their own affairs.⁴⁹¹ University officials spoken to in research indicated that they would not let China dictate terms of the CIs that would compromise local values such as academic independence.⁴⁹² This model represents a higher degree of political independence from the CCP than it has allowed before, and an attempt by China to make its publicity acceptable to its audience. There are some mechanisms that connect the CIs to China's political system, but the public diplomacy of other nations is not independent from their political system either.

Assessment of criticism

One of the initial questions for this thesis was, "Are the CIs a tool for subversion or a bridge for understanding?" The answer, according to this research is neither; they are part of China's public diplomacy. CI officials maintain they are merely meeting the demands of foreigners who wish to learn the Chinese language and they are not promoting any political viewpoint in doing so. However, some scholars have argued that should the CIs become directly involved in academic research this will open them to be criticism for being vehicles of propaganda, because of their links to the CCP.⁴⁹³ However, there is little, if any, evidence of CIs trying to influence academic research on China. Their political influence is more in the form of persuading foreign audiences that China is an attractive place, an increasingly important goal in the light of concerns about China's activities. While criticism of the CIs has been substantially more than that directed towards the cultural diplomacy of other countries, the CIs have been successful in increasing the resonance of Chinese culture - especially in Asia, and the

⁴⁹⁰ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. p. 44.

⁴⁹¹ Shepherd, "Not A Propaganda Tool." p. 2.

⁴⁹² Interview with University lecturer in the Chinese language March 10, 2008.

⁴⁹³ Chey, "Chinese "Soft Power" Cultural Diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes," p. 44.

global popularity of the Chinese language continues to expand. The CIs are likely to reach their goal of teaching 100 million non-native speakers of Mandarin by 2020.

Despite the concerns that the CIs allow China an opportunity to influence the study of the Chinese language and of China studies generally, this has not prevented many universities from concluding agreements to host them. While they do have links to the CCP, the CIs are perceived to have a high enough degree of political independence from China, at least in the minds of many who work closely with them.⁴⁹⁴ It is apparent that China is trying to make the CIs acceptable to foreigners and to make its culture and language accessible to them. Chinese universities have promoted the CI programme through existing links with foreign universities, and in this way the programme has been able to benefit from the reputation universities in developed democracies have for independence and objectivity. Arrangements formed to host CIs have had to meet the objectives of the foreign partners in which they are located, such as protecting academic independence from any political basis. There are a variety of different institutions involved and different hosting arrangements within those institutions. Many learning institutions in developed democracies are involved in other partnerships with commercial organisations, and in some cases, foreign governments. CI directors often come from their local community and establish links with the community and related organisations such as Chinese teachers in High Schools.

China prefers universities as hosts, because they provide the CIs with authority and connection to the community that previous Chinese cultural centres located in foreign countries lacked.⁴⁹⁵ Many of the top-ranked universities in the world however, have chosen not to accept CIs, as maintaining their political and financial independence is more important than the benefits CIs can offer. Other learning institutions who have hosted CIs have chosen to distance them from academic activity, while the CIs concentrate on outreach to the local community. CIs bring a host of benefits to learning institutions such as improving links between China and local communities and meeting their demand for information about China. Therefore, academic independence is but one of the many factors that learning institutions have to weigh up when they consider whether a CI will contribute to the institutions long and short-term social and economic

⁴⁹⁴ Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p. 79.

⁴⁹⁵ Interview with a University Chinese language lecturer, June 30, 2008.

priorities. The CIs are not only carrying out Chinese government goals and adhering to Chinese regulations; they have to meet conditions of the host – such as protecting academic independence and respecting local laws and customs.

Some critics have argued that the CIs can be a tool for propaganda, however, many studies view the CIs as an example of public diplomacy; a term that describes persuasive activities including cultural diplomacy, that are designed to influence foreign public opinion. Public diplomacy is experiencing an increase in interest not just from China but also from developed democracies, because influence over foreign “hearts and minds” is strategically important in the era of globalisation. Rumi Aoyama argues that the public diplomacy/propaganda distinction is of no significance because the public diplomacy emanating from less democratic nations tends to be propagandistic in nature while public diplomacy from a more democratic system tends to more accurately reflect that country’s culture. The culture presented in a public diplomacy programme is mediated by the originating countries’ political system.⁴⁹⁶ The aim is the same: to influence public opinion, while the difference lies in the political system. The key question is how credible is the message, and therefore how effective the public diplomacy/propaganda will be in achieving its objectives.

Arrangements to host CIs must respect local as well and Chinese laws,⁴⁹⁷ and this means that contracts must be on terms the Beijing finds acceptable,⁴⁹⁸ but they must also abide by host priorities. The CCP is sensitive about certain subjects such as the Cultural Revolution, the June 1989 crisis, Tibetan, Taiwan, and Xingjian independence, religious freedom, and democracy. It seeks to manage discussion on these topics and others that threaten its legitimacy. According to responses from a minority CI directors, China has little political influence on local institutes and those directors do not seek to exclude Chinese dissidents from classes, which like other university departments, cannot be used to make political arguments. However, given that only 15% of Directors who were invited to comment actually did so, questions remain about what the silent majority of directors think on such issues, and why so many chose not to comment.

⁴⁹⁶ Aoyama *China’s Public Diplomacy*. p. 2.

⁴⁹⁷ Confucius Institutes n.d. *Constitution and Bylaws of the Confucius Institutes*.

⁴⁹⁸ Lai *China’s Cultural Diplomacy: Going for Soft Power*. p. 10.

China sees the institutes as open to all people willing to learn about China, although Chinese dissidents are wary of the CIs, and some scholars feel that they will push out Chinese organisations that cater to a more diverse representation of Chinese culture. Given previous CCP policy that culture must be managed to serve the interests of the proletariat, and use of language policies to achieve national unity rather than represent China's diversity, the CIs cannot be viewed as the only reliable source of information about China. Given the importance of the CIs to China's diplomacy, future research may look at whether China does seek to use the CIs coercively.

While there has been some political concerns about the CIs, such as possible exclusion of dissidents⁴⁹⁹ and industrial espionage,⁵⁰⁰ the recent scholarly literature that is specific to the CIs is not highly critical.⁵⁰¹ CI directors come from local communities, and reflect local values. For those working with CIs the main challenges are not about academic independence, but those relating to administrative issues and long-term financial stability.⁵⁰² Several interviewees stated that the CIs have helped meet university objectives of providing education to their community, and have deepened local understanding of China. The CIs are language and cultural institutes that are part of Chinese attempts to gain soft power through public diplomacy, as many other developed democracies are also doing.

Final assessment: a tool for engagement

According to Philip Altbach of Boston College, the CIs are doing good work in promoting understanding about China, but there is a need for people to see the CIs for what they are.⁵⁰³ They are not an academic department, but are in the same category as the public diplomacy of other countries: activity designed to influence foreign public opinion. The question should not be whether or not culture used as part of public diplomacy is an extension of government influence, but whether it provides an accurate picture of the society it seeks to represent – that will determine the success of the diplomacy. Traditionally, the CCP has sought to use Chinese culture such as cinema, art and literature to tightly manage society and to advance the interests of the People. Since

⁴⁹⁹ Steffenhagen, "Has BCIT Sold Out to Chinese Propaganda?" p. 2.

⁵⁰⁰ Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, "Confronting Confucius".

⁵⁰¹ Paradise, "China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power.", Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes."

⁵⁰² Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," p. 79.

⁵⁰³ Scott Jaschik, "Rose-Coloured Glasses on China." *Inside Higher Ed*
<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2007/12/07/china> (Accessed 12 June, 2008).

1978 there has been an increase in freedom of expression, but there are still sensitive subjects such as those which touch on the Party's legitimacy such as the Cultural Revolution and the June 1989 disturbances, on which discussion remains managed.

Although China's cultural diplomacy has contributed to the global popularisation of the Chinese language, it is unlikely that the Chinese language will take over English as the global language in the near future. China will be slow in developing its soft power without dealing more directly with negative aspects of its international image such as its democracy deficit. The power to attract and influence audiences to China's goals will depend on attraction of its domestic political values and foreign policies as well as interest in its language and culture. In the view of Ding and Saunders, China's harmful corruption and reluctance to pursue wide-scale political reform has constrained its efforts in promoting its culture and language in the liberal democracies of the world.⁵⁰⁴ Nye argues that nations most likely to project soft power in an information age are those whose dominant ideas are closer to international norms.⁵⁰⁵ Despite the expanding engagement with the developed world, China must grapple with many challenges associated with global interdependency.

While China's re-emergence is likely to change the global balance of power, this is likely to be gradual while there are aspects of China's foreign policy that do conform to norms governing international behaviour. China's focus on the peaceful settlement of disputes, mutually beneficial economic ties, the need to address new forms of security threats as well as public diplomacy, are increasingly congruent with approaches advocated with the vast majority of the international community. Where this does occur (and the CIs are one example), several scholars argue that the rest of the world should be more active in engaging with China. This may go as far as rewarding responsible behaviour, and deepening China's attempts at engagement.⁵⁰⁶

Soft power also, is more than just one way; other countries themselves may use their own soft power to influence China to improve democratisation and transparency, because it is more integrated into the world system compared to 60 years ago. Soft power is achieved not just through having an attractive culture, as no matter how

⁵⁰⁴ Ding and Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language," p. 22.

⁵⁰⁵ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*. p. 31.

⁵⁰⁶ Gill and Huang, "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power'," p. 31.

independent it is from the political system, foreign audiences cannot help to be influenced by the domestic political system and its foreign policies. Foreigners with their own values who understand the Chinese language as a result of the CIs will be much more able to influence the domestic Chinese political process than foreigners have before. Like the Olympics, the CIs will increase the leverage foreigners have to influence China, and negotiate agreements.⁵⁰⁷ Rather than being seeing them as either threatening, or benign, the CIs can be a means of engagement between China and rest of the world.

While China's rise in economic and military power is a visible sign of its transformation, its rise in soft power is less obvious. Not only has Beijing adjusted its strategic perspective, but it has put many new measures in place of which the CIs are one. While the CIs have helped increase the resonance of Chinese culture abroad, China's "new diplomacy"⁵⁰⁸ has increased Beijing's agenda-setting capabilities amongst global public opinion. These changes will have far-reaching effects on the world. However, China will have to grapple with many limitations with such a rise which has resulted in greater engagement and responsibilities. China's soft power push lacks effectiveness, because it avoids the negative aspects of the Party-States' image such as its lack of democracy and transparency, with the result that Beijing cannot yet achieve all the outcomes it wants.

The CIs reflect a new confidence in China's attitude towards the rest of the world, and a greater opportunity for engagement. They are part of the CCP's external propaganda system, and though them, China is succeeding in improving its international influence. The CIs need to be seen for what they are; namely public diplomacy, and not neutral scholarly institutions. Through the CIs, China is developing the "soft power architecture"⁵⁰⁹ of a major power. But soft power works in more than one way, and the CIs can also be an opportunity for greater international engagement with China; as when foreigners better understand China, they can contribute to exposing China to international values and themselves participating in the sphere of public discussion within China. Therefore, the Confucius Institutes represent a new confidence and

⁵⁰⁷ d'Hooghe, "Into High Gear: China's Public Diplomacy." p. 55.

⁵⁰⁸ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy."

⁵⁰⁹ Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*. p. 121.

effectiveness in Chinese foreign policy, and one that increases the opportunities for engagement.

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