



Britain's Cultural Diplomacy in China

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Abstract

Culture in international relations has been paid increasing emphasis and cultural diplomacy, often regarded as an important part of foreign diplomacy, is a powerful instrument by governments to foster cross-cultural understanding, build trust between nations and promote national image and interests.

The United Kingdom is one of the earliest countries to carry out cultural diplomacy and has committed to international cultural relations for decades. Known for its historic heritage, global reputation and the breadth and depth of expertise and the creativity of the cultural sector, Britain has a well-coordinated system for promoting its cultural influence worldwide. In particular, British Council has offices worldwide and is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations.

When conducting relations with China, Britain has been paying great emphasis on the cultural aspects of the bilateral relations, with increasing high-level meetings between the two sides and agreements signed. Also growing number of fund has been allocated to British Council, the main organisation for conducting cultural diplomacy in China. The reasons behind have aroused interest and led to this research.

The thesis starts with the observations on the emphasis on cultural relations by the UK and then raises a research question on how UK's cultural diplomacy has been conducted and the underlying reasons for such great emphasis. Then introduction to Britain's cultural diplomacy in China constitute the empirical data part, including its relevant organisations, activities and its overall effects and evaluation. Then, it continues to analyse the reasons by applying Alexander Wendt's theory constructivism, with special focus on his theorization of identity and interest and classification of three cultures. Finally this thesis concludes that as a cultural and educational superpower and also a democratic country, Britain regards China as a comprehensive strategic partner, with whom close cultural relations are actively maintained, in order to foster a positive and favourable image in China and worldwide and to enhance its economic benefits and national interests.

Key Words: the UK, cultural diplomacy, China, cultural relations

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Chapter One Introduction

Culture is difficult to define but can be easily understood. Culture is important in influencing values, world-views, and the structure of human relationships. No one will dispute the argument that international relations are also cross-cultural communications as international relations are by definition, relations among nations.¹ Culture, without doubt, has been recognised as an increasingly important aspect in international relations and is a powerful instrument by governments to foster cross-cultural understanding, build trust between nations and promote national image and interests.

Meanwhile, different cultural backgrounds can bring misunderstandings and miscommunications just as Samuel Huntington argued that “the great division among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural”.² Thus how to utilize cultural relations in international affairs has attracted worldwide attention.

Since the 1920s, governments have often tried to use culture in foreign affairs, promoting their own languages, music, media and views overseas. It was then recognized that there were fields where different cultures can interact, and when cultural diplomacy can be used.³ Afterwards, the term cultural diplomacy constantly appears on the agendas of governments. Often defined as “exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding”⁴, cultural diplomacy is aimed at “listening to others, recognizing the values of cultures”, and includes “showing a desire to learn from them, and conducting programs as a two-way street”.⁵

The United Kingdom is one of the earliest countries to carry out cultural diplomacy and has committed to international cultural relations for decades, which is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that the British Council was founded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 1934 to conduct its cultural activities worldwide.⁶ The strength of UK’s historic collections, their global reputation, long-term relationships with foreign institutions, the breadth and depth of expertise and the creativity of the cultural sector have all made UK a

¹ Akira Iryke, “Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations”. *Diplomatic History*. Volume, 3. 1979: 115.

² Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72, No. 3. 1993: 22.

³ Li Zhi, *Cultural Diplomacy: An Interpretative Mode of Communication*. (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2005):5.

⁴ Milton C Cummings, *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey*. (Washington, D.C: Centre for Arts and Culture, 2003): 1.

⁵ U.S. Dept. of State. The Advisory Commission on Cultural Diplomacy. “Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy”. (2005): 4. Assessed 23 April, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/pdcommission/reports/174096.htm>

⁶ Bound et al. “Cultural Diplomacy”. (London: Demos, 2007).

forerunner on cultural diplomacy. And with its long history in this field and great importance attached to it, its cultural diplomacy approach has received remarkable results. For instance, Britain ranks the third on the Nation Brand Index 2013, just after United States and Canada as the third most attractive nation among the 50 countries surveyed⁷.

When Britain conducts relations with China, cultural diplomacy has also been applied and has constituted an important aspect. The more recent cultural relations between the two sides put focus in particular on cultural aspects. For example, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in 2012 to build the mechanism of high-level cultural exchanges between the two governments. More recently, British Prime Minister's visit to Beijing from December 2 to 4, 2013 attracted heated discussion in both China's and Britain's media. Cameron opened his Sina weibo (China's social networking site, China's twitter equivalent) before his visit and had over 240,000 followers by midday of 4 December, the last day of his visit, with over 150,000 comments and re-tweets.⁸ Besides, during Cameron's visit, a new cultural agreement was signed today by British Culture Secretary Maria Miller and Chinese Minister for Culture Cai Wu, aiming to give a boost to cultural and creative exchanges between the UK and China. This agreement will provide an active programme of cultural exchanges, encourage and facilitate exchange of arts groups and artists.⁹

Britain has paid increasing emphasis on its cultural relations with China, with increasing high-level meetings between the two sides and agreements signed. Also a growing number of fund has been allocated to British Council, the main organisation for conducting cultural diplomacy in China. The reasons behind have aroused interest and triggered this research.

Problem Formulation

Thus the problem formulation for this thesis is:

⁷ GfK website. "Nation Brand Index 2013: latest findings". Accessed 23 April 2014. <<http://www.gfk.com/news-and-events/press-room/press-releases/pages/nation-brand-index-2013-latest-findings.aspx>> (Note: Conducted annually, the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index measures the image of 50 countries, with respect to *Exports, Governance, Culture, People, Tourism and Immigration/Investment*, helping governments, organizations and businesses understand, measure and ultimately build a strong national image and reputation. For the 2013 study, a total of 20,445 online interviews were conducted in 20 developed and developing countries with adults age 18 or over.)

⁸ Sina News. "Cameron opened Sina account, using social platforms for diplomacy. Last modified 04 December, 2013. <http://news.sina.com.cn/m/2013-12-04/151228885042.shtml>

⁹ British Council, "New cultural agreement leads to closer co-operation between Britain and China". Last Modified 03 December 2013. Accessed 11 April 2014 <<http://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/press/culture-ministers-sign-agreement-beijing>>

✚ *How does Britain conduct cultural diplomacy in China? Why has Britain attached great importance in its cultural diplomacy towards China?*

In order to better understand and solve this question, the following questions need to be answered in order to form a holistic understanding.

- *What is the history of Britain's cultural diplomacy in China?*
- *What measures have been applied in China to enhance its cultural influence?*
- *What organisation or institutions are involved in British cultural diplomacy?*
- *What are the reasons for the significance attached to cultural diplomacy in China?*

Chapter Two Methodology

This chapter will describe in what way the main problem will be approached – including the core concepts, the theories and data used and the analytical approach. It is the hope that this chapter will help give a logical framework for the thesis and clarify the logic of the structure and why this is a suitable way to reach a conclusion.

2.1 Core concepts

Several repeatedly mentioned concepts should be first clarified in terms of definition, connotation and extension so that ambiguity and irrelevance will be effectively avoided.

2.1.1 Culture

The definition of culture can be made from various perspectives. Normally it is a complex system including knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws and habits created and shared by a society. In international relations, its increasing great role has been recognized and emphasized. It is the “fountain of life and vitality as well as an important part of a country’s soft power”, according to Cai Wu, Minister of Culture of China.¹⁰ In this thesis, a broad view of culture is used including science, sport and popular culture as well as the performing and visual arts and heritage.

2.1.2 Cultural diplomacy

British diplomat J. M. Mitchell believes that cultural diplomacy “seeks to impress, to present a favourable image, so that diplomatic operations as a whole are facilitated” and involved strengthening one country’s cultural influence by offering direct funding for artists’ tour or by promoting the study of its language or culture in universities abroad¹¹. Often regarded as a subfield of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy’s goal is to create a positive and favourable external environment in order to expand its national cultural influence and outreach of a country. Its scope of activity often includes the promotion of various cultural industries and artistic production as well as support to the dissemination of the language and culture abroad.

2.1.3 Cultural relations

Richard Arndt distinguished between cultural relations and cultural diplomacy, stating that the former grows “naturally and organically, without government intervention” and includes

¹⁰ Cai Wu. “Cultural Diplomacy Blossoms on Global Stage”. *China & the World Cultural Exchange*. Issue 10, 2013: 4.

¹¹ J. M. Mitchell, *International Culture Relations*. (London: Allen & Unwin Publishers Ltd., 1986): 81.

cross-cultural encounters such as trade transactions and tourism, flows of students, communications, book circulations, immigration, access to media, etc.¹² Cultural diplomacy, according to Arndt, mainly concerns formal diplomatic relations with diplomats in the service of national governments employing these exchanges for the purposes of national interests¹³, thus emphasizing the role of governments and its goals it hopes to obtain. This thesis also argues that cultural diplomacy, often conducted towards one country, is often one-sided while cultural relations emphasizes the mutual or bilateral relationships between the two sides. The practice of cultural diplomacy has been known as international cultural relations in the UK.¹⁴ Thus for the convenience of discussion, these two terms are often used interchangeably, with the focus on the British cultural diplomacy towards China.

2.2 Analytical framework and approach

The analytical framework used in this thesis includes both the conceptual framework and theoretical framework.

The term cultural diplomacy has been applied as the conceptual framework. The definition and key features of the concept have been explored in detail, with emphasis on the role of government and its purposes. To avoid conceptual confusion, the relations between cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and soft power are also examined briefly. Cultural diplomacy highlights the role of culture in the external diplomacy of a country and also the role of government in facilitating the cultural diplomacy overseas.

Thus in Chapter Four, the introduction to British cultural diplomacy in China has been examined under this conceptual framework, with focuses on the governmental level (emphasizing the role of government) and at the operational level (namely to examine how British Council and other non-state actors are involved).

The evaluation of British cultural diplomacy effects in China, without doubt, is tricky as its effects is hard to make assessment in the short run but should be perceived in the long run.¹⁵ In this thesis, figures from British Council's annual reports from 2005 to 2013 have been chosen, including the numbers of Chinese people it engaged and reached annually as well as the statistics for the customer satisfaction in China, which can give us the hint on what has

¹² Richard T. Arndt. *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*. (Washington D.C., Potomac Books, 2005): xviii.

¹³ Ibid, 4.

¹⁴ Hu Wentao, "A Theoretical Analysis of Cultural Diplomacy", *Foreign Affairs Review*. No. 96. 2007: 54.

¹⁵ Mary Einbinder, "Cultural Diplomacy: Harmonizing International Relations through Music". Master Thesis for New York University, 2013. Assessed 02 May 2014. <[http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/pdf/case-studies/Cultural Diplomacy Harmonizing International Relations through Music - Mary Einbinder.pdf](http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/pdf/case-studies/Cultural%20Diplomacy%20Harmonizing%20International%20Relations%20through%20Music%20-%20Mary%20Einbinder.pdf)>

been achieved. Besides, the impact of Britain's cultural influence can also be witnessed by the growing number of students studying in UK. The popularity of British culture in China can also serve as evidence of the positive results of its cultural diplomacy.

The theory used in this thesis will be constructivism. The theory presented and developed are primarily based on Alexander Wendt's interpretation of constructivism presented in his book from 1999 titled *Social Theory of International Politics*.

Constructivism contends that international relation is "a sphere of interaction through which states' identities and practices are created".¹⁶ Besides, constructivists hold that international relations are defined by norms and ideas and the international structure leads actors to redefine their interests and identities in the process of interacting.¹⁷

The theory of constructivism will serve as the guiding theoretical framework. Thus the basic assumptions of constructivism will be explained. Wendt's theory of identity and interest has been put special emphasis. According to Wendt, interests and identities are central determinants of state behaviour. The intentional equation "desire (interest) + belief (identity) = action". Thus in order to understand why Britain has paid great emphasis on its cultural diplomacy with regard to China, both its identities and interests need to be explored in order to provide answer to the problem formulation.

Besides, identities and interests of a certain country are largely constructed by social structures and are shaped by cultural formations and shared ideas. According to Wendt, the three cultures of the anarchic international structures—Hobbesian anarchy, Lockean anarchy, and Kantian anarchy—may shape the identities and interests of Britain and are relevant in analysing Britain's transform in its cultural diplomacy approach after WWII. Wendt names these three structures Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian which are characterized by enemies, rivals and friends respectively.¹⁸ Thus the three cultures take the analysis a step further and will be used in analysing the historical developments of UK's cultural diplomacy in general and in China to examine the background for its existing identities and interests in its cultural diplomacy in China.

¹⁶ Jackson, Robert and George Sorensen. *Introduction to International Relations Theories and Approaches*. 3rd edition. (Oxford university press, 2006): 4.

¹⁷ Dale C. Copeland, "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism: A Review Essay", *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2. Autumn, 2000: 191.

¹⁸ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 249.

2.3 Data and materials collection

In order to gather as much relevant and recent literature on the issue as possible and answer the main question, this study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. In most cases, secondary sources from books, journals, government/organisation reports and information from government websites are used in this thesis and each section applies multiple sources. The reason for employing secondary sources is that it is almost impossible for a person to get accurate primary and first-hand data at a national or bilateral level.

To examine how Britain conducts cultural diplomacy in China and why great importance has been attached to it, information gathered from the internet is useful, because information and data from government's official websites are authoritative. Websites of Britain's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and British Council have been used extensively as they can offer information on Britain's diplomacy, the official statement, details and also latest data for the topic examined in this thesis. British Council's websites (both its global website and Chinese website) offers information about its history, activities and programmes conducted as well as its relationship with the government, which are all relevant in understanding how Britain engages in wide cultural interactions with China. Reports and statements published on these websites can also give evidence of some arguments made in this thesis. The corporate report "China - Country of Concern" published by FCO introduces human rights and civil society in China, which reflects Britain's concern as a democratic country in its relations with China. In particular, different reports published by British Council are useful in understanding different areas of British cultural diplomacy. The annual corporate reports published by British Council, for instance, examines the people it has reached as well as the feedbacks on its activities, which have been used as the statistics can reveal the effects of British Council in China.

However, information from British alone can't ensure the integrity and credibility of the data and materials collected as more often positive information is publicized. Thus some Chinese websites and academic journals are also consulted to ensure aspects have been considered inclusively. When considering the interest of Britain in conducting cultural diplomacy in China, both English and Chinese journals are consulted to give a holistic picture.

Besides, scholarly books and journals have been cited frequently. For example, as this thesis mainly uses Wendt's constructivism as the analytical framework, study of his *Social Theory of International Relations* proves to be enlightening and useful. For the understanding of the

concept of cultural diplomacy, various scholarly journals and books have been quoted in order to give a detailed analysis and clarification.

Being a Chinese student, I have both Chinese and English sources available for use, which has enriched the database for my research and contributed to a more objective analysis. Thus the resources cited in this thesis, including websites, journals and books contain both Chinese and English materials.

In addition, as the thesis examines an up-to-date phenomenon in international relations, new events might occur during the thesis writing.

2.4 Thesis structure

In order to answer the problem formulation, this thesis is divided into six parts, which can be explained with Figure I below.

The Introduction gives the background of the topic examined in this thesis and puts forward the problem formulation and also its sub-questions.

The Methodology part, aiming to give a logical framework for the thesis, gives the definition of key concepts, analytical framework and data and materials collected.

Chapter Three Analytical Framework includes the conceptual framework (namely the cultural diplomacy) and the theoretical framework (Wendt's theory of constructivism, in particular, his ideas on identity and culture and classification of "three cultures").

Chapter Four provides the empirical data for this thesis, including the brief history of British cultural diplomacy in China, how it is conducted (at both governmental and operational level) and finally its overall effects and results.

Chapter Five analyses the reasons why great significance has been attached in its cultural diplomacy in China, with inspirations from Wendt's theory.

The last part, Conclusion, summarizes the findings of this thesis.

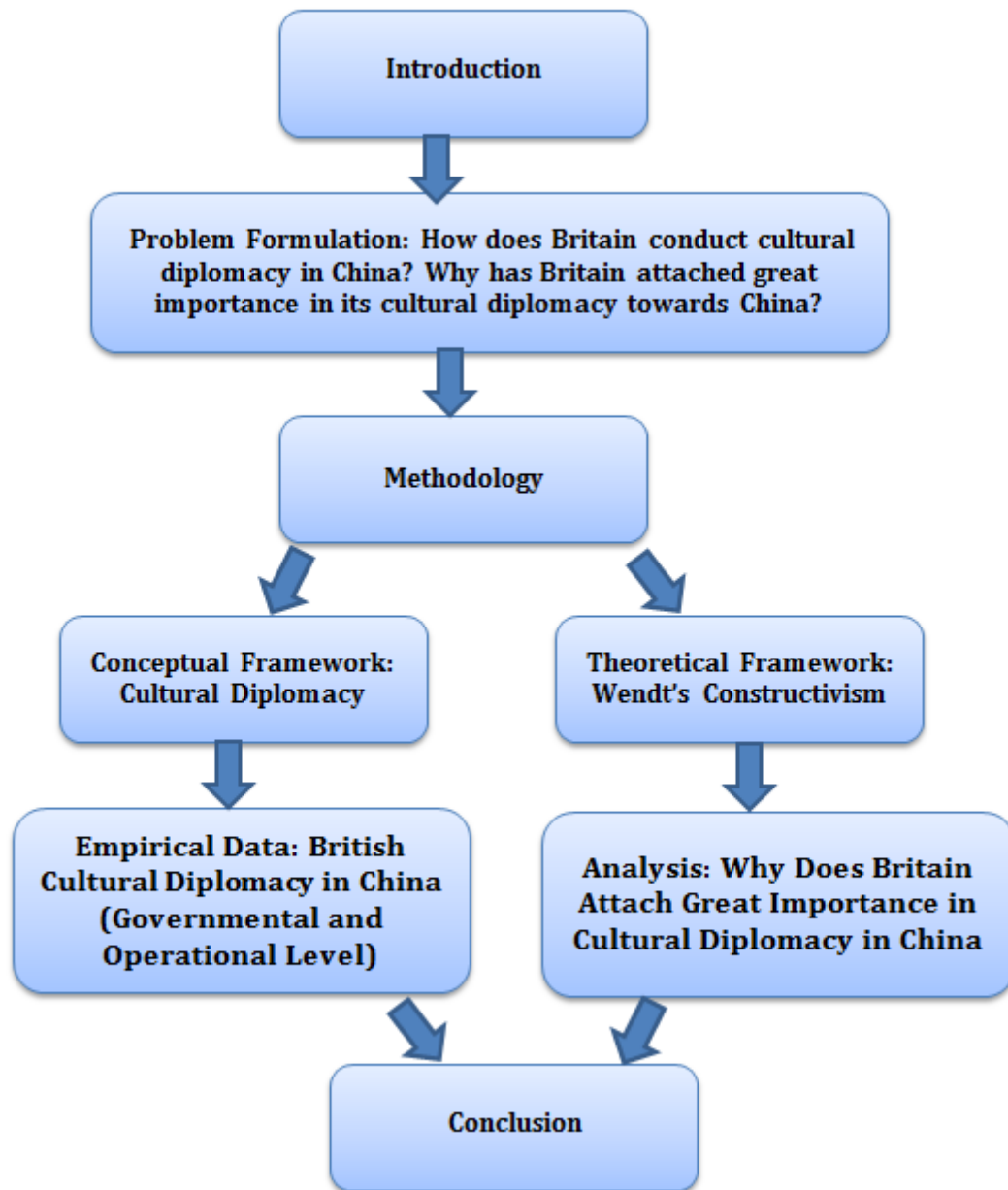


Figure 1 Thesis Structure

Chapter Three Analytical Framework

In this chapter, I will highlight both the conceptual framework of cultural diplomacy to analyse how Britain conducts its cultural diplomacy in China, hoping to provide background to investigate my problem formulation. Besides, the theory of constructivism, the theoretical framework for this thesis is explored in detail with special attention on Wendt's propositions on identities and interests and the classification of "three cultures".

3.1 Cultural Diplomacy

First and foremost, the concept of cultural diplomacy is explored and then the relations between cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and soft power are clarified to avoid ambiguity.

3.1.1 The concept of cultural diplomacy

First brought by American diplomacy historian Lard Turner and later improved by Frank Ninkovich, the term cultural diplomacy has been widely recognized by countries worldwide.¹⁹ Though with a long history, no consensus has been reached as to the definition of cultural diplomacy among the academia as this term has been confronted with definitional confusion with similar words like international cultural exchange, cultural public relations, or cultural cooperation²⁰.

Some treat cultural diplomacy as synonyms of cultural relations, often with the objective of mutual understanding. Shizuru Saeki²¹ offered the definition that cultural diplomacy is to exchange ideas, information, arts and culture to promote mutual understandings amongst citizens or different countries. In other words, from this perspective of definition, cultural aspects are emphasized. She also mentioned that one-sided culture policy should be avoided such as coercion of implementing ideology and policy to the world as a whole or public relations only to promote its languages course.²² Thus the long-term maintenance of friendly relationship and mutual trust is valued. Milton Cummings also gave a widely quoted definition of cultural diplomacy from this perspective saying that "the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs and other aspects of culture, with the

¹⁹ Li Zhi, *Cultural Diplomacy*, 4.

²⁰ Hwajung Kim, "Cultural Diplomacy as the Means of Soft Power in an Information Age". *Culturediplomacy.org*. December 2011. http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/pdf/case-studies/Hwajung_Kim_Cultural_Diplomacy_as_the_Means_of_Soft_Power_in_the_Information_Age.pdf

²¹ Shizuru Saeki, "The Perry Centennial Celebration: a Case Study in US-Japanese Cultural Diplomacy", *International Social Science Review*, 80. 3&4 (2005): 137-138.

²² Kim, "Cultural Diplomacy as the Means of Soft Power".

intention of fostering mutual understanding”.²³ With multilateral perspectives, this wide and inclusive definition combines cultural diplomacy with the notion of cultural relations and is based on cross-cultural exchange and interactions. In addition, in order to build long-term trust, genuine cultural diplomacy, often opposed to propaganda, emphasizes two-way communication on an equal basis instead of imposing the ideology or cultural values onto other countries. In other words, exchange and mutuality distinguish it from the government-led formal diplomacy in terms of purposes.²⁴

For some other scholars, cultural diplomacy is regarded as part of diplomacy itself, just like military diplomacy or political diplomacy. Diplomacy is defined by Nicholas Cull as the ‘international actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through mechanisms short of war, and engagement with another international actor” and based on this, cultural diplomacy is an actor’s attempt to “manage the international environment” by utilizing its cultural resources and making its achievements known to the outside world and by “facilitating cultural transmission abroad”.²⁵ For Cull, cultural diplomacy uses cultural aspects to achieve the same aim of foreign diplomacy, namely, to foster a favourable international environment and friendly relations. Ivey also offered the definition with the concept of diplomacy as the starting point and stated that cultural diplomacy is a sphere of diplomacy which is concerned with “establishing, developing and sustaining relations with foreign states by way of culture, art and education” and also “external projection” in which a nation’s institutions, value system and unique cultural personality are promoted at a bilateral and multilateral level”.²⁶

Nowadays, most countries have realized that cultural relations have become another core pillar in international relations apart from political and economic relations. But some other scholars put it as the fourth after political, economic and military relations.²⁷ That cultural diplomacy was an instrument used by countries to advance their interests was beyond dispute. Often defined as an increasingly important aspect of one country’s foreign diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, without doubt, shares the goal of diplomacy itself and hopes to encourage and influence the public opinion in order to shape the foreign government’s decision-making, thus advancing national interests of its own, not merely for mutual understanding.

²³ Milton C. Cummings, *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government*, 1.

²⁴ Lucian Jora, “New Practices and Trends in Cultural Diplomacy”. *Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations*. No. 1, 2013: 46.

²⁵ Nicholas Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*. (LA: USC Centre for Public Diplomacy, 2009): 12, 19.

²⁶ Bill Ivey, “Cultural Diplomacy and the National Interest: In Search of a 21st Century Perspective”. *Arts Industries Policy Forum*, 2008: 1.

²⁷ Li Zhi, *Cultural Diplomacy*, 8. Also See J. M. Mitchell, *International Culture Relations*, 79.

In his book *International Cultural Relations*, the former British diplomat J. M. Mitchell believes that cultural diplomacy “seeks to impress, to present a favourable image, so that diplomatic operations as a whole are facilitated” and involved strengthening one country’s cultural influence by offering direct funding for artists’ tour or by promoting the study of its language or culture in universities abroad²⁸. Thus according to Mitchell, a government utilizes cultural diplomacy as a strategic action in order to expand its national cultural influence. Often it includes multilateral or bilateral agreements signed by governments and also activities taken by national cultural institutions with other nations.²⁹ That is, according to Mitchell, cultural diplomacy, different from cultural exchanges, puts emphasis on the role of government in facilitating the country’s external cultural relations.³⁰

Though different emphasis has been put, either on “culture” or on “diplomacy” in the definition of the term, it should be acknowledged that these are not in contradiction with each other. Instead, this definitional division underscores the main features of cultural diplomacy, namely, the emphasis on cultural relations and the purpose of it (namely, to foster national interests).

As discussed before, “culture” used in this thesis takes a wide perspective, containing science, sport and popular culture as well as the performing and visual arts and heritage and cultural approaches taken by a country normally include conducting cultural programs of “faculty and student exchanges, performing arts productions, museum shows, book exhibits, (and) lectures”³¹ which can promote aspects of one country’s culture (such as language) and enhance its artistic and cultural prestige. Cultural diplomacy is often regarded cost effective considering its outcomes and impacts on international ties between different countries, according to Richard T. Arndt as culture can help establish a foundation of trust with other people which policy makers can build on to reach political economic and military goals.³²

Cultural diplomacy is not government-to-government diplomacy, but the communication between governments and foreign people of the targeted country.³³ Targeted at the general

²⁸ J. M. Mitchell, *International Culture Relations*, 81.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Li, *Cultural Diplomacy*, 38.

³¹ Kevin V. Mulcahy, “Cultural Diplomacy and the Exchange Programs: 1938-1978”. *Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society*, Vol. 29, Issue 1. 1999: 7.

³² Richard T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 15.

³³ Li Zhi, *Cultural Diplomacy*, 16.

public as a whole, cultural diplomacy, due to its diplomatic nature, stresses the significant role of government in promoting and facilitating the overall cultural diplomacy.³⁴

Besides, against the backdrop of new technologies and communication channels, the increase of non-state actors also influences the practice of cultural diplomacy as a whole. It is argued that the focus of cultural diplomacy has shifted from one government's intention to impose its ideology on another to a more "transparent and unselfish offering of culture" within the context of state-sponsored cultural diplomacy program.³⁵ Hu Wentao claims that policymakers would normally take a more realistic and more tough-minded approach to cultural diplomacy to safeguard one's security and geopolitical advantages, but at the same time, non-state actors, such as citizens and non-governmental organisations, take a more idealistic and more qualitative attitude, in the hope of combating stereotypes and enhancing communication.³⁶

Fox believes that the greatest difficulty in defining cultural diplomacy "is and should be lies in the terms 'diplomacy' and 'culture' and their semantic baggage".³⁷ Despite these definitional complications, this thesis uses the definition by Mitchell that cultural diplomacy is aimed at presenting a favourable image so as to facilitate diplomatic operations and national interests through funding directing artists' tour or by promoting the study of its language or culture in universities abroad. This definition has been chosen because it both emphasizes the role of government and includes the means and the goals of the concept. Britain's cultural diplomacy also fits this definition, which can be seen in Chapter Four.

In addition, in order to better understand the meaning of the concept, one must understand its actors and approaches (or ways). The main actors of cultural diplomacy would include both state professional diplomats and also non-state (or societal) personnel, such as writers, artists, multinational corporations, or NGO officials (Hu 2007). In other words, cultural diplomacy can be conducted not only from official and governmental level, but also from non-governmental levels. The approaches it takes can also be divided into official/state and societal level. At the government/state level, cultural diplomacy is planned and executed at state level and achieved through cultural negotiations, the signing of cultural agreements or MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding), organising of international cultural conferences,

³⁴ Ibid, 24.

³⁵ Jin Ling, "The Impact of Culture on Diplomacy and How to Bridge Cultural Gaps in Diplomacy". *Overseas English*. Issue 4. 2013:170.

³⁶ Hu, Wentao, "A Theoretical Analysis of Cultural Diplomacy", 52.

³⁷ Robert Fox. "Cultural Diplomacy at the Crossroads. Cultural Relations in Europe and the Wider World". (London: The British Council, 1999): 2.

personnel exchanges or exhibitions or fairs of cultural themes, etc.³⁸ At the societal level, cultural programs are carried out by non-state actors, with aspirations to ideals such as world peace, equality and understanding.³⁹ In other words, cultural diplomacy can be carried out by both diplomats working for a government's foreign ministry and those working for other organisations or entities that have links to foreign ministries of various degrees.

3.1.2 Cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and soft power

In order to better understand the concept of cultural diplomacy, its relations with public diplomacy and soft power will be mentioned and briefly analysed.

Firstly, culture diplomacy is often seen as one dimension or branch of public diplomacy, which encompasses a range of instruments such as arts, education, language, sports and religion. For instance, the Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy of the U.S. Department of State from 2005 used the title "Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy" and puts cultural diplomacy under the category of public diplomacy.⁴⁰ British historian Nick Cull regards cultural diplomacy as "a subset of actions and programs under the general headings of public diplomacy".⁴¹

Li Zhi, a famous Chinese scholar in the field of cultural diplomacy argues that from the perspective of communication theory, the overlap between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy can be illustrated in Figure 1. In this figure, the area No.1 represents is the culture directed at the general public, while No. 2 and 3 refer to public diplomacy directed at economic, political, military and scientific fields and the cultural diplomacy focusing at the government level respectively. He also believes that the methods of public diplomacy are in nature cultural and there is a growing trend for the convergence of these two concepts.⁴²

³⁸ Li, *Cultural Diplomacy*, 26.

³⁹ Aoki-Okabe et al, "National Commitments to Cultural Diplomacy within Regional Frameworks". In *Searching For A Cultural Diplomacy*. Eds by Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried. (Berghahn Books: Reprint edition. 2013): 204-215.

⁴⁰ U.S. Dept. of State. "Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy", 3.

⁴¹ Jessica, C. E. Gienow-Hecht. and Mark C. Donfried. *The Model of Cultural Diplomacy: Power, Distance and the Promise of Civil Society*. In *Searching For A Cultural Diplomacy*. (Berghahn Books; Reprint edition. 2013): 14.

⁴² Li, *Cultural Diplomacy*, 56.

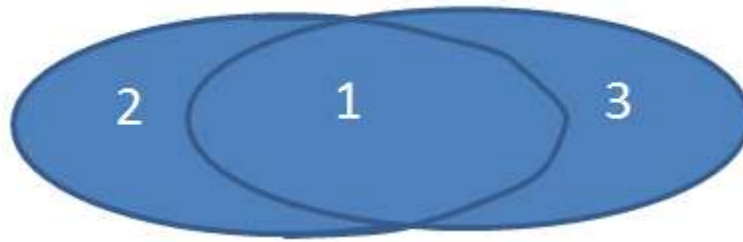


Figure 2 The relationship of cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy from the perspective of communication

(In this figure, the oval on the left represents public diplomacy while the oval on the right refers to cultural diplomacy.)

The detailed distinction between these concepts is beyond the limit of this thesis and in this paper, cultural diplomacy is regarded as part of the broader field of public diplomacy and government policies are believed to be the prerequisite for cultural exchange. At the same time, culture has been paid greater significance since culture can bring the necessary operating conditions for policies.⁴³

Today, public and cultural diplomacy alike are seen as important elements in the “arsenal of soft power”.⁴⁴ In other words, inherent with the concepts of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy is the Joseph Nye’s idea of “soft power”. Compared with “hard power”, soft power emphasizes the ability to get “others to want the outcomes that you want” and in particular “the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion”.⁴⁵ And according to Nye, three types of resources constitute soft power: culture, values, and foreign policies.⁴⁶ The other two sources of cultural diplomacy, values and foreign policy, refer to the consistency of its domestic policies and foreign policy and its political values.⁴⁷ Culture, the first, and the most important source of one country’s soft power, can generate soft power influence through intellectual and artistic activities such as literature, music and education. The quality, richness and the wealth of cultural events will appeal to foreign audience and arouse their admiration and appreciation, which eventually leads to a rise of the country’s soft power. Besides, the distinction between highbrow culture and lowbrow culture can be made as the former refers to art and education and the latter includes popular entertainment. The latter, also known as popular culture, is gaining increasing significance due to new

⁴³ Jora, “New Practices and Trends in Cultural Diplomacy”: 45.

⁴⁴ Michael. J. Waller, "Cultural Diplomacy, Political Influence, and Integrated Strategy," in *Strategic Influence: Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda, and Political Warfare*, Ed.by Michael J. Waller. (Washington, DC: Institute of World Politics Press, 2009): 74.

⁴⁵ Joseph Nye, “When Hard Power Undermines Soft Power”. *New Perspectives Quarterly*. 21(3), 2004: 15.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid,14.

technologies of information and communication and should not be distained.⁴⁸ It is also worth mentioning that education and academic exchanges are also important to enhance the soft power as those who have studied abroad and later come back to their home country act as informal ambassadors to the country he/she has visited.⁴⁹

Culture of a country, its ideals and politics are important tools for soft power and a country whose culture and ideals convey values which may be considered as universal and whose policies reinforce its credibility abroad is likely to be an attractive country. Cultural diplomacy is closely and primarily associated with soft power and is regarded as the means to improve one country's soft power (the end).⁵⁰

Thus in this thesis, cultural diplomacy is considered to present a favourable image to facilitate diplomatic operations and advance national interests (the end) through cultural activities (the means) abroad. Cultural diplomacy is often government or state sponsored and involves non-state actors at the same time. This will be the framework to see how the UK has conducted its cultural diplomacy in China, namely from governmental level and non-state level.

3.2 Constructivism by Wendt

Constructivism has recently made significant contributions to our understanding of international relations by “highlighting the role of intersubjective perceptions and shared understandings”.⁵¹ Historically speaking, since the 1980s, the arrival of new forces created by discoveries in technology, transportation, and communications changed the patterns of social life and structures of international relations. The end of the Cold War and ideological confrontation, decline in state sovereignty, and spread of globalization enlivened scholarly thinking about international relations and fostered academic debates about the nature of global politics and ways in which one can know and study it.⁵² Thus the study of constructivism expanded greatly and has become one of the major schools of international relation theories with emphasis on social dimensions of international relations and possibility of change.

⁴⁸ Joseph Nye, “Soft Power and Higher Education”, *The Internet and the University Forum*. 2004: 45.
<<http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ffpiu043.pdf>>

⁴⁹ Ibid, 42-45.

⁵⁰ Li, *Cultural Diplomacy*, 45.

⁵¹ Vaughn P. Shannon and Paul A. Kowert. *Psychology and Constructivism in International Relations: An Ideational Alliance*. (MI, USA: University of Michigan Press: 2011): 58.

⁵² Jackson and Sorensen. *Introduction to International Relations Theories and Approaches*, 163.

Inspired by other social disciplines such as philosophy and sociology⁵³, constructivist explanations of international politics moves beyond materialist explanations of international relations and draws our attention to the role that ideas play in shaping actors' identities and interests as well as actions, which can shed light on our understanding and explaining the Britain's cultural diplomacy.

Constructivists argue that social beings, institutions and global politics (or international relations) are socially constituted, "by shared understandings, expectations or knowledge" and they reflect an "intersubjective consensus" of shared beliefs about political practice, acceptable social behaviour, and values.⁵⁴ Taking an ideational view of international relations, in contrast with the material view taken by neoliberals and neorealist, constructivists argue that ideas can define the meaning of material power and that international system is constituted by ideas instead of material forces.⁵⁵ Besides, social identities or impressions in political, social, cultural, religious, class, national aspects towards certain country are not objectively given – they may develop and change over time and according to different outside circumstances.⁵⁶ In other words, the ideational structures and agents involved can play a role in constituting and determining each other during the interaction process⁵⁷, making the international relations subject to change.

As the influential scholar in constructivism, Wendt, in his *Social Theory of International Relations*, believes that "the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces and the identities" and second, "interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature"⁵⁸.

This thesis will use Wendt's argument on identity and interests as well as his proposition of culture and classification three cultures as the guiding and analytical framework.

3.2.1 Identity and interest by Wendt

Wendt's arguments on identities and interests will be used to analyse why Britain's cultural diplomacy in China has been paid great importance.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics". *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1. 1995: 73.

⁵⁵ Jackson and Sorensen. *Introduction to International Relations Theories*, 165.

⁵⁶ Henry Plaschke. "Lecture notes for Constructivist approaches to IR, Course of International Relations Theories", Aalborg University, October 18, 2012.

⁵⁷ Copeland, "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism", 190.

⁵⁸ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 1.

Wendt argues that identity is rooted in its understanding of the self and “generates motivational and behavioural dispositions”. Identity, in other words, include ideas held by the self and also by the other and are constituted by both internal and external structures.⁵⁹ According to Wendt, four kinds of identities exist, namely personal or corporate identity, type identity, role identity and collective identity and are multiple given different situations.

The personal or corporate identity stems from the domestic environment of the actor while type identity refers to a social category and in international system would correspond to the forms of states, like democratic, monarchical, capitalist or communist states. Role identity depends on culture and shared expectations and exists only in relations to others. And collective identity refers to the identification of self with other through blurring the distinction between them. It is believed that identities are not just grounded in material forces but are the result of ideas and the social construction of such ideas.⁶⁰

When discussing the concept of interest, Wendt draws on arguments of Alexander George and Robert Keohane who have explicated three categories of national interest they describe as “life, liberty and property,” (namely survival, autonomy, and economic well-being) and then he adds a fourth category, “collective self-esteem”.⁶¹ Physical survival means the ability of the state-society complex to survive. The second national interest, autonomy or liberty, refers to the “ability of a state-society complex to exercise control over its allocation of resources and choice of government”. The third, economic well-being, means to use the state's resource for production.⁶² “Self-esteem” means that an actor in international relations need to feel good about itself, for respect or status largely and depends upon the “collective self-images” of other actors involved as positive or negative, which are in turn created partly on the basis of relationships with “significant others”. While positive self-images come from “mutual respect and cooperation” between actors involved and to a great extent presuppose “recognition of sovereignty” by other states, negative self-images result from perceived disrespect or contempt by others and might prompt states to make compensations by “self-assertion and/or devaluation and aggression toward the Other”.⁶³ Thus the prestige or international image of a country rests not only on its economic or military power, but more importantly, on this collective identification, or confirmation of mutual identities of actors

⁵⁹ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 224.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 224-230.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 236-237.

⁶² *Ibid*.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

involved. These four interests must be met if states want to feel safe and if states want to set objective limits on their foreign policies. But, in different occasions, prioritization of these interests will be required.⁶⁴

According to Wendt, interests refer to what actors want while identities refer to who they are. Identity is “a property of international actors that generates motivational and behavioural dispositions” and “interests presuppose identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows what it is”.⁶⁵ At the same time, “identities may themselves be chosen in light of interests” and “interests themselves presuppose still deeper identities”. It can be said that the behaviour of a state is generated and motivated by a variety of interests rooted in various identities.

Interests and identities are central determinants of state behaviour. That is, these two form the basis for the behaviours of an actor. Wendt’s intentional equation is that “desire + belief = action”, with identities on the belief side and interest on the desire side. Thus identities are significant because they provide the basis for interests. Interests, in turn, develop in the process of defining situations. These two concepts interrelated and can’t “ignore or trump each other”.⁶⁶

Identities and interests of a certain country are largely “constructed by social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature (as neorealists maintain) or domestic politics (as neoliberals favour)”.⁶⁷ The distribution of power in international systems is shaped by cultural formations and shared ideas and depends greatly on the perceptions they hold of one another or the shared ideas that constitute their identities and interests in the eye of others. Thus the relationship among “culture/shared ideas”, “identity”, “interest” and “action” can be illustrated with the following figure.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 224, 231.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 231.

⁶⁷ Maysam Behraves, “The Thrust of Wendtian Constructivism”. *E-international Relations*. Last modified 9 March 2011. Assessed 02 May 2014. < <http://www.e-ir.info/2011/03/09/the-thrust-of-wendtian-constructivism/>>

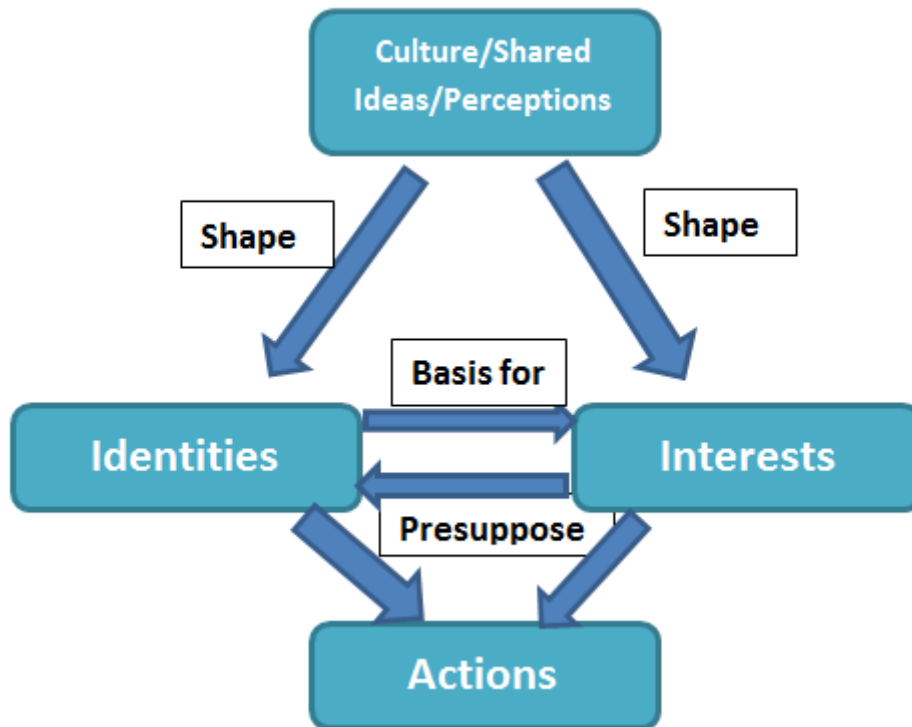


Figure 3 Wendt's theorization on culture, identity, interest and action

3.2.2 Three cultures

Wendt's definition of culture should be first clarified before proceeding to his theory of three cultures. His understanding of culture depends on the distinction between micro and macro structures the former referring to the interaction of agents (or actors) in the system and discussing the structure from the actors' perspective while the latter focusing on the system level⁶⁸. Then based on this, culture is understood as the common knowledge of the micro level as well as the collective knowledge on the macro level. Common knowledge, "nothing but beliefs in the heads" is subjective in its nature and is equal to "intersubjective understanding" between different actors⁶⁹. Common knowledge generates "norms, rules, institutions, conventions, ideologies, customs, and laws are all made of common knowledge" and is subject to change if beliefs or membership of actors involved have experienced changes.⁷⁰ The latter, collective knowledge, or collective representation, is group-level phenomenon and is "knowledge structures held by groups which generate macro-level

⁶⁸ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 140.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 159-161.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

patterns in individual behaviour over time”⁷¹. The overall effects of collective knowledge are not reducible by individuals’ beliefs but at the same time rely on actors’ belief to involve and reproduce the structures.⁷²

Thus Wendt’s “culture” is not equivalent to that in “cultural diplomacy”, but instead, is used by Wendt as synonyms with “(socially) shared knowledge” and “shared ideas”, including many specific forms such as “norms, rules, institutions, ideologies, organisations, threat-systems”.⁷³ Cultural diplomacy, however, includes using science, sport and popular culture as well as the performing and visual arts and heritage to enhance cultural influence and advance national interests.

Wendt rejected neorealists’ argument that anarchical system will eventually lead to self-help, constant security competition and conflict and he believes has ignored “questions of identity-and interest-formation”.⁷⁴ Instead, the distribution of power at the structural level is determined by shared ideas which make up norms and institutions and whether a system is conflictual or cooperative depends on the shared culture created through interactions.

For Wendt, the structure of anarchy contains ideational or cultural aspects and culture, “just lurks behind ‘interest’” and includes both common and collective knowledge seen from micro and macro levels as discussed above. Besides, culture (shared knowledge) and its manifestations such as norms, rules, etc.—are “analytically neutral with respect to cooperation and conflict”.⁷⁵

He draws views of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Immanuel Kant and distinguishes three cultures of anarchy characterized by “enmity,” “rivalry,” and “friendship” respectively, each involving a distinct posture between Self and Other in regard to violence.

The first, Hobbesian culture is “a truly self-help system”⁷⁶ and is characterized by enmity and states will perceive each other as enemies, trying to destroy and conquering each other. Thus conflicts are possible with no limits on violence between actors involved. Actors’ actions

⁷¹ Ibid, 161-162

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid, 141.

⁷⁴ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46, no 2 (1992): 391-392.

⁷⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 253.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 247.

depend upon their perceptions of their enemies, either they really exist or in their imagination.⁷⁷ Hobbesian culture is often said to resemble realist arguments since

In Lockean culture, states treat each other as rivals or competitors. “Constituted also by representations about Self and Other with respect to violence”, a rival/competitor will use violence to advance its own interests but at the same time refrain from killing each other, which is different from the Hobbesian culture. When the sovereignty of the Other is recognized by the Self and the other way around, the system gradually transforms into “an institution shared by many states” that is based upon the “shared expectation” that they will not seek to destroy each other’s life and liberty. In the words of Wendt, “modern inter-state rivalry ... is constrained by the structure of sovereign rights recognized by the international law, and to that extent is based on the rule of law.”⁷⁸ In other words, states will act based on the premise that others would respect their right of sovereignty and in return constitute a system of mutual constraint. However, in Lockean culture, the possibility of war is not completely mitigated since violence is still accepted as an effective way to advance its interests.

According to Wendt, Westphalia states system is the break point or the result of “qualitative structural change” when “the kill or be killed logic of the Hobbesian state of nature has been replaced by the live and let live logic of the Lockean anarchical society”.⁷⁹

Wendt identifies a third culture of anarchy based on Immanuel Kant’s famous work, *Perpetual Peace*. In Kantian culture when states are regarded as friends, who will follow two basic rules, namely “the rule of non-violence” which means to resolve disputes without resorting to war or threat of war, and the rule of “mutual aid,” meaning to take collective action as a “team” against any outsider threatening the safety of mutual interest.⁸⁰ Members in a Kantian culture will collaborate because “they believe in a team approach to security with the members of their bloc”. In modern era, the close relationship between the UK and US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) can be regarded as typical examples of a Kantian culture.⁸¹

Thus the three cultures of anarchy can be summarized with the following table.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 261-265.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 279-281.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 279.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 298-299.

⁸¹ Ibid, 301.

Table 1 Three cultures of anarchy by Wendt

Cultures of anarchy	Nature of relations	The use of violence
Hobbesian culture	“Enmity” States regard one another as enemies. They deny one another’s existence.	Violence and wars are omnipresent.
Lockean culture	“Rivalry” States perceive the one as rivals. They recognise one another’s existence.	Violence and wars can break out periodically.
Kantian culture	“Friendship” States treat each another as friends. They recognise one another’s rights of existence and abide by the rule of non-violence and rule of mutual aid.	Violence and wars will not be used.

He also claims that at macro-level of the structure, anarchy can have three kinds of structures based on what kind of roles (enemy, rival and friend) is dominant in the system⁸². Interests and identities can only emerge through interaction and whether the system is Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian is determined by the interaction history. Thus the socially constitutive role of interaction has been valued by Wendt and thus the type of culture and the identities of the actor will vary and are subject to change. The above figure 2 can be modified and expanded to the following to explain the relations between three cultures, identity, interest and action.

⁸² Ibid, 249.

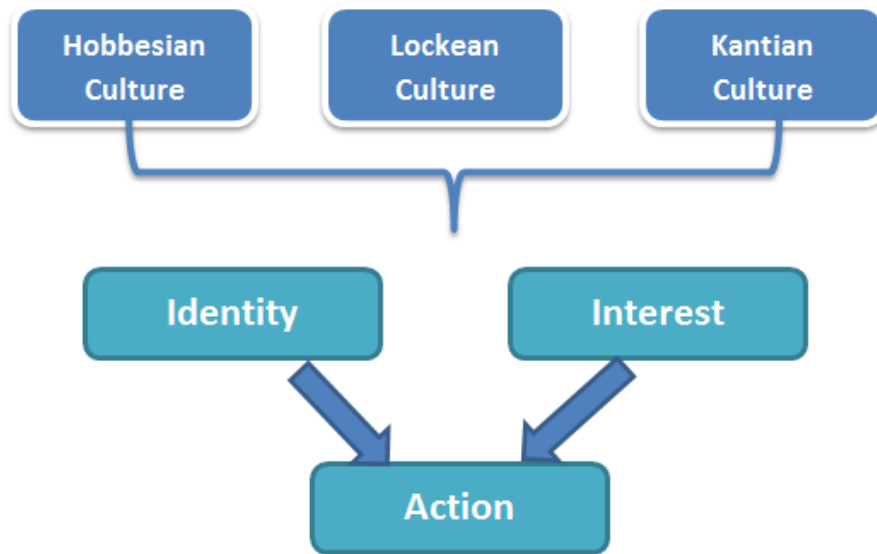


Figure 4 The relationship between culture, identity, interest and action in international relations

3.3 The application of constructivism in analysis

From above analysis, it is believed that the culture of anarchy the relations will influence the identities of the actor, which forms the basis of and also determines the interests of the actor. The intentional equation “desire (interest) + belief (identity) = action”. Thus in order to understand why Britain has paid great emphasis on its cultural diplomacy with regard to China, both the identities and interests need to be explored.

Besides, the socially constitutive role of interaction has made Britain change its understanding of international relations and towards the understanding of cultural diplomacy. The three cultures of anarchy proposed by Wendt takes the logic of reasoning a step further and can help shed light on the background of Britain’s existing identities and interests in its cultural diplomacy in China. Thus the analysis part will first explore the changing focus of British understanding of its cultural relations with China from this perspective. Then the identities of Britain and its interest behind its cultural diplomacy in China should be explored in order to answer the problem formulation.

Chapter Four Empirical Data: British Cultural Diplomacy in China

This part will explain how Britain has conducted its cultural diplomacy in China, with the conceptual framework of cultural diplomacy discussed above.

4.1 Brief history of British cultural diplomacy in China

The detailed historical examination between these two countries is beyond the scope of this thesis and instead, the timeline the thesis focuses will start from the 1949 after the founding of People's Republic of China.

British government formally recognised the status of People's Republic of China on 6 January 1950. The two sides later signed the Joint Communiqué on the Agreement on an Exchange of Ambassadors on 13 March 1972, which marked the formal establishment of diplomatic ties.⁸³ Although the formal diplomatic relations were established only in 1970s, civil interaction activities began earlier, though later interrupted by the Cultural Revolution.

Before the formal diplomatic ties, civil arts groups started mutual exchange, though mainly from the British side, not vice versa. Some examples include British visiting group in Beijing in 1951 which were warmly welcomed by Chinese people. In 1952, the deputy director of Canterbury Cathedral was officially met by Premier Zhou Enlai.⁸⁴

British Council, the principal organisation for conducting UK's external cultural relations, started work in 1943 in China but the first period of operation was disappointingly short. By 1951 pressure of visa requirements led to suspension of most of its activities. Funds originally allocated for China were redirected to Japan and activities were paused.⁸⁵

The cultural relationship between China and Britain during this period contributed to the Chinese development in general. However, it should be realized that the cultural ties between the two countries were conducted against the backdrop the Cold War and were often led by government. UK at that time was caution of the ideological interference of Communism, including China. During this period, political goals remained the top priority of foreign

⁸³ Xinhua. "Backgrounder: China and the United Kingdom." Last modified 16 July 2005. Assessed 04 May 2014. <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2003-07/16/content_977034.htm>

⁸⁴ Wen Lipeng, "British Cultural Diplomacy and its Relations with China". Master Thesis of China Foreign Affairs University. 2009: 25.

⁸⁵ Ali Fisher, *A story of engagement: the British Council 1934-2009*. (London: British Council, 2009), 33.

relation between these two counties. Cultural diplomacy was often mainly used to serve and became supplement for political diplomacy⁸⁶.

Since the end of China's Cultural Revolution and reform and opening up in the 1970s, cultural relations between China and Britain quickly warmed up. At the governmental level, various agreements have been signed to offer policy guidance and facilitate the cultural exchanges. The restart of British Council and its following expansion also reflects the growing interaction between the two sides. With China's increasing closer relationship with the West, the British Council's relationship with China was also re-established in the late 1970s after a long stop. In 1980 work produced by the Ashington Group was 'taken to China and shown as the first exhibition from the West since the Cultural Revolution'.⁸⁷ Since then, British Council has expanded its work in China and now has information centres in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing and has run numerous projects nationwide.⁸⁸

4.2 Organisations responsible for Britain's cultural diplomacy in China

Cultural diplomacy often involves the work of governments and also non-state actors as discussed in Section 3.1.1. Before detailed analysis, the main organisations for conducting cultural diplomacy in China should be clarified, which can be categorized into government departments, semi-official organisations and non-governmental institutions and organisations⁸⁹.

At the government level, cultural policies are formulated and supervision over cultural practises conducted. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is mainly responsible for controlling and managing its cultural diplomacy and separates from domestic cultural services. Within it, the Cultural Relations Department is the official government department mainly responsible for its cultural diplomacy and its areas of focus include guiding British Council's cultural exchange programs through funding and review, offering direct leadership of Cultural and Education Section of Embassy/Consular, and coordinating relations between UN and UNESCO.⁹⁰

Taking China into consideration, the detailed exploration of decision-making department is beyond the scope of this thesis. The British government taken as a whole is deemed

⁸⁶ Wen Lipeng, "British Cultural Diplomacy and its Relations with China", 27.

⁸⁷ Fisher, *A story of engagement*, 33.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Li Defang, "Learn by Others' Mistakes: Speaking of UK's Cultural Diplomacy". *Cultural Exchanges between China and Abroad*. Vol 2.2012: 24.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

responsible for signing governmental level agreements and MOUs and supervising the operation in order to facilitate cultural exchanges.

At the semi-governmental level, British Council “undertakes cultural relations activities on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office”⁹¹ and is the organisation for conducting cultural diplomacy when China is concerned. According to FCO website, “the British Council is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, building lasting relationships between the UK and other countries...to promote British values and interests”.⁹² Though it officially claims that it is an “executive non-departmental public body and “operates at arm’s length from the UK government and does not carry out functions on behalf of the Crown”, British Council is heavily related with British government and is subject to British foreign policy changes since FCO is “the British Council's sponsoring department” and provides BC with grant-in-aid funding (although more than 75 per cent of its revenue has been obtained through its teaching programs and exams and other contracts and partnerships).⁹³ It maintains close relationships with UK governments, parliaments and other assemblies in order to make contributions to the UK’s prosperity and security.⁹⁴ In some countries, British Council operates closely related to its Embassy or Consulate and its Head will also work as embassy cultural attaché in some countries⁹⁵, which is true in China as it is officially named the “Cultural and Educational Section of the British Embassy/Consulate”.

Other non-governmental/non-state organisations provide a supportive but active role in cultural diplomacy. This kind of non-state organisation includes British Library, Arts Council England, Arts and Crafts Board Museums and Galleries Commission, the British Film Institute, the British Museum.⁹⁶

Thus British cultural diplomacy, including in China, conducted at different levels, is supported by government mainly in policy guidance and funding and is operated by semi-governmental (mainly British Council) and non-state institutions and organisations.

⁹¹ Bound, et al, *Cultural Diplomacy*, 16.

⁹² Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Departments, agencies and public bodies. Assessed 05 May 2014. <<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/british-council>>

⁹³ British Council Website. Management and structure. Assessed 04 May, 2014. <<http://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/structure>>

⁹⁴ British Council Website. Relationship with the UK government. Assessed 04 May, 2014. <<http://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/facts/what-the-british-council-does/relationship-uk-government>>

⁹⁵ Li Defang, “Learn by Others’ Mistakes”, 24.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

The following will examine Britain's cultural diplomacy from the governmental and operational level. That is, the governmental level of agreements and focuses has been explored and at the same time, the work by British Council and other non-state actors are introduced. Since these non-state actors are most commonly involved through British Council in China, as UK's cultural and educational institutions have been supported mainly by British Council to share knowledge and expertise worldwide.⁹⁷

4.2 Cultural diplomacy at the governmental level

At the governmental level, various agreements have been signed to offer policy guidance and facilitate the cultural exchanges. The first Agreement on Educational and Cultural Cooperation at the governmental level was signed in November 1979 in which the two sides agreed to boost dialogue and cooperation extensively in arts, culture, education, social science, news, publishing industry, sports, and tourism on an equal and mutual beneficial basis.⁹⁸ Other important agreements include "Program of Cultural Exchanges from 1999 to 2002" in 1999, "Memorandum Concerning the Reciprocal Establishment of Cultural Centres" in 2000.⁹⁹

More recently, during former Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to Britain, the two sides signed *the 2009—2013 China-UK Cultural Exchange Implementation Plan*, including the mid-term and long-term plans for the exchanges and cooperation in publishing, performing arts, radio, film and television, cultural heritage protection and many other fields¹⁰⁰. And China-UK High-level People-to-People Exchange Mechanism was launched. A MOU was signed in 2012 to build the mechanism of high-level cultural exchanges between the two governments¹⁰¹.

It is also worth mentioning that British Prime Minister's visit to Beijing from December 2 to 4, 2013 attracted heated discussion in both China's and Britain's media. During Cameron's visit, a new cultural agreement was signed today by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Maria Miller and Chinese Minister for Culture Cai Wu, aiming to give a boost to cultural and creative exchanges between the UK and China¹⁰². This agreement will also

⁹⁷ British Council, Annual Report 2012-13: 17.

⁹⁸ Xinhua, "Backgrounder: China and the United Kingdom."

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *Chinese Embassy in the UK*. "China-UK Cooperation in Cultural Exchanges Enjoys a Broad Prospect: Ambassador Liu Xiaoming Published an Article in People's Daily". Last modified on 16 April 2012. Assessed 06 May 2014. <<http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/EmbassyNews/2012/t926111.htm>>

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² British Council. "New cultural agreement leads to closer co-operation between Britain and China".

provide an active programme of cultural exchanges, encourage and facilitate exchange of arts groups and artists.

It is believed that the establishment of cultural communication mechanism between China and UK has promoted the sustainable development of China-UK relations and in particular, the high-level cultural mechanism set up by Cameron government has signified that the relations between these two countries have advanced in “depth and width”.¹⁰³

4.3 Britain’s cultural diplomacy at the operational level: British Council in China

As the previous part focuses on the facilitation of cultural diplomacy at the governmental level, this part will examine the activities offered by British Council to see how cultural diplomacy has been actually applied in China.

4.3.1 British Council in China: introduction

As the UK’s international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations, British Council in China is also known as the “Cultural and Educational Section of the British Embassy/Consulate”. It originated from the “British Cultural Scientific Mission to China”, a delegation representing Royal Society during the Republic era including famous sinologist Joseph Needham also laid the foundation for future work for British Council in China.¹⁰⁴ First opened in Chongqing in 1943 by Joseph Needham, British Council in China now operates as the Cultural and Education Section of the British Embassy in Beijing and as the Cultural and Education Section of the British Consulates-General in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing¹⁰⁵.

As the name indicates, British Council in China is affiliated with British Embassy/Consulate in China, which is not independent from governmental influences. Besides, its present Director, Carma Elliot is also the Consul-General in Shanghai to facilitate the cultural affairs directly.¹⁰⁶

As discussed above, being the semi-governmental organisation responsible for conducting the cultural diplomacy worldwide, British Council China also fulfils the role by bridging the gap

¹⁰³ *People Daily*. “Report: The Development of China-UK relations best reflected in cultural and communication mechanisms”. Last modified on 16 December 2013. Assessed 06 May 2014.

<<http://uk.people.com.cn/n/2013/1217/c352308-23858925.html>>

¹⁰⁴ Xiao Lang and Shi Zheng, “Joseph Needham and Cultural and Educational Exchanges between China and Britain in Modern History”. *Journal of Zhejiang University (Humanities and Social Science Edition)*. Vol. 33, No. 1, 2003: 7.

¹⁰⁵ British Council China website. About Us. Assessed 06 May 2014. <<http://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/about>>

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

between British government and other non-state actors, including higher and further education institutions, museums, committees, since “the public service nature of these institutions makes them effective, but unofficial, ambassadors for the UK...(and) a valuable bridge between diplomacy, international relations and public opinion.”¹⁰⁷

4.3.2 *British Council in China: its activities*

According to the British Council work report 2012-13, its main business areas include,

“English: More widespread and better quality teaching, learning and assessment of English worldwide.

Arts: New ways of connecting with and understanding each other through the arts.

Education and society: Enhanced UK leadership of, and shared learning from, international education. Societies whose young people, citizens and institutions contribute to a more inclusive, open and prosperous world.”¹⁰⁸

As the main organisation for conducting cultural diplomacy in China, British council is engaged in wide areas of culture-related work, which can be divided into the following aspects.

First of all, British Council in China promotes its language and education in China extensively, with its rich experience in English test and language teaching and learning. It is believed that English language can “give the UK a competitive edge” and “drive growth and international development”.¹⁰⁹ British Council in China has conducted extensive language learning and teaching projects and programmes in China. Firstly, online education has been promoted with videos, podcasts, games and interaction activities, catering to the needs of kids, teens and businessmen.¹¹⁰ Secondly, English teachers’ training programmes have been conducted which has directly benefited more than one million teachers and students over the last two years. This type of training programs have been conducted nationwide to improve

¹⁰⁷ Bound, et al, *Cultural Diplomacy*, 49

¹⁰⁸ British Council, Annual Report 2012-13: 8. Assessed 04 May 2014.

<<http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/annual-report-2012-13.pdf>>

¹⁰⁹ British Council, The English Effect. 2012: 3. Assessed 05 May 2014.

<<http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/english-effect-report.pdf>>

¹¹⁰ British Council. Learn English online. Assessed 05 May 2014. <<http://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/english/online>>

the language teaching capabilities in Chinese primary and high schools.¹¹¹ In addition, partnerships between Chinese and British higher institutions have been established in recent years, such as internship pivotal programs for university students, cooperation projects between primary and middle schools and the between universities and enterprises.¹¹²

British Council offers a wide range of exams, including English language tests and many other professional qualifications, including the IELTS. Other professional tests have also been conducted by British Council in China, including Association of Chartered Accountants (ACCA) exam, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) test, etc. In 2011 alone, BC administered more than 500,000 UK tests and qualifications in China.¹¹³

Besides, university cooperation has been established extensively between the two sides. The on-going Sino-UK joint-funded research programs was worth 48 million pounds in 2013 and UK is right now the largest provider of joint degrees in China. The University of Nottingham Ningbo China was the first joint Sino-foreign university established in 2004, followed by cooperation between Liverpool University and Xian Jiaotong University, Sino-British College offered by Northern Group of UK universities, to name a few.¹¹⁴

Secondly, cultural events remain a priority in British Council's areas of focus. "Innovative and diverse aspects of the UK arts, including visual arts, architecture, design, dance, theatre, music, film and literature" have been promoted actively in recent years in China.¹¹⁵ The end of Cold War triggered fierce competition of the soft power worldwide and British government realized that emphasis solely on elites could not improve its own soft power influences. Instead, popular culture targeting at the general public should be emphasized. That is why "football culture", creative cultural products have become an important means to strengthen relations with people in other countries.¹¹⁶ For example, English Premier League agreed to help fostering elite, youth and community football in China, as a headstart for Cameron's China visit in 2013. The League and British Council also announced their plans to expand a Chinese Ministry of Education's coaching and referee training programme named Premier Skills, hoping to reach more than 1.2 million Chinese

¹¹¹ British Council. Around the world-China. <<http://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/facts/around-the-world/china>>

¹¹² Yang Fang, "An Analysis of the China-UK relations since 2010." In *Development Report of the United Kingdom (2010-2013)*. Ed by Wang Zhanpeng. (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2013.): 144.

¹¹³ British Council. Around the world-China.

¹¹⁴ Universities UK. "The UK's relationship with China: Universities", Parliamentary briefing. 6 November 2013. Assessed 08 May 2014. <<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2013/UKandChina.pdf>>

¹¹⁵ British Council. Our global work in the arts. <<http://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/programmes/arts/about>>

¹¹⁶ Li Defang, "The Global Influence of Britain's Cultural Diplomacy". *Modern World*, Vol 4. 2012. Assessed 07 May 2014. <<http://www.idcpc.org.cn/globalview/sjzh/120405.htm>>

students by 2016.¹¹⁷ This event was dubbed by the media as “football diplomacy”, in resemblance of the ping-pong diplomacy between China and US. During its bidding for Olympic Games, famous football star David Beckham was invited to represent its national image, another example of its down-to-earth cultural diplomacy in order to appeal to the wider public.¹¹⁸

Another cultural event worth noticing is the “UK Now”, the largest and vibrant UK culture festival. Held in 29 cities in China, this festival and its live events were attended by over four million people, generating over 6,000 pieces of media coverage. This offered the chance for artists, museums, galleries, festival programmers, venues, arts media and cultural officials from the two countries to connect and had brought positive feedback¹¹⁹. One audience member in Shanghai said after the event, ‘Before UK Now, my impression of the UK was of traditional British haughtiness and arrogance. But...I came to see the individuality and vitality of Britain today’¹²⁰, which is a typical example of the popularity of British culture in China, especially among the young generation.

Thirdly, science and creative industry has also been on the agenda of British Council’s work. Britain’s creative sector is estimated to be worth £71.4 billion every year to the UK economy, including fields such as music, dance, theatre, visual arts, movies and videos, design, television and radio, etc.¹²¹ In China, various events and activities related to creative industry have been promoted, resulting in success of British popular culture, especially among the young generation.

¹¹⁷ Reuters, “British PM kicks off China trip with football diplomacy”. Last Modified on 2 December 2013. Assessed 06 May 2014. <<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/12/02/uk-china-uk-soccer-idUKBRE9B103W20131202>>

¹¹⁸ Li Defang, “The Global Influence of Britain’s Cultural Diplomacy”.

¹¹⁹ British Council Website. “UK Now: a UK-China partnership”. Assessed 06 May 2014. <<http://www.britishcouncil.org/partner/corporate/our-stories/uk-now>>

¹²⁰ British Council, “Culture Means Business”. 2013: 19.

<<http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/culture-means-business-report.pdf>>

¹²¹ China Culture. “Britain: The Blossoming of its Creative Industry”. Last modified 23 January 2014. Assessed 08 May 2014. <http://cul.china.com.cn/2014-01/23/content_6633228.htm>

4.4 The effects of Britain’s cultural diplomacy in China

The evaluation of the results and effects of cultural diplomacy can be tricky and difficult as discussed in *Section 2.2*. This thesis uses statistics from British Council as it conducts analysis of its cultural diplomacy via market research organisations and also uses questionnaires to gather information on citizens’ attitudes and suggestions.¹²² The figures related to China have been summarized into the following two tables.

Table 2 The Number of Chinese people directly “Engaged” and “Reached” (2005-2010)¹²³

Year	People Directly Engaged (Face-to-face) (Measured in millions)	People Reached (Measured in Millions)
2005—2006	0.9	5.8
2006—2007	1.3	45.2
2007—2008	3.6	32.6
2008—2009	1.3	46.7
2009—2010	1.5	134.5

Table 3 Satisfaction by Chinese (Score 0--100)¹²⁴

Year	Customer Satisfaction
2005—2006	75
2006—2007	77
2007—2008	77
2008—2009	80
2009—2010	81
2010—2011	81
2011—2012	82

The above two tables summarizes the number of Chinese people “engaged” and “reached” by British Council as well as the feedback, or the satisfaction towards its work. From these two

¹²² Wu Zelin, “Britain’s New Public Diplomacy to China: With the British Council as Case Study”. *International Forum*. Vol. 14 , No. 5. September 2012: 38.

¹²³ British Council, Summarized Corporate Annual Reports (from 2005 to 2010). Assessed 06 May 2014. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/how-we-work/reports-documents> (Note: From 2010 till now, British Council’s annual report has put China into the bigger category of East Asia. Thus only figures from 2005 to 2010 has been chosen for analysis.)

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

tables, it can be seen that generally speaking, Chinese respondents take a growing positive attitude towards Britain's as well as towards British Council's cultural diplomacy.

More practically, the figure of growing international students to Britain can also act as important criteria for its cultural diplomacy effects. Britain's educational attraction and influence can be seen from the number of Chinese students studying in British higher education. The United Kingdom remains one of the top educational destinations for Chinese students. According to the 2014 Report for Trends of Chinese Students Studying Abroad (EOL), Britain remains the top 2 destination for Chinese overseas study. According to figure below, Chinese students enrolled in British higher education increased steadily year on year and reached 56,535 in 2012-2013 alone, which has doubled compared to 2008-09.¹²⁵



Figure 5 Number of Chinese Students Studying in the UK¹²⁶

Another figure offered by *UK Council for International Students Affairs* is higher, indicating that China mainland is the top one non-EU sender of international students to UK's higher education, reaching 78,715 in 2011-12, over 2.5 times than that of the top 2 country, India.¹²⁷

Besides in China, the influence of Britain's culture can be strong felt. A typical example in its popular cultural influence is the influence of British drama, films and TV series, widely welcomed in China's younger generation. Harry Potter and 007 Series films have brought about millions of fans worldwide. British Culture Secretary Maria Miller said that her department still existed because the "entire Cabinet" believes television, film and music from Britain are important for forging links with emerging economies such as China in which

¹²⁵ EOL.CN. "Trend Report for Chinese Students Studying Overseas 2014". Assessed 05 May 2014. <<http://www.eol.cn/html/lx/2014baogao/content.html>>

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ UK Council for International Student Affairs. "International student statistics: UK higher education". Last modified 07 March, 2014. Assessed 05 May 2014. <<http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Info-for-universities-colleges--schools/Policy-research--statistics/Research--statistics/International-students-in-UK-HE/#Top-non-EU-sending-countries>>

Downton Abbey and the BBC series *Sherlock* are watched on the internet by millions of Chinese viewers each month.¹²⁸ All of these popular cultures constitute a significant aspect for promoting English language, culture as well as worldviews as a whole and its role in British cultural diplomacy has been widely acknowledged.

To summarize briefly, this part introduces how Britain has conducted cultural diplomacy in China, including governmental support and British Council's activities in various areas. In general, British cultural aspects are welcomed and regarded positive.

¹²⁸ Matthew Holehouse, "Silent diplomacy of Downton Abbey is as valuable as British Army, says Lord Hall". *The Telegraph*. Modified 12 September 2013. Assessed 07 May 2014. <
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/downton-abbey/10304047/Silent-diplomacy-of-Downton-Abbey-is-as-valuable-as-British-Army-says-Lord-Hall.html>>

Chapter Five Analysis

This part will analyze the reasons why Britain has attached great significance to cultural diplomacy in China.

5.1 The evolution of British cultural diplomacy: from Lockean culture to Kantian culture

This part will examine Britain's identity change behind its cultural diplomacy by giving a brief account of Britain's cultural diplomacy history, which is necessary in order to give a holistic and complete answer to the problem formulation. However, detailed examination into historical facts is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, how its identity has changed during different historical periods will be highlighted.

5.1.1 From early developments to the end of Cold War: Lockean culture

The 1920s to mid-1950s marked the initial establishment of Britain's cultural diplomacy, which reflects the increasing importance attached to cultural aspects in international relations.

The World War I had changed the once powerful global status of the UK and reminded the government of cultural relations in elevating its influence. Cultural diplomacy was brought up into foreign policy agenda.¹²⁹ At that time, France and Germany surpassed Britain in their efforts to expand their language and cultural influences, which eventually led to big shares in global trade. Britain gradually realized that it had lagged behind in the "global cultural race" and that government ought to take immediate actions.¹³⁰

Only in later 1920s did Britain start to engage in some cultural activities in its colonies. The Wall Street Crash in 1929, the following economic depression and increasing competition between its European counterparts forced Britain to pay attention to cultural aspects in its external relations and brought about rapid development in cultural relations in 1930s, marked by the establishment of BBC Empire Services and British Committee for Relations with Other Countries.¹³¹

British government also instilled large amount of funds to include BBC into its cultural diplomacy mechanism. In 1932 the BBC World Service now famous worldwide appeared as

¹²⁹ Zhao Kejin, *Public Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*. (Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Press, 2007): 397.

¹³⁰ Hu Wentao and Zhao Chunxiu, "United Kingdom's Cultural Diplomacy: A Successful Way to Enhance Soft Power". *Pacific Journal*. Vol. 18, No. 9. 2010: 30.

¹³¹ Zhong Xin and He Juan, "The UK: An Evolution from Cultural Diplomacy to Public Diplomacy". *International News World*, July 2007: 20

the BBC Empire Service and during the war periods, it played great role in propaganda and winning outside support.¹³² Even to now, BBC with its extensive global network has been regarded as an influential channel for Britain's cultural diplomacy.

Besides, the *British Committee for Relations with Other Countries* was founded by the Foreign Office in order to “conduct propaganda overseas on behalf of the British Government” and also to counter the negative influence of Fascism and Nazism.¹³³ In other words, the main purpose of this committee was to curtail the growing influence of Fascism, not solely for promoting mutual benefits.

Thus, though established later than France, UK emphasized the significance of ideational factors. However, it should be noted that the harsh external conditions, including the deteriorating political and economic conditions as well as the competition with other European countries, necessitated the significance attached to cultural diplomacy of Britain. In other words, during these “hardships”, Britain treated its counterparts in Europe as competitors, or rivals, according to Wendt. That is, for Britain, the shared knowledge of Self by the “Others” has constituted its own understanding of “Self” and the external relations was regarded by Britain as a “Lockean culture” in which competition and rivalry had become the underlying reason for its cultural diplomacy approach.

The end of WWII marked the start of Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union in which Britain no longer played a central role. Britain's post war decline necessitated the emphasis on cultural aspects to revive its great-power splendour.

To facilitate the work of British Council, “British Council Section of the Foreign Office” was set up within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1943, Britain's foreign diplomacy department to offer necessary political direction and guidance. This Section was renamed as “Cultural Relations Department” (CRD) and was responsible for formulating UK's cultural policies, signing of cultural agreements and allocating capital for cultural exchange programmes¹³⁴.

During this period, Britain's cultural diplomacy, as part of its foreign policy, was in line with this “three circles” foreign policy guideline proposed by Winston Churchill, namely focusing

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Philip M. Taylor, “Cultural Diplomacy and the British Council: 1934-1939”. *British Journal of International Studies*. Vol. 4, No. 3. Oct., 1978: 244.

¹³⁴ Richard J. Aldrich, “Putting culture into the Cold War: the Cultural Relations Department (CRD) and British covert information warfare”. *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.18 (No.2). 2003: 110.

on British Commonwealth and Empire, English-speaking and United States, aiming to expand its cultural and language influence.¹³⁵

However, the underlying reason for Britain's significance on cultural diplomacy should be explored. In the 1960s, Britain was regarded as a "second-tier great power" by the Duncun Report in 1969 since it failed the application for European Common Market in 1961, which was attributed to the fact that the UK failed to maintain a friendly and cooperative relationship with its European counterparts. Britain in general was not welcomed by European leaders and common citizens.¹³⁶ The image of Britain provided by the Other (its European counterparts) gradually had a constituting role in shaping its own identities. For Britain, the worsening image provided overseas provided the impetus to take actions from within, to change and improve its own identities for projection.

Britain's relations with the Soviet Union and Communist countries also affected its cultural diplomacy approach. During post-war time, namely during the Cold War, British government paid great emphasis on international propaganda. "At the cutting edge of the information Cold War", the Cultural Relations Department was engaged in anti-Communist activities, and strived to prevent Soviet Union's domination of the world's ideological developments.¹³⁷ CRD was first established to give British Council political and policy direction and guidance, reflecting that "the greater part of the British Council's work was done on the Foreign Office vote". Besides it soon became involved in cultural propaganda services and worked with MI5, UK's secret service agency.¹³⁸ A similar intelligence department called "Information Research Department" (IRD) was also established to "distribute anti-Communist propaganda in Britain and abroad".¹³⁹

When considering it from Wendt's three cultures perspective, it can be seen that during this period, Britain treated Soviet Union and the Communist world as an adversary. Thus from the early beginning to the end of Cold War, the international environment Britain was in can be regarded as a Lockean culture of anarchy in which Britain had to compete with European countries for cultural influence and with Soviet Union for ideological dominance.

¹³⁵ Zhong Xin and He Juan, "The UK: An Evolution from Cultural Diplomacy to Public Diplomacy", 20.

¹³⁶ Zhao Chunxiu and Hu Wentao, "British Cultural Diplomacy for Constructing International Image". *International News World*. October 2011: 46.

¹³⁷ Aldrich, "Putting culture into the Cold War", 111-112.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 112-116.

¹³⁹ Lyn Smith, "Covert British Propaganda: The Information Research Department: 1947-77". *Millennium*. Vol. 9 Issue 1. 1980: 67.

5.1.2 Cultural diplomacy after Cold War: moving towards Kantian culture

The end of Cold War marked a new era in Britain's cultural diplomacy and reflects its change in its understanding of the concept.

In 2002, the British government launched a Public Diplomacy Strategy Board to coordinate the government's work in external relations around the globe and tried also to provide coordination for the activities of Foreign and Commonwealth Office, British Council, the British Tourist Authority and UK Trade and Investment.¹⁴⁰ The importance for coordinated approach for its cultural relations has been recognized. Then, the *Public Diplomacy Review* in 2003 listed core areas for improving its global stance and also mains that Britain will be committed to be a trustworthy, reliable and honest partner with the rest of the world and pursue relentlessly an open, plural, just, honest and cooperative world system in its external relations.¹⁴¹ As cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy shares the same goal and sees a growing convergence, it can be seen that Britain has taken a more cooperative perception of the international relations, believing that cooperation and mutual understanding will be the trend for the new century.

In recent years, another cultural diplomacy report in 2007 by the think tank Demos regarded cultural diplomacy as one facet of foreign relations and of soft power. It is argued that increased emphasis should be put on it, not just part of public diplomacy since culture has become much more significant because the changing international environment necessitates the construction and projection of its national identity, and "the emerging Asian powers understand the important of culture and are consciously using it as a means to project themselves not just to foreign governments, but also to global public opinion and potential partners and allies".¹⁴² Besides, the government's foreign policy should not drive the cultural or scholarly goals of such cultural diplomacy organisations, which will "give the impression that ...institutions are political tools".¹⁴³ This reflected the new definition and focus of its cultural diplomacy, namely to move away from the original emphasis on "rivalry" with European counterparts or communist nations, but rather on establishing a cooperative and friendship relations with other countries.

¹⁴⁰ Mark Leonard, et al, *British Public Diplomacy in the 'Age of Schisms'*. (London: The Foreign Policy Centre. 2005): 3.

¹⁴¹ Zhong Xin and He Juan, "The UK: An Evolution from Cultural Diplomacy to Public Diplomacy", 22.

¹⁴² Bound et al. *Cultural Diplomacy*.17.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 22.

Thus, the brief analysis of Britain's cultural diplomacy history has revealed the fact that for the UK, the value of ideational factors has been paid increasing significance. More importantly, the dominance of rivalry in previous periods has given way to the emphasis on mutual understanding and long-term relationships. For them, only by establishing long-term cooperative relations can further contact be made and extended. That is, though it can't be argued that Britain seeks no competition with other nations, the emphasis on cooperation and friendly relationship has become wide consensus. The growing prominence of Kantian culture has been widely acknowledged, resulting in some change of its identities and interests in its cultural diplomacy.

This trend can also be seen in its shift in relations with China. Against the background of West-East confrontation with China being a major communist country, Britain's cultural diplomacy in the early post-war period was conducted to serve the political goals. That is, Britain treated China with caution, Lockean culture maintained a priority. In recent years, the "equal" friendship between the two sides has been iterated in public by political leaders. Thus it can be argued that in Sino-UK cultural relations, the highlight of competitive relations has been gradually given way to cooperation between the two sides.

5.2 Britain's identities in its cultural diplomacy in China

The above analysis has demonstrated that British cultural diplomacy has moved from Lockean culture to Kantian culture in which mutual understanding and trust has been increasing valued, instead of mere competition and rivalry.

When exploring Britain's cultural diplomacy in China, several identities of the UK should be highlighted, namely its personal/corporate identity (as an influential cultural and educational power), its type identity as a democratic country and its role identity as a comprehensive strategic partner with China.

It should be mentioned that since this thesis examines British cultural diplomacy in China, the analysis into the bilateral relations have not included the analysis of collective identity. The reason is that collective identity extends the boundary between self and other and implies the convergence of interest towards the outside world. As this thesis focuses only the cultural relations between China and the UK, this identity can be regarded irrelevant.

5.2.1 Britain's personal/corporate identity as a culture and education superpower

As discussed in the theoretical section, for a state, a personal/corporation identity, with essential properties, is the actor's distinctive entity and is constituted by homogeneous structures.¹⁴⁴ An actor can have multiple personal/corporate identities which are based on "a separate locus of thought and activity".¹⁴⁵ When considering its cultural interactions with China, one important personal identity of Britain can be identified as one with rich cultural heritage and educational advantage.

With a long history, the majority of British people feel very proud of Britain's achievements in the arts and literature and feel the need to enhance its global reach from this perspective¹⁴⁶. Britain's personal identity can also be seen from British Council's emphasis on its promotion of cultural events and education.

British Council offers a wide range of exams, including English language tests and many other professional qualifications and, most notably among them, the official organisation for the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test, which is one of the world's most popular English language tests for overseas studies¹⁴⁷. As a must for overseas study in UK as well as in other Commonwealth countries, IELTS test is taken by 300,000 Chinese students in 2013 only, which has seen an annual 10 per cent increase over the past several years.¹⁴⁸

Through educational promotion, the role of English has been expanded largely. Nowadays over 400million are native English speakers while another 700million are learning it, both of which continue to rise sharply.¹⁴⁹

In order to cultivate support from international community, the UK has been promoting its language and education influence worldwide as an important aspect of its cultural diplomacy. These students, with educational background in the UK, brings with them the image and conceptual recognition towards the UK. Thus this elite population has been regarded as an

¹⁴⁴ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Relations*, 224-225.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Mark Leonard, *Britain: Renewing Our Identity*, 22.

¹⁴⁷ British Council. Take An Exam--IELTS. Assessed 07 May 2014. < <http://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/exam/ielts>>

¹⁴⁸ Sina News. "The Number of IELTS and TOEFL tests Expected to Increase." Last Modified 04 January, 2013. Assessed 05 May, 2014. < <http://edu.sina.com.cn/yyks/2013-01-04/1719367739.shtml>>

¹⁴⁹ Li Defang, "The Global Influence of Britain's Cultural Diplomacy". 21.

invaluable source for establishing long-term relations and is regarded as a transaction well worth it.¹⁵⁰

5.2.2 Britain's type identity as a democratic country

Type identity of a nation refers to a social category more intrinsic to actors and is “exogenous to the states system”. With cultural and historical dimensions, it often corresponds to regime types or forms of state, like “capitalist states, fascist states, monarchical states”, etc.¹⁵¹. In its cultural relations with China, Britain's role identity as a democratic society can also be discerned, causing some problems and frictions during the formal interaction.

Western countries including the UK have been criticizing China's undemocratic aspects, such as human rights, freedom of speech, etc. Foreign Secretary William Hague has repeatedly emphasized that issues like human rights and democracy should not be avoided between China and UK and said in Global Investment Conference 2012 that a “strong and transparent partnership” should be built.¹⁵² A recent report from FCO website, taking a critical attitude towards China's undemocratic moves, said that though great economic and social improvements have been made, “civil and political rights remain subject to significant restrictions”, and “increased restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly” can be found.¹⁵³ That is, during its cultural relations with China, Britain still acts from the perspective of western ideology and highlights these issues such as abolition of the death penalty, freedom of expression and the development of civil society, etc.¹⁵⁴ According to the FCO report, international human rights standards have been promoted actively through its public diplomacy activities.

A more recent event especially worth mentioning is that in 2012, British Prime Minister David Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg met the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama which has led China froze out Britain for more than a year longer than

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 20.

¹⁵¹ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Relations*, 226

¹⁵² Ben Glaze, “William Hague seeks 'strong and transparent partnership' with China”. *The Guardian*. Last Modified 27 July 2012. Assessed 07 May 2014. < <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/william-hague-seeks-strong-and-transparent-partnership-with-china-7982115.html>>

¹⁵³ Foreign and Commonwealth Office. “China - Country of Concern (Corporate Report)”. Published 10 April 2014. Assessed 10 May 2014. < <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/china-country-of-concern/china-country-of-concern>>

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

British diplomats expected¹⁵⁵. Due to this event, the cancellation of annual meeting between prime ministers and also Wu Bangguo's (then the top legislator) visit has been followed by an almost stagnancy¹⁵⁶.

Though Britain often identifies itself as a democratic country in its relations with China, it should be noted that differences in social system and ideologies, however, have not impeded the overall cultural diplomacy between these two countries. For instance, on 29 October 2008, for the first time Britain officially recognised Chinese sovereignty over Tibet in a written statement by the British Foreign Secretary David Miliband. That is, though Britain has been fully aware of its type identity as a democratic country which is in sharp contrast with China, it is not the priority among other identities considered and often is subject to other diplomacy goals.

5.2.3 Britain's role identity as a "comprehensive strategic partner" with China

Role identity exists "only in relation to Others" and depends on the sharing of expectations with assumption of "normative integration and cooperation".¹⁵⁷ When considering UK's cultural diplomacy, the shift from Lockean culture towards Kantian culture has underlined its own understanding of modern international relations, namely to seek trust and understanding with other countries.

When considering its cultural diplomacy in China, Britain's role identity can be summarized as a "comprehensive strategic partner". Borrowed from the official title of "comprehensive strategic partnership" between China and UK, this term indicates that through long history of interaction, Britain has identified China as an increasingly important partner in all aspects and regarded China's rise as an opportunity rather than a threat.¹⁵⁸ Thus it emphasized economic and trade areas in particular, supplemented by activities of complementary interests during its interactions with China.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Kiran Stacey, "UK admits China relations slow to thaw after Dalai Lama visit". Financial Times. Published December 8 2013. Assessed 08 May 2014. < <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0f955f82-5ff8-11e3-916e-00144feabdc0.html#axzz31tMtwSaK>>

¹⁵⁶ Yang Fang, "An Analysis of the China-UK relations Since 2010", 146.

¹⁵⁷ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Relations*, 227-228.

¹⁵⁸ Shi Zhiqin and Liu Lida, "Is UK 'China's Strongest Supporter in the West?—Characteristics of Current Sino-UK Relationship and Prediction of its Development in the next Decade". *Frontiers*. Feb 2014: 7.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

The growing emphasis on Sino-UK partnership can be seen from David Cameron's visit to China in late 2013. He reaffirmed UK's "commitment to be a firm supporter of China in the West" and highlighted again the growing importance of China in global affairs.¹⁶⁰

This partnership can also be witnessed in cultural relations as it has become a pivotal and highlight area in bilateral relations. Cultural events have been conducted extensively between the two sides.

To summarize, Britain's identities in its cultural diplomacy in China can be summarized into its personal/corporate identity (as an influential cultural and educational power), its type identity as a democratic country and its role identity as a comprehensive strategic partner with China. As mentioned above, the type identity as a democratic country distinct from China, though sometimes emphasized, is not the most important identity among the three.

5.3 Britain's interests in its cultural diplomacy in China

Wendt's intentional equation indicates that identity and interest combined determine the action of the actor involved. Thus in order to understand why Britain pays great significance on its cultural diplomacy, its interests should also be explored to see the motivations behind its cultural diplomacy approach.

As discussed in the theoretical part, identities of an actor together with its interests will exert great influence on the motivation and behaviour dispositions. At the same time, the common knowledge or culture will shape and constitute the identities of its own, which will eventually shape the interests.

Above analysis has shown that British cultural diplomacy has shifted from its focus on Lockean culture to Kantian culture, which has resulted in change of priorities in its interests. Thus how the cultural diplomacy is conducted is affected.

In international relations, states' behaviour is motivated by a variety of interests which are rooted in corporate, type, role, and collective identities. Wendt argues that a nation has to strive for four main categories of state interests, namely, survival, autonomy, economic well-being and collective self-esteem.

¹⁶⁰ Li Xiaokun and Zhang Chunyan, "Good beginning to a big opportunity". China Daily. Last Modified 06 December 2013. Accessed 05 May 2014. < http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2013-12/06/content_17156328.htm>

Physical survival and autonomy are two basic interests of an actor within international relations, which form the basis for interaction and exchanges with other nations. When examining the current China-UK relations from Britain's perspective, however, these are not priorities for Britain as China has not hindered the development or sovereignty of Britain. Since the smooth return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, there have been no territorial disputes between two sides. With no more historical burdens between the two sides, this had become the turning point for Britain to improve the bilateral cooperation with China, heralding the rapid development of Sino-UK relations.¹⁶¹

Thus the third and fourth interests, namely economic well-being and collective self-esteem proposed by Wendt are the focus of analysis in analysing UK's cultural diplomacy in China.

5.3.1 British interest in China: Economic well-being

A former British Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston had a famous saying that nations have no permanent friends or allies; they only have permanent interests which should be the guidance for their foreign policies. This is embodied in the major principle of Britain's modern diplomacy with China. To put it more simply, Britain has taken a realistic and practical approach in conducting its relations with China, including its cultural diplomacy.¹⁶²

The change of external environment and the expanding influence of globalization have been the impetus for Britain to be economic interests oriented in its relations with China. The relative decline of its national power and influence after the World Wars has led to redefinition of its identities on the one hand (as discussed above), and necessitates the daunting need to use soft power approach to make up for its loss in its hard power.¹⁶³ In addition, especially after the financial crisis in 2008-09, Britain's economy has been suffering from slow recovery and huge deficit, to establish relations emerging markets with huge market potential like China has become an urgent task to solve its own economic problems.¹⁶⁴ Thus the huge market in China and alluring investment from China have been highly valued.

The identification of China as a strategic partner also reflects its practical approach to maximize its economic benefits from China's rise. Sino-UK relations for the past several decades have been characterized by a relatively pragmatic policy by Britain towards China,

¹⁶¹ Zhao Huaipu, "Observations on Britain's Diplomacy towards China". *World Outlook*, Vol 1. 2010: 58.

¹⁶² Shi Zhiqin and Liu Lida, "Is UK 'China's Strongest Supporter in the West?', 7.

¹⁶³ Zhao Huaipu, "Observations on Britain's Diplomacy towards China", 66.

¹⁶⁴ Zeng Biao. "The Transformation of British Diplomacy and Sino-UK Relations". *World*. Vol 25. 2010:87.

with priorities to the “pursuit of economic interests under ideological differences”.¹⁶⁵ For Britain, China is “a major priority” in the UK’s future foreign policy and China’s development is greatly related to UK’s prosperity, globalisation, climate, its own development, international security as well as the international system. Thus how to maximize its benefits and reduce its risks in its relationship with China is of great concern.¹⁶⁶

Britain’s cultural diplomacy towards China, as part of wider diplomacy, is also subject to the economic goals and national interests as a whole. British Council’s goal, for instance, is to improve awareness and understanding of Britain in order to “encourage people to visit, study and do business in the UK, so contributing to long-term prosperity and security”.¹⁶⁷

The pursuit of economic benefits for its cultural activities is evident in British Council’s report “Culture Means Business” which investigates how cultural relations help contribute to increased trade and competitiveness in general for the UK. It concludes that

*“Young people who have participated in cultural activities with the UK are significantly more likely to be interested in working with, and doing business with, the UK than those who have not. On average, they also rate the opportunities the UK offers as a place to do business more highly.”*¹⁶⁸

For China, among those who have participated in cultural activity with the UK, 46% want to work and conduct business with UK. For those who have not taken part in cultural activities, this number is only 38%. In addition, when comparing investment in UK and studying in UK, over 54% Chinese surveyed showed interest in its education while another 42% are keen on investment.¹⁶⁹ That is to say, direct cultural involvement with Britain can not only brings economic benefits, but also advances Britain’s position as an alluring business and investment destination, namely the potential for great benefits in the years to come.

Besides, the growing importance of China has been highlighted in British Council’s annual reports as China has become the largest education market with fast growing revenues generated every year. For instance, the table below the revenue generated in Chinese market of the British Council has increased from only 5.5% in 2006 to around

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 68.

¹⁶⁶ Foreign and Commonwealth Office. “The UK and China: A Framework for Engagement”. Official Strategy Paper, 2009. Assessed 08 May 2014. < http://www.ncuscr.org/files/uk-and-china_0.pdf>

¹⁶⁷ British Council, Annual Report 2012-13: 7.

¹⁶⁸ British Council, “Culture Means Business”. 2013: 3.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 4, 9.

12 in 2012. British government has paid increasing emphasis on the Chinese market for economic benefits, which can be exemplified by its growing fund allocation by British government.¹⁷⁰ Also during this period, revenues from various activities and services in China have enjoyed sharp increase, with a 240% per cent increase over the past 7 years (from £22.3m in 2006 to £76.1m in 2012), accounting for an increasing number in the global revenue.

Table 4 British Council's Revenue in China (in Million Pounds)¹⁷¹

Year	Government allocation	Income from activities and services	Total Income	The Percentage of BC China's income in its overall revenue
2005-2006	5.9	22.3	28.2	5.5%
2006-2007	5.9	27.2	33.1	6.0%
2007-2008	5.9	34.9	40.8	7.2%
2008-2009	8.5	49.5	57.9	9.0%
2009-2010	9.4	58.4	67.8	9.6%
2010-2011	8.3	61	69.3	10.0%
2011-2012	11	76.1	87.1	11.9%

Thus it can be concluded that in accordance with its overall diplomacy, Britain takes a realist and practical approach in its cultural diplomacy towards China, focusing on China's huge market and its huge market potential.

5.3.2 British interest in China: Collective esteem

The increasing focus on Kantian culture indicates that long-term trust and understanding should be the goal for international relations and that apart from the traditional emphasized interests (survival, autonomy and economic well-being), the collective self-esteem has been put greater emphasis. Collective self-esteem, according to Wendt, refers to the need to feel respected and an important element is the collective image, and positive self-images come from "mutual respect and cooperation" between actors involved.¹⁷²

Britain's endeavour to improve its collective image abroad can be seen clearly from its recent emphasis on projecting its image to the outside world. The Prime Minister Tony Blair was keen to transform Britain into a "young country" since the image abroad was out-of-date (such as "in decline, stuffy, traditional, white, racist and imperialist") according to several polls and reports. "Cool Britannia", a government's nation rebranding initiative to present

¹⁷⁰ Wu Zelin, "Britain's New Public Diplomacy to China", 38.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Wendt, *Social Theory of International Relations*, 265.

UK as “new, young, and creative”, though mocked by many then, was promoted by the Labour Party and was widely accepted.¹⁷³ In 1997 the promotional videos of 'New Britain' was promoted in Commonwealth countries and a pop version of British anthem "God Save the Queen" was also released. The Powerhouse UK exhibition in 1998 was organised to showcase its latest achievements in industrial design, arts and S&T, which was the first time for the UK to realize its great commercial potential behind the design innovation. This had also become starting point of governmental promotion of its creative industries across 13 different industrial categories.¹⁷⁴

In 1997, “Britain: Renewing Our Identity” was published by British think tank Demos, in which 6 features representing Britain’s image have been summarized: Hub UK (Britain as the world’s crossroad), creative island, united colours of Britain, open for business, silent revolutionary, the nation of fair play¹⁷⁵.

When it comes to China, Britain also tries to improve its image against the background mentioned above. The poll conducted in 2002 in China showed that Chinese public regards Britain’s image as “stuck in the past”, such as “classic”, “traditional”, “polite”, etc. In 2012, however, the latest survey showed that many citizens in China regarded the UK as “creative” (14.5%), “pluralistic” (12.48%), “international” (10.9%) and “wonderful” (9.9%), a great improvement over the last decade.¹⁷⁶

This improvement of international images has been closely related to its activities abroad, including the work by British Council. For instance, the government allocated large sums of fund to improve Britain’s national image worldwide and the fund was distributed to the Foreign Office (responsible on information and policy guidance), the Department of Trade and Industry (on export promotion), the British Council (for cultural activities worldwide), the British Tourist Authority (to improve the attraction of British tourism) and the BBC (for advertising worldwide).¹⁷⁷

A new research report entitled “Trust Pays” from the British Council claims that the trust its cultural diplomacy builds between people of different background which eventually bring economic benefits for the UK and that British Council contributes to the positive feedback

¹⁷³ Leonard, et al, *British Public Diplomacy in the ‘Age of Schisms’*: 2-3.

¹⁷⁴ Zhong Xin and He Juan, “The UK: An Evolution from Cultural Diplomacy to Public Diplomacy”, 22.

¹⁷⁵ Mark Leonard, *Britain: Renewing Our Identity*, 22.

¹⁷⁶ Wu Zelin, “Britain’s New Public Diplomacy to China”, 40.

¹⁷⁷ Leonard, *Britain: Renewing Our Identity*, 28.

and increased cultural exchanges.¹⁷⁸ According to figure below, active participation in cultural activities will enhance the trust in the UK, with the ultimate goal of enlarging the business and economic benefits. In other words, the national interests of economic well-being and collective self-esteem are not contradictory to each other, but instead, complementary.



Figure 6 The positive reinforcement of cultural activities and trust (British Council)¹⁷⁹

Thus Britain, when conducting cultural diplomacy towards China, has focused on its national interests, namely economic well-being and collective self-esteem, which are interrelated and complementary. These two national interests have served as the motivations behind to highlight the growing significance of cultural diplomacy in China.

To summarize the analysis part, this thesis follows the logic examined in Section 3.3. Firstly, the brief analysis of Britain's cultural diplomacy history has revealed that its understanding of this concept has moved from rivalry and competition of Lockean culture during the world wars and in the post-war period to the growing emphasis on the friendship and cooperation of Kantian culture.

Against on this background, Britain's current identities include (1) personal/corporate identity as a cultural and educational superpower, (2) type identity as a democratic country, in contrast with the communist China and (3) the role identity regarding China as a

¹⁷⁸ British Council. "Trust Pays". 2012: 16. Assessed 04 May 2014.
<<http://www.britishcouncil.org/trustresearch2012.pdf>>

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 17.

comprehensive strategic partner. Its interests behind its active cultural diplomacy are mainly economic interests and its increasing emphasis on the formation of collective esteem. This following figure can best represent the logic of analysis.

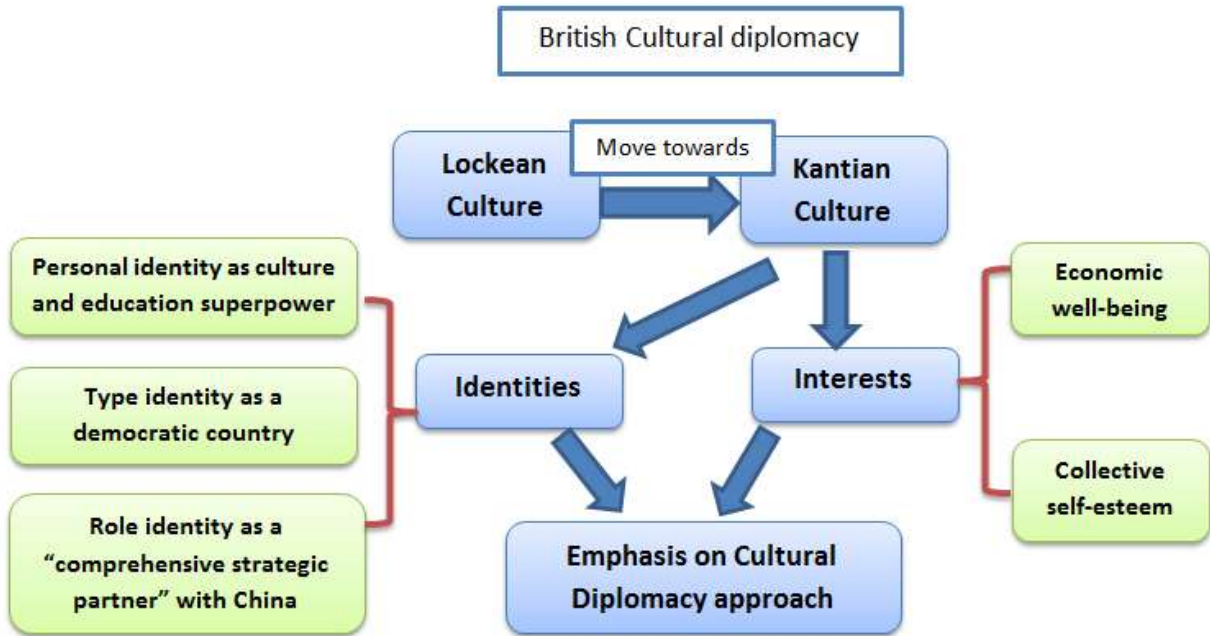


Figure 7 The analysis of Britain's emphasis on cultural diplomacy in China

Chapter Six Conclusion

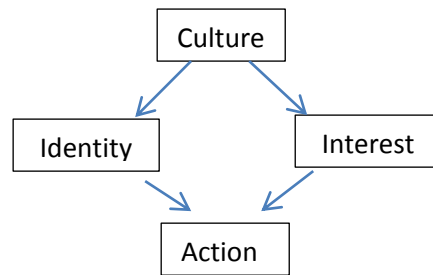
The thesis follows a deductive logic of reasoning and applies the conceptual framework of cultural diplomacy and the theoretical framework of Wendt's constructivism, in particular his theorization of interests and identities and the classification of "three cultures". These two analytical frameworks have been used to guide the analysis part so as to draw an answer to the problem formulation: ***How does Britain conduct cultural diplomacy in China? Why has Britain attached great importance in its cultural diplomacy towards China?***

The conceptual framework of cultural diplomacy has been used to introduce how Britain has conducted cultural diplomacy in China in order to answer the first part of the problem formulation and thus composes Chapter Four. This part of empirical data aims to present an overview of how the UK has conducted its cultural diplomacy and tries to answer the following three sub-questions.

- ***What is the history of Britain's cultural diplomacy in China?***
- ***What measures have been applied in China to enhance its cultural influence?***
- ***What organisation or institutions are involved in British cultural diplomacy?***

It can be found out that Britain conducts its cultural diplomacy in China mainly through British Council in China, with government (the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) providing facilitating roles with various governmental levels signed between the two sides. At the operational level, mainly British Council and other non-state actors (including museums, libraries, artists, etc.) are involved with the semi-governmental institution British Council as the intermediary. Through its educational promotion, cultural events organizing and the promotion of its science and creative industry, British Council has in general received great results, reaching and engaging an increasing larger population in China with good customer satisfaction. The effects of Britain's cultural diplomacy can also be seen from the increasing number of Chinese students studying in UK.

In order to answer the second part of the problem formulation, namely the reasons for Britain's emphasis on its cultural diplomacy in China, Wendt's theorization of interests and identities and the classification of "three cultures" have been employed. According to Wendt, desire (interest) plus belief (identity) equals action while interest and identity are constituted by shared ideas (culture).



Following this logic, the brief analysis of Britain's cultural diplomacy history has revealed that its understanding of this concept has moved from rivalry and competition of Lockean culture during the world wars and in the post-war period to the growing emphasis on the friendship and cooperation of Kantian culture.

Against on this background, Britain pays increasing emphasis on building long-term trust and Britain's current identities and interests, which are the basis for its behavioural dispositions, are explored in its cultural diplomacy with China. Its identities include (1) personal/corporate identity as a cultural and educational superpower, (2) type identity as a democratic country, in contrast with the communist China and (3) the role identity regarding China as a comprehensive strategic partner. Its interests behind its active cultural diplomacy are mainly economic interests and its increasing emphasis on the formation of collective esteem.

In conclusion, as a current cultural and educational superpower, Britain regards China as a comprehensive strategic partner, with whom close cultural relations must be maintained. The UK takes a practical approach in its foreign diplomacy with China, including its cultural diplomacy, which can be seen that its cultural diplomacy aims to foster a positive and favourable image in China and worldwide and to enhance its economic benefits and national interests. Britain also regards itself a democratic country, different from Communist China, which has brought about some frictions over human rights issues. But overall speaking, at the present stage, this has not been identified as a priority.

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