**China’s Dilemma in its Soft Power:**

 **How to Build Its National Image?**

![Chinaquestion-580x430[1].jpg]()

 **By**

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**Abstract**

In 1990’s Joseph Nye raised his conception of soft power and turned it into a popular topic since then and today it is a favorable one among China’s discourse as well from policy-makers to academics, from mass media to public. Why soft power has become so hot and gained a lot of concerns on it? The reason is that we are coming into a “power shift era”, not only in the traditional power areas but also in this newly coming soft power area such as culture and value and so forth.

As everyone knows, China has a brilliant strength in its traditional cultural history, which was used to be attractive to not only Asian countries but also to western ones and it still influences significantly. “Asian Value|” leading by China even becomes a topic for academics to research on. It is not simply a term, rather it is a phenomenon, on which captures the world’s attention. What’s more, China’s rapid economic development both in domestic and world’s market has raise lots of discussions. “China’s threat theory”, “China’s collapse theory”, coming along with “Chinese development model”, “Beijing Consensus” and “peaceful development” together forms a bitter-sweet symphony of China’s image in other nation’s eyes. China needs to build soft power and national image in emergency.

Confucius Institute and China’s role in Africa are just two cases in this thesis to examine how China applies it soft power and how China builds its national image through the soft power. Nye’s soft power theory, Cox’s Neo-Gramsci theory and China’s peaceful development theory all suit the cases and afford us a theoretical thinking of Chinese approaches of exercising its soft power in practice such as promoting traditional cultural influence and applying soft approach in traditional hard power area to get soft power effect. However, the thesis more focuses on China’s soft power limitations in these two cases and further draws to an open-end conclusion to inspire more thinking and perspectives to examine China’s soft power and its national image.

**Key Words:** soft power, national image, peaceful development, Confucius Institute

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**Chapter One: Introduction**

Today the whole world is coming into “the power shift era”,[[1]](#footnote-1) which is directly related to the establishment of capitalist mode of production. As Maxis points out, the spread of capitalism around the world is turning all the production and consumption from national level into a cosmopolitan level, for this aim, the political ideals and values being spread to all over the world, make philosophy and literature into cosmopolitan humanities.[[2]](#footnote-2) As the application of high technology and dissemination of capitalist mode of production, the power shift is speeding up, not only the traditional hard power as economy and military, but also technology, culture, values and so on, which are within the soft power field as the essential actors has recently captured the world’s concentration.

Being a favorite concept in worldwide affairs, soft power, the term coined in 1990’s by Joseph Nye in his book *Bound to Lead*,[[3]](#footnote-3) has frequently appeared in government policy papers, academic discussions and the popular media. Almost the same time, the implications of the rise of China have been debated in global relations, like “What will China be eventually become? What impact will the rise of China have on the world? Will China ever be able to fulfill Western expectations? How will the rise of China affect the underlying rules of the game of the existing capitalist world economy?”[[4]](#footnote-4) All these intensities of discussion of China are particularly notable, but much more related to hard power instead of soft power in that period.

Ever since the end of the 1970s, the launch by Deng Xiaoping of the “policy of reform and opening”, as a landmark in contemporary history of China, shows the attempt of China to re-emerge and get back to the “Middle Kingdom” as China did as one of the key world political and economic actors. The “sleeping giant” as once Napoleon warned the whole world, are now standing up and trying to run as fast as he can to catch up with other runners called developed countries in the globalization and capitalist world competition. As a metaphor as human being has two legs, the state also has two legs in this running, one is called hard power, and another is called soft power[[5]](#footnote-5). China has already proven to the whole world how strong it is of his “hard power” leg, how about the other one and how to win the competition at last if one leg is long and strong, and the other one is short and weak?

Some scholars with foresight in 1990’s have noticed this and argued the interest in soft power. For example, shortly after the first publication of Nye’s *Bound to Lead*(1990) in Chinese in 1992, Wang Huning, the President Jiang Zemin’s chief advisor and former professor at Fudan University in Shanghai, stressed the necessary of soft power for China in one article he published in *Fudan University Journal* (1993).[[6]](#footnote-6) In 1997, Nye’s soft power theory was introduced in great details by a professor in Nankai University.[[7]](#footnote-7) In 1999, ShenJiru, an American professor, published an article called for strengthening China’s soft power.[[8]](#footnote-8) All these published papers or some other discussions or debates among Chinese’s elites or academics could be regard as a good staring to understand the importance of soft power in China’s international politics. The concept of soft power provides a unique perspective not only on China’s current foreign and security policy but, more significantly, on the trajectory of China’s rise in the long term[[9]](#footnote-9) and when coming into 21st century, soft power has became one of the most approved terms among political leaders, leading academics and journalists, as well as a noticeable part of official and popular discourse of foreign policy and international politics since it has frequently appeared through government official pronouncements, academic journals and popular newspapers and TV shows especially entering the Hu Jintao era due to his proposal of the “peaceful rise theory” and “ harmonious world”.

In Fact, before the Hu Jintao era, China had made efforts related to this topic cause the “Economic China”[[10]](#footnote-10), its rapid economic growth has unleashed its world impact in many dimensions, and its significant success in global market has rises the worried from other countries, especially in those countries, regarding capitalism as being historically unique, in which the western economic liberal theories rooted, but not seem to be able to explain the Chinese economic success. As during a BBC interview that China’s success promoted the idea that one could get rich without needing democracy and such an idea posed a threat to the West[[11]](#footnote-11) all these economic things related to the “Political China” generated the uneasiness of the West in dealing with a country that could not fit any Western theories or frameworks of understanding, particularly in the “political uncertainties”, leading to such as “China opportunity theory” and “China contribution theory” which appeal to developing countries and on the counterpart, more popular theories are “China threat theory” and “China collapse theory”, especially highlighted by G.W. Bush in his first term of presidency, when the U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice threat China as a rival.[[12]](#footnote-12) These realities cause attention from Chinese authorities that “Chinese model of development” may cause uneasiness worldwide and presumably the foremost reason for China to improve its reputation and national image in the international scene.

Looking through the China’s diplomacy and foreign policy in the past three decades could also get some hints on the shift from hard power to soft power: “ good neighbor diplomacy” ( 1980s and early 1990s), “great power diplomacy”(late 1990s), “energy diplomacy”, “soft power diplomacy”, “public diplomacy”(2000s) as well as “peaceful rise” and “peaceful development”[[13]](#footnote-13) not only these national strategies, but also by advertising Chinese values and publicizing its culture, some other efforts as steps to attract international students and promote the study of Chinese language. Nowadays , even it could be easily to find some evidence that supports the improvement of applying soft power and spreading China’s national image and even we could find the encouraging change from Professor Joseph Nye of Harvard University, who is first raise up the term of “soft power”, whose attitude from previously downplaying the strengthening of China’s soft power as being a development for the future in his book *in Soft Power*(2004) to now arguing that China’s soft power is rapidly growing in Asia in his article published in the *Wall Street Journal (Asia)* on December 29, 2005.[[14]](#footnote-14) But the mainstream assessment of the state of China’s soft power by Chinese analysts is that soft power is still a weak link in China’s pursuit for a stronger comprehensive national power because the Chinese discourse on soft power has mainly focused on its sources and potential utility in Chinese foreign strategy.[[15]](#footnote-15) Accordingly, the research poses the question:

***How does China build its national image by using and enhancing the soft power in its peaceful strategy?***

National image is a comprehensive reflection of one nation’s influence of soft power and it is a crucial factor in international relations. As Hertz notes that: “It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that today half of ‘power politics’ consists of image-making.”[[16]](#footnote-16) The data given by a recent CNN poll shows that 58% of African people is feeling uncomfortable by China’s growing economic development and taking it as a threat to the U.S.[[17]](#footnote-17) This has led China to rethink about its national image in recent years. This is not only in the conceptual reflection such as peaceful development, but also reflected in practical terms. One is the Confucius Institute, which are established for the aim of teaching language and promoting Chinese culture; the other one is the role China has acted in African through a very sophisticate strategy. These two cases showing how China uses its soft power in other nations and how China is perceived by other nations will influence Chinese development and its national image.

**Chapter Two: Methodology**

The following section aims to explain the structure of the thesis as well as several considerations for the research. Before the question above can be examined, it must first create a referential framework to the study before engaging in its theoretical and empirical levels. Therefore, taking various aspects into consideration such as core concepts, choice of theories, and the motivation of the thesis will be present throughout this chapter. All of these are considered as crucial components of a successful research aiming at a thorough understanding of the logic and the relevance to the thesis.

**2.1. Core Concepts**

Given the specific approach and focus of this project, it is necessary as well to define some of the core concepts that form the foundation of this project and, which will be used throughout the paper.

**2.1.1 Power**

In this thesis, the core word “power” will penetrate through the whole article, which could be appeared singly or in words. Therefore, it is the upmost task to make a clear definition of this concept. And in this thesis, it will take the definition from Nye’s. In the book of *Soft Power--the Means to Success in World Politics*, he says power is the capacity to do things, as well as have the ability to affect the behaviour of others to get the outcomes that one wants. And of awareness, the power may evaporate when the context changes, which means power always depends on context in which the relationship exists.[[18]](#footnote-18) Even so he also states practical politicians and ordinary people usually find this too complicated that they turn to a second definition of power, with the definition of the possession of capabilities or resources that can influence outcomes.[[19]](#footnote-19) All above are quite useful in this thesis. That definition of power would offer some understandings in general level and makes the power more concrete and measurable.

**2.1.2 Soft power**

Actually, there are several definitions of soft power both in Western and Asia, even now the academic in China are trying to explain some perspectives of soft power. However in this thesis, the core concept of soft power will base on the definition of Joseph Nye, who is the first one to make it systematically. This concept has oriented and associated with the United States. According to Nye, soft power is “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments”.[[20]](#footnote-20) It is the ability to get desired outcomes through appeal, attraction and seduction. As in one of his early article “Soft Power”[[21]](#footnote-21), it is said that “the ability to affect what other countries want tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions. Then later he explains three primary sources: its culture (in place where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad) and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).[[22]](#footnote-22) The soft power could also have the ability to structure or reshape situation or rules and institutions of international regimes.[[23]](#footnote-23)

**2.1. 3 Hard power**

Everyone is familiar with hard power. Hard power can rest on inducements (“carrot”) or threats (“sticks”).[[24]](#footnote-24) Hard power, is the ability to coerce, grows out of a country’s military and economic might.[[25]](#footnote-25) Hard power remains crucial in a world of states trying to guard their independence, and non-state groups such as terrorist organizations willing to turn to violence.[[26]](#footnote-26) In Nye’s definition, the source of hard power would be military, economic and technological strength. He also says that “the hard power is evident in the practices of threat, coercion, sanction, payment and inducement.[[27]](#footnote-27)

**2.1. 4 The interplay between hard power and soft power**

One way to distinguish hard power and soft power is to consider the variety of ways you can obtain the outcomes you want. As Nye said that “the hard power is evident in the practices of threat, coercion, sanction, payment and inducement.” On the counterpart, soft power is demonstrated in attraction, persuasion, appeal and co-optation.[[28]](#footnote-28) But even in Nye’s definition, he did not make them clearly-cut because as he said hard power and soft power are related.[[29]](#footnote-29) They both could be considered as the ability to achieve what one wants by affecting others’ behaviour. When referring to behaviour and resource, he claims more clearly that “soft power resources tend to be associated with the co-optive end of the spectrum of behaviour, whereas hard power resources are usually associated with command behaviours.”[[30]](#footnote-30) To sum up, the table[[31]](#footnote-31) here can depict the whole as the shorthand.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Hard | Soft |
| Spectrum of Behaviours |  Coercion Inducement Command |  Agenda AttractionSetting Co-opt |
| Most Likely Resources | Force PaymentsSanctions Bribes | Institutions Values Culture Policies |

## 2.2. Choice of theories

Keeping in mind that the thesis is guided by the theories, the foremost importance of choosing theories will present as an overview in this part. In this thesis, it will apply three theories as “soft power theory”, “Neo-Gramsci theory” and “peaceful development theory (peaceful rise theory).The third theory “peaceful development theory” will be used as supplementary theories. It will afford as a holistic background and as a Chinese perspective to the other theories in China’s exercise of applying soft power and building its national image. However, it is still under developing and will be, somehow, a long way to be systematically and wildly accepted by the western world. All in all, these three theories have been chosen in this thesis because they are the most suitable and applicable in explaining the problem stated in Chapter one: “How does China build its national image by using and enhancing the soft power in its peaceful strategy?”

**2.2.1 Soft power theory**

Soft power as one of the main theories should be introduced first since it has been well known in many years and reflects the profound changes and influences in international relations after the Cold War. As oriented from analyzing the decline of US, who is losing its sole superpower once led to the world and challenged by the catching-up countries especially after the USSR collapsed and China emerged. It explores a new concept of power and provides a new perspective of behaviour approach for the states, international organizations and other international, political or economic entities to convince or affect others to follow their values, regulations or policies and get the outcomes as what they want in their anticipation. Particularly, when the powers in a global information age, the political game within this context suggests that arise of soft power is relatively important and the states and countries those with multiple channels of communication will prefer to be more attractive and gain more soft power to frame issues. The concept and the theory of soft power during these years are the top topics among Chinese academics because China’s rapid emerge and development has made western countries worried, which leads to China’s awareness about the importance of soft power in building its national image to reduce the anxiety and seek for a friendly environment to develop.

**2.2.2 Neo-Gramsci theory (from Cox’s perspective)**

Neo-Gramsci theory is very broad and there are lots of academics working in this field. However, in this thesis, only Cox’s contribution mostly relate to the problem-formulation. So it will only introduce Cox’s historical structure approach as material capaticies, ideas and institution here, not at an international level but in a historical phase.. Since Robert Cox’s effort into the work of Gramsci in the 1980’s, he has extended Gramsi’s work to the international relations. This critical theory contributes in applying historical structure approach to examine the existing state we take for granted, actually it is what we build by ourselves. The three factors of one state’s structure as material capacities, ideas and institutions afford a good theoretical understanding on China’s approach in soft power exercise. China has put lots of effort on material capacities and values output, but in institutions’ part, China has faced many limitations and difficulties. So it can explain where China’s dilemma is.

**2.2.3 Peaceful development theory (Peaceful rise theory)[[32]](#footnote-32)**

In this Thesis, it will apply a theory created and conceptualized by Chinese academics, therefore it suits especially in the thesis as a background-guided framework. As Nye stated in his works, foreign policy is the key factor of soft power resources. China is no exception. In this context, peaceful development theory is “Soft Power Theory” as well, but in Chinese version. In analysis chapter, it will use in the case of Confucius Institute, because Confucius Institute itself is a project issued by Chinese government to the world as a cultural diplomacy to convince the other nations about China’s charity image and its willing to develop in consistent with the world. Another case as China’s role in Africa, all the policies and activities applied by China are under this peaceful development theory as well. For China, it is a theory, but also a national strategy.

**2.3. The motivation of the thesis**

The motivation behind the thesis is trying to study the soft power from China’s perspective and explore how China’s approaches right now to build up its national image. China’s hard power as rapid economic growth and military influence has gained the whole world’s attention. However, on the counterpart, in soft power area China is kind of behind other countries in this global competition. As we all know the “Cask Effect”--the shortest part of the cask will decide the water volume it can contain. The weakest part of one nation’s power will influence the position one is in and the achievement one could get. Thus soft power and the national image building work need to be taken into China’s national strategy and diplomacy to help China’s long-term development. In this thesis, the three theories will apply to examine China’s exercise in soft power area to draw the approaches China applies and the limitations China faces and further through an open-ending conclusion the thesis is trying to inspire more thinking of China’s limitation in soft power and national image work.

**2.4. Data collection and case study**

Since the thesis will deal with recent and contemporary issues, books, scientific articles and statistics will form the foundation of the research. In this thesis, it will both use qualitative and quantitative data according to achieve a deeper understanding of reality. Within the research paper, it will exclusively use secondary sources[[33]](#footnote-33) as relevant a background material as possible in a wide range such as electronic documents, books, studies, articles, theses or presentations from previous conferences and lectures. The internet information is also good to find useful information, not only data on the official websites are authoritative; some essays written by journalists or editors are also very helpful and keep pace with the times.

For the case study, two cases will be picked up and used throughout the thesis. One is Confucius Institute boosted in the world, and the other one is China’s role in Africa. These two cases are chosen from a macro perspective. The reason of choosing case study in the thesis is in its nature: “case study is not easily summarized as a single, coherent form of research; rather it is an ‘approach’ to research which has been fed by many different theoretical tributaries.”[[34]](#footnote-34) The two cases introduced in empirical data chapter are the step-stones for the next analysis chapter. However, most data used in these two cases is quantitative data. By using these quantitative data, we can draw vividly and directly how China’s soft power is excising now. However, those are far enough to analyze its influence since the soft power is hard to measure. So in analysis chapter, qualitative data is applied as well to support both analysis and theories from a practical perspective.

**2.5. Project design**

**Introduction**

**Problem-Formulation**

**Methodology**

**Analysis**

**Empirical Data**

**Theories**

**Peaceful Development Theory**

**Soft Power Theory**

**Neo-Gramsci Theory**

**Conclusion**

**Chapter Three: Theories**

The problem question of the thesis will be answered and examined through the use of soft power theory, Neo-Gramsci theory and peaceful development theory. Therefore, the following chapter of the thesis is devoted to explaining and describing these theories which will be further applied to the case introduced into the chapter of empirical data.

**3.1. Soft power theory**

The balance of the power and the theories related with the power are always the core topics in the international relations in Western. The huge and profound changes in the international relations between powers after the cold war penetrated some new contents to the classical power theories. “Soft power” is just the right reflection of this change.[[35]](#footnote-35)

**3.1.1 The concept of soft power**

The earliest one of introducing this term systematically and academically is from Professor Joseph Nye, in his work *Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power*, following the other works as “the Transformation of World Power”, “Soft Power” and especially the book *Soft Power: the Means to Success in the World Politics*. Firstly, he defines what is power. He says “the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants”[[36]](#footnote-36) is the behavior power and the “the possession of resources that are usually associated with the ability to reach outcomes you want”[[37]](#footnote-37) is the resource power. And further Nye argues that in today’s world, these trends and the nature of power suggest a second, more attractive way of exercising power. So he divides power into “hard power” and “soft power”.

He argued that everyone is familiar with hard power as “hard command power” with its resource of military and economic, which might get others to change their position by inducement or threat. While the “second face” of power is often occurred “when one country gets other countries to want what it wants—might be called co-operative or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants.”[[38]](#footnote-38) With the abstracted resource of culture, ideology and institutions, it can make its power seem legitimate in the views of others. Nye and Robert Keohane in their coauthored article “Power and Interdependence in the Information Age” make them more precisely: hard power is the ability to get others to do what they want otherwise would not do through threats or rewards,”[[39]](#footnote-39) which could rest on inducement as “economic carrots” or threats as “military sticks”. On the other hand, soft power is “is the ability to get desired outcomes because others want what you want”[[40]](#footnote-40), achieving the goals by attraction more than coercion. Soft power rests on the “appeal of one’s ideas or culture or the ability to set the agenda through standards and institutions that shape the preferences of others.”[[41]](#footnote-41)In the other words, there is no need to expend as much costly economic or military resource as it did in the past.

**3.1.2 Main resources of soft power**

There are three main resources of soft power[[42]](#footnote-42):

A Culture. The culture he argued here is related to the universalistic culture, the culture that appeals to the global world. However, culture itself is vague and hard to define. Religion, language, education, the lifestyle, film, TV, newspaper and food could all involve in culture. In his view, through the means of culture, the policy-makers always penetrate their policies, which will promote values and interests they would like others to share and enhance the opportunities and increase the probability of obtaining the desired outcomes. Furthermore, he put some efforts in culture on clarify that the “effectiveness of any power resource depends on the context.”[[43]](#footnote-43)

B Political values (ideology). Ideology is as well difficult to be defined as the term of “value”. When talking about the sources of soft power, Nye usually mixed these three terms as “ideas”, “political values” and “ideology” together.[[44]](#footnote-44) In the book *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, he used the term of “political value”, but in the other parts of the book, he also mentioned the appealing of ideology. Actually, in a broad perspective, ideology or value is both the essential elements of culture. Even though the political values are the very powerful sources of attraction, it does not mean that just proclaim it is enough. One should notice that in some cases values can repel some people at the same that they can attract others.

C Foreign policy. Nye points out it clearly that if a state could build up and lead the international norms and international institutions, then in the same degree it will influence the agenda of the world politics and further it will make others be consistent with its interests and values which will lead to the “soft power” or “institutional power. In the book *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, he also argues that institutions can enhance a country’s soft power and will cost less “carrots” or “sticks” if the institutions and rules can be used appropriately to make others follow them and limit their actions in the way the dominate country prefers.

**3.1.3 The development of soft power**

In the following years, Nye also develops it by putting forward “informational power” and “smart power”. Referring to “informational power”, he points out that today in this global information age, “power is less tangible and less coercive among the advanced democracies that it was in the past”[[45]](#footnote-45) because the information revolution is somehow affecting “power measured” in terms of resources rather than behavior[[46]](#footnote-46) and “the politics will shape the information revolution as much as vice visa.”[[47]](#footnote-47) Here information means “free information”, “commercial information” and “strategic information”. The information technology, like network, is creating virtual communities, which have cut across the national borders, further, it influenced the polities-makers to involve in this competition. “The ability to share information- and to be believed-becomes an important source of attraction and power.”[[48]](#footnote-48) In other words, raw materials have less important and skills on collecting information and the capacity for the timely and rightly response to new information are critical. Another development of soft power is called “smart power”, which Nye developed it in 2003 to counter the misperception of using only soft power is sufficient to produce effective foreign policies and he give his definition of smart power: “Effective strategies in the real world are a mix of hard and soft power, and that combination of hard and soft power in effective ways is what I call “smart power.”[[49]](#footnote-49) He applied the term to offer an alternative approach the hard power driven foreign policy of the Bush administration. However, rather than a term and concept, “smart power” is more likely a approach that combines hard power and soft power together as Nye said, it is “smart strategies that combine the tools of both hard and soft power”[[50]](#footnote-50) under appropriate proportion depending on the given situation.

**3.1.4 Soft approach of power**

Inspired by Li Mingjiang, the author of the book *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Politics* and as it is mentioned above with the different types of power : resource power ( the possession of resources that are usually associated with the ability to reach outcomes you want) and behavior power (the ability to obtain outcomes you want)[[51]](#footnote-51), “soft power” could use as a soft approach of power, which is better to manage how to use the resources of power than to associate the sources of power is soft or hard. In essence, soft power lies in the soft approach of power because Nye himself didn’t make the clear cut of hard power and soft power and he also claims that in some given situations, culture, ideology and values can be used as well for coercion, meanwhile the traditional resources of hard power as military and economic development can be regarded for appeal and attraction. Being argued more details, as stated in Li Mingjiang’s work:[[52]](#footnote-52)

“If a nation state (or any other actor) makes good use of its resources of power though various domestic cultural, economic, and political programs to bring well-being to its own nationals, it will produce a lot of admiration from other countries. If a state uses its resources of power in a prudent, cautious, accommodating, and considerate approach in its relations with other states and plays a leading role in providing public goods to international society, it will surely win respect, amity, and positive reciprocity form the other states. If a state has the ability to make proposals in multilateral institutions that the rest of the international community regards as legitimate, feasible, and beneficial, it gains soft power”

To apply “soft power” as to use the soft approach of power will give us a bright, clear and holistic framework of how those three main resources Nye stated above as culture, value and institutions can be brought into the discussion and exercise of soft power in China. What’s more, by using soft approach can also help further understand of why the popularity of “soft power” comes across the national boundary between international and domestic politics. Because the three resources of soft power also imply how the ruling elite use soft power in their domestic countries and on their own people, which will be observed by people outside to examine them and associate that practice with their performance in the international context.

**3.1.5 The critique to the theory**

This theory affords an alternative and critical approach of analysis the position of one state on the international relations stage, which leads to put more focus on abstractive and non-material actors as culture, value or institutions. However, the theory has its own limitations. Even Nye himself points out some limitations of soft power such as some skeptics object to the idea of soft power, some object to “using the term ‘soft power’ in international politics because governments are not in full control of the attraction”,[[53]](#footnote-53) but more critical on following points: firstly, it is not clear-cut of hard power and soft power and their interplay relationship, even though it is so easy to distinguish power into hard power and soft power and what he explored in the theory is persuasive and easy to understand; secondly, no matter hard power or soft power, power itself is hard to measured; lastly, the effective results of soft power in the reality are proved insufficient.[[54]](#footnote-54)And in transitioning from soft power as a theory to soft power in practice is facing multiple challenges. Such as, [Ken Adelman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Adelman), in an article entitled “Not-So-Smart Power,” argues that there is no correlation between U.S. aid and the ability of America to positively influence events abroad.[[55]](#footnote-55)

**3.2. Neo-Gramsci theory (from Cox’s perspective)**

Before being introduced the Neo-Gramsci theory in International Relations, Gramsci and his “culture hegemony” should be given briefly only as the background of the inspiration to Neo-Gramsci theory and Cox’s work.

**3.2.1 Gramsci and the his “culture hegemony”**

The theory of “Hegemony”, as the “most significant contributions to twentieth-century Marxist thought”[[56]](#footnote-56) introduced by an Italian leftist named Antonio Gramsci. However, due to his long and confinement in prison, it seems fragmented and dispersed throughout his *Quaderni del carcere*[[57]](#footnote-57) as a jigsaw puzzle. But the concept of hegemony appears to be “the logical conclusion to his total political experience”.[[58]](#footnote-58)

In the history, the term of “hegemony” depends on different. In the 20th-century, the concept of hegemony is central to cultural hegemony, which formulated by Antomio Gramsci. The basic premise of the theory of hegemony is that man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas. “Hegemony” as a term and concept in his work, refers to a type of cultural leadership exercised by ruling class to make the other social class content with their dominant norms, values, beliefs, perceptions, sentiments.

**3.2.2 Neo-Gramsci theory (Cox’s perspective)**

Even though Antonio Gramsci has very little to say that his work could apply in the international relations,[[59]](#footnote-59) but it could not stop numerous of scholars using his conceptual work as an “alternative theoretical approach”[[60]](#footnote-60) to the mainstream consensus in international relations/international political economy (IR/IPE)

The most important concepts connecting Gramsci to Neo-Gramsci are civil society, hegemony and historical bloc, which developed by Professor Robert W. Cox from York University under his historical structure analysis constructed by ideas, material capabilities and institutions and the dialectical relation of these three factors. Later other scholars also adapt Gramsci’s views to regional integration and globalization such as Stephen Gill, Andreas Bieler, Kees van der Pijl, Mark Rupert and so on[[61]](#footnote-61) all these scholars in the international relation area are called Neo-Gramsci school or Italian school, using a methodology of historical materialism.[[62]](#footnote-62)

Through Cox’s work, he provide us a deepening sight of getting inside the working of state in order to better understand their internal dynamics and the interactions between them by using his “historical structure” approach, it invites us to rethink the social fact as state we take for granted as existing in the world are actually the things we build ourselves.

Cox sought to explain how the power and influence by using the concept of hegemony. For Cox, hegemony at the international level was a way in which a state establishes a form of “world order” by its influence among the all international system. In this way, he broadens the conception of hegemony from Gramsci which in the way within a state. In Cox’s article *Social Force, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory*, first published in 1981, he rethought the Marxist conception of “structure” he argues that individuals cannot ignore structures, but they can resist an opposition to them in ways that may bring about structure changes. From Cox, there are three categories of forces interact in a structure,[[63]](#footnote-63) as the diagram and explanations below:

**Ideas**

**Institutions**

**Material Capacity**

**Material capabilities**---the Marxist element: “technological and organizational capabilities” as productive and destructive powers, including natural resources and the wealth that commands all of them.[[64]](#footnote-64)

**Ideas---**two kinds, to begin with, we have the intersubjective meanings that shape our views of the world at a fundamental level such as shared notions of the nature of social relations meanings regarding territory, diplomacy, inter-states. Then we have ideas about the world held by different groups within societies such as the collective images of social order, justice, public good and common development path. [[65]](#footnote-65)

**Institutions---**are used to stabilize and perpetuate a particular order and it encourages collective image to be in consistency with the prevailing power relations. “…are particular amalgam of ideas and material power which in turn influence the development of ideas and material capabilities.”[[66]](#footnote-66)

Above is the framework of the historical structure, which is “a picture of a particular configuration of forces”.[[67]](#footnote-67) This structure is significant because it “does not determine actions in any direct, mechanical way but impose pressure and constraints”[[68]](#footnote-68) and neither individuals nor groups can ignore them. This structure relationship also inspires us to consider of which way the configuration of forces could run and this is always to be answered by case study.

**3.3. Peaceful development theory**

“Peaceful development”, introduced into China as an official policy under Hu Jintao administration, is a theory. This theory endorsed by Chinese authorities and academics, which is kind of more practical and more suitable in China’s soft power exercise than other western dominant theories.

**3.3.1 The origin of peaceful development theory**

The concept of peaceful rise can be rooted back in the late 1970’s since China had started its reform-era, which increased the number and quality of its interactions and international behavior with the international community, particularly with some of China’s Asian neighbors, who view Chinese foreigner policies as one of the instable sources in East Asia. In 1974 when China returned UN, according to the variation of the development throughout the world, De Xiaoping made a significant strategy judgment to ask for adhering to the peace and development. However, the catalyst of this theory was the spread of all kinds of uncomfortable and unfavorable discussion in the international discourse, such as “China threat theory”[[69]](#footnote-69) which views China as a potential revisionist sate and potential menace to USA in the future foremost role in Asia and the “China collapse theory” which has the opinion that China’s “house of cards” economy[[70]](#footnote-70) seems stable to retain its development but could be easily brought down, pushing the own country into the political and social chaos. These discussions in international discourse on the China’s future and its rise and development set the Chinese peaceful development theory emergence.[[71]](#footnote-71)

The first one who introduced the peaceful rise theory is Zheng Bijian in his trip to USA in December 2002, as a delegation from Chinese Communist Party (CCP). After that he submitted a report in which he detailed his concerns about China’s rising status from American perspective and he advanced the concept of” the development path of China’s peaceful rise”.[[72]](#footnote-72) He proposed a project of “the Relationship Between the Construction of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics that Began in the Late 1970’s and Its Process of Integration with the Region and the World”[[73]](#footnote-73), which helps to research and implicate the China’s rise among Asian and global security, aiming at establishing and developing a comprehensive theory of China’s peaceful rise. In November 2003, Zheng presented a speech entitled “the new road of China’s peaceful rise and the future of Asia” at Bo’ao Forum in Asia, it is the first time to make this concept of “peaceful rise” public to the international society.[[74]](#footnote-74) In Zheng’s opinion, the peaceful rise theory will ensure the major powers in the world and by pursuing a peaceful development path, socialism and capitalism can compete with each other while enjoying peaceful relations and learning from each other.[[75]](#footnote-75)

**3.3.2 The peaceful development theory**

The peaceful development theory now exists in many academic papers by different scholars but shares the similar essence. Chinese leader Premier Wen Jiabao’s speech in Harvard University[[76]](#footnote-76) is the first time to announce it publicly. However, it is until in December 2005 that issued a White Paper called “China’s Path to Peaceful Development” by the State Council Information Office systematically explained the peaceful development theory as below.[[77]](#footnote-77)

Firstly, peaceful development is an inevitable path for China’s modernization. The peaceful development means to combine the domestic development and the opening to the world together; to combine China’s development and global development together; to link the fundamental interests and common interests together. All above are inevitable because of the China’s national conditions; because of the historical and cultural traditions, because of the global development trend.

Secondly, China has depended on its own development to promote a peaceful world and facilitate its development. “Peace is the base of development and development in turn will promote the satiability of peace.[[78]](#footnote-78)China’s own development needs peaceful global environmental condition and its domestic development also contribute to the world in turn within the hot topic of sustainable development, poverty reduction and improvement of living condition, peace-keeping and international cooperation and regional sustainable development.

Thirdly, China has achieved development by relying on its own capacities, reform and innovation. China has focused on the following works such as adhere to the concept and system innovation; base on exploring domestic market and increase domestic demand and so on.

Fourthly, China accommodates its development to the trend around the world and makes an effort to get mutual benefits and common development. For instance, China is an active supporter and participant of the multilateral trading system; China’s participation in regional economic cooperation has been gradually deepened; China has participated actively in international economic and technological cooperation.

Fifthly, China insists on the principles of peace, development and cooperation and adheres to contribute to construct a harmonious world of sustained peace and common prosperity. Under four “adhere to” principles,[[79]](#footnote-79) China takes concrete actions to promote the establishment of good-neighborliness and mutual trust with the surrounding areas and to promote regional security cooperation. China continues to strengthen exchanges and dialogue among civilizations.

In September 2011 another White Paper called “China’s Peaceful Development” issued by the State Council Information Office, in which it explains the “peaceful development” more academically, scientifically and theoretically. In this paper, it summarized the “path to peaceful development” as follows:[[80]](#footnote-80)

 “From the broader perspective on the world history, the path to peaceful development is: develop China itself through safeguarding world peace and development and in turn to safeguard world peace and development though its own development; when stressed on China’s own strength, reform and innovation to achieve development and at the same time China has to adhere to the opening policy and draw on the strengths of other countries; China has to adapt to the development trend of economic globalization and to seek mutual benefit and common development with other countries; with the support and help from the international community efforts, China would like to promote an enduring peace, common prosperity and harmonious world. The most distinctive feature is “five developments”: scientific development, self-development, open development, peaceful development and cooperative development.”

The general aim and the foreign policy based on peaceful development are explored clearly as well in this White Paper 2011. In a nutshell, it summarized those “five points” introduced in 2005.

**3.3.3 The difference between development and rise**

Even though there are still many articles, papers, journals using both terms, especially in academic circles, there is actually only “peaceful development theory” used officially now since April 2004. President Hu and Prime Minister Wen have replaced the use the term of “rise” with “development”, which means the top leader made a decision to use peaceful rise in research and academic circles, but no longer to use in the leadership speeches of government and Party documents. Despite of changing the terminology there is little difference in the content of the peaceful rise theory and peaceful development theory in Chinese discourse besides includes a new concept of “harmonious world”. In Lin Jianfei’s paper, “……(Besides), there is no essential difference between the words, both are just two ways of expressing the same process.”[[81]](#footnote-81) But the terminology of “rise”, in western discourse, implicates like a challenge and it will post a threat to the pre-existing situation and the balance of the power. Also a Chinese scholar explains that rise designates a shift in power balance between states,[[82]](#footnote-82) and connotes a China-led “power transition” in the region and possibly the emergence of a new power center in Asia.[[83]](#footnote-83) It will encounter with some suspicions and wariness when foreigners hear it in the first time because they always focus on the term of rise instead of the peaceful aspect of this theory.

However, on the counterpart, “development” is more focus on the process of how to use its own advantages to develop and catch up. Generally speaking, in Chinese discourse, peaceful development is a re-terming of peaceful rise. After examining the concept, the peaceful development theory has not altogether abandoned the contents of peaceful rise theory but rather than accept the centre essence o peaceful rise theory. The nuance in the terminology change from peaceful rise to peaceful development has a significantly implication to the world that China will not repeat the orbits of emergence as great powers in history but create its own rising path not to intrude the capitalist world but rather than search for a possibility of parallel development with the existing great powers.

**3.3.4 The critical to peaceful development theory**

Any theories will face the challenged critically either by rethinking or intensifying or deepening. No single theory is exception. In peaceful development theory, it is challenged and criticized by both Chinese scholars and western academics. Opposition to the idea came from many points of view. Some scholars argues the theory’s focus on peace made China look vulnerable, while others argues that the idea is too simplistic for a complex world. And another criticism is that Zheng’s theory was naive, “since the United States and other established powers won’t, in these critics’ view, permit China to rise at all, let alone peacefully.”[[84]](#footnote-84) For many China observers, however, there are more broad criticisms and debates among this peaceful theory which can be summarize below:[[85]](#footnote-85) a. China’s “peaceful development” may not be possible; b. The term “rise” will intensify concern among China’s neighbors; c. It is premature to discuss “China’s rise”; d. Promoting “peaceful rise” could not incite domestic nationalism and e. Slogans are not policies. International observers have also begun to notice some of its weaknesses, such as its unclear and potentially contradictory treatment of the Taiwan issue.[[86]](#footnote-86)

What’s more, some other think-tanks, university-based scholars put more attention of criticizing the practice of China’s rise leading by this peaceful development theory. They argue that as “an increasingly powerful” China is also likely to try to push away the hegemonic dominance in Asia and make China’s neighbors fear for its rise no matter peaceful “rise” or peaceful “development”,[[87]](#footnote-87) and China, along with Russia, poses a critical challenge to the liberal order of global political economy founded by the West.[[88]](#footnote-88)

**3.4. The application of theories**

These three theories chosen there actually interweave together when apply them with the cases in this thesis because they support the problem-formulation of this thesis from different aspects, when applying these three theories into the analysis chapter combined with the empirical data, the soft power theory and the peaceful development theory will be combined together to analyze the case studies as Confucius Institute and China’s soft power in Africa, but more focus on the former case. This analysis thinking can be explained by the diagram below.



**Build China’s Soft power and Positive Image**

**Institution**

**Value/Idea**

**Culture**

**Peaceful Development Strategy**

From this diagram, it can be explained clearly that how the soft power theory and the peaceful development theory are combined together to analyze the problem-formulation as how China build its national image by using its soft power through the peaceful strategy. In the case of Confucius Institute, the main sources of soft power as culture, value and institution are applied greatly in this language institution. Firstly, with the Constitute Institute bloomed around the world, the Chinese language is spread to abroad. And apart from language, some other courses and activities as the culture carriers are introduced to the world to make westerns know more about China and its culture. Secondly, some Confucius Institute has its business aim as well. They play a very important role in the relationship between the local companies and the Chinese partners to promote mutual economic benefit and development. The last but not the least, the Confucius Institute as an institution from China exporting to foreign countries is the most influential factor in soft power theory.

In the case of Confucius Institute, China is trying to embrace the soft theory to service China’s peaceful strategy. All these three main sources from soft power theory are absorbed in the peaceful development theory. However, there are also some challenge and limitations when Chinese government explores their Confucius Institute abroad. In the three sources of soft power, Confucius Institute has its own limitations. The Confucius Institute is not like other institutions such UN, WTO or IMF, which has high-profile position in the international relation stage. So there leaves a question mark in the diagram to show the influence on China’s national image is not so clear yet.

In the peaceful development theory, it also contributes to the soft power theory by introducing soft approach of applying power. The unique strength of this approach is it is better to manage how to use the resources of power than to associate the sources of power is soft or hard. In some given situations culture, ideology and values can be used as well for coercion, meanwhile the traditional resources of hard power as military and economic development can be regarded for appeal and attraction. The diagram showing below can draw a clear picture.

**Soft Approach of Power**

**Hard Power**

**Resource**

**Soft Power**

This could apply in the case of China’s soft power in Africa. As we know that China’s economic support to Africa is significant and gains remarkable achievements. With the rapid economic development in Africa, the soft power from China in Africa is growing as well. Most soft power is accumulated from the Chinese development model and its economic approach to Africa, which are so appealing to African leaders and their population. Some are from the culture output such as Confucius Institute in African and the training programme. In this Africa case, the soft approach is used vividly and incisively. But still, the limitations come along with the China’s action in Africa has raised many westerns worries.

The third theory stated above called Neo-Gramsci Theory set forth my understanding of what Gramsci and Cox meant by hegemony and historical structure analysis and related concepts. What’s more, it will lead to how I think of them adapted to the understanding of the problem raised in Chapter one of building China a national image by the soft approach of power.

This Neo-Gramsci Theory suits the case of China’s role in Africa. This theory’s application in analysis part is more related to the limitation of China’s soft power. As the diagram stated in the Neo-Gramsci theory part, from the material capacity perspective, they are China’s economic support as aid, loan and investment and the projects to build infrastructure in Africa; from the ideas perspective, they are Chinese traditional cultural value and its foreign policy and political value such as peaceful development. However, from the institution perspective, even China has make its huge effort on participating the African organization and afforded much assistant. There are Sino-African forums and Ministerial conferences held regularly as well between China and Africa. But considering the criticisms from both international society and African domestic discourse, there is still far to penetrate and build an attractive and universal recognition system. The existing world order now can’t fully accept the Chinese value and its rise on the world political stage and the economic market. Eventually the two cases show that by applying soft power China has got phased and partial victory to build its national image but there is still a long way to go.

**Chapter Four: Empirical Data –Macro Cases study**

In this chapter, it will introduce two case studies. One is the Chinese Confucius Institute in the world and the other is China’s role in Africa. These two case studies will provide the data collection and the framework, on which the next analysis chapter will base.

**4.1. The Chinese Confucius Institute in the world**

Over 2500 years ago, Confucius, the ancient Chinese thinker and educator, took his students on a journey around a lot of kingdoms to spread and develop his ideas and values. Today, the Confucius Institute has been more and more popular and it has become a bridge of culture exchange and communication, which linked China and other countries together around the world.

**4.1.1 The overview of Confucius Institute in the world**

In the past 30 years, China has huge tremendous changes so the world hopes to learn more about China. That is one of the reasons why Confucius Institution is in fashion. The name of Confucius Institute, will make foreigners immediately know that is a cultural brand of China, just like Germany’s “Goethe Institute, Spain’s “Cervantes Institute”, or France’s “French Alliance”. Over the past years, Confucius Institute has become a platform for cultural exchanges between China and the world such as in Asia, Africa, America, Europe and Oceania.[[89]](#footnote-89) Most Confucius Institutes are a partnership between a foreign organization, often a university, and one or more Chinese university partners. The first Chinese government sponsored language school officially opened in Seoul, capital of South Korea, on November 21 in 2004. On October of 2008, in 81 countries and regions China has been set up a total of 326 of Confucius Institutes.[[90]](#footnote-90) By the end of 2010, there have been 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius Classrooms established in 96 countries.[[91]](#footnote-91) What’s more, by the end of October, in Asia, there have been 75 Confucius Institutes in 30 countries and regions; in Europe, there have been 100 Confucius Institutes in 31 countries; in America, there are 90 Confucius Institutes in 12 countries; in Africa, there have been 28 Confucius Institutes in 18 countries[[92]](#footnote-92) and in Oceania, there have been 10 Confucius Institutes in 2 countries.[[93]](#footnote-93)

Today, all these Confucius Institutes will involve more than 30 million people around the world learning Chinese as a foreign language. What’s more, in the following years, that number is expected to multiply under the country’s economic development and culture expand.[[94]](#footnote-94) The more clear and vivid image can be seen in the following picture.[[95]](#footnote-95) The potential growth can be foreseen because the requirements of 250 institutions from over 50 countries have expressed to ask for establishing Confucius Institute/ Classrooms.[[96]](#footnote-96) Some of them are even from the world’s top universities.



Confucius Institutes adopt flexible teaching patterns when teaching Chinese language and promoting Chinese culture in foreign primary schools, secondary schools, communities and enterprises. There are all sorts of classes at the Confucius Institute, many people say that the Confucius Institute is like a store, of course, not as a big store as a supermarket. In other words, one can’t learn some very deep cultural things, but the things one can learn from Confucius Institutes are like how to meet with Chinese people and talk business and some everyday words and also why it’s okay to do this but not that and so on. There are also martial arts, calligraphy, the traditional Chinese Medicine (the Confucius Institute for traditional Chinese Medicine in London teaches that), paper cutting, calligraphy, tai chi, traditional music and singing, cuisine as dumpling-making, spring-roll making and so forth, just like a grocery store for Chinese culture.[[97]](#footnote-97) Apart from these, organizing film festivals, maintaining a reference library, promoting academic and cultural exchange programmes and acting as consultants for individuals interested in China[[98]](#footnote-98) are in progress. In 2009, the cultural exchange activities, involving the participation of over 3 million people, have reached to more than 7500 which double the participation figures of the previous year.[[99]](#footnote-99)

The Confucius Institute is different from other language and culture training institutes abroad in that it maintains a management system which focuses on cooperation with other nations. Sometimes Confucius Institutes are accompanied by Confucius Classrooms (CCs), which are local hubs based in primary and secondary educational institutes rather than universities. In the list of the top 200 Universities released by “The Times”, 70 had established Confucius Institutes,[[100]](#footnote-100) which will lead to profound influence among the students who will largely become the elites and the potential future leaders.

**4.1.2 The aim and the role of Confucius Institute in the world**

Chinese government is setting up a project of Confucius Institutes around the world not only aimed at reducing the anxiety around the world on China’s increasing economic and military power, but also at spreading its language and culture and collaboration with other foreign academic institutes to increase China’s “soft power”, which could help to build a national image of peace-love and benign country. What’s more, it is attempting to project a more positive image of China and assure the world that the intention of China’s development is kind and peaceful. This approach includes explaining the Chinese peaceful development. By issuing this project to the whole world, it affords a better understanding framework to explain the Chinese point of view and its non-threatening development.

Over the past few years, it turns out that the Confucius Institute can’t just be a simple language institution. As Xu Lin, the National Director of Hanban, says in a interview: “We have to become a comprehensive platform for exchange of Chinese culture and foreign culture. One of the important tasks is to research the differences between China and foreign countries in the matters of economic, culture and history and that is what more than 70 Confucius Institutes around the world are doing now.”[[101]](#footnote-101)

Each institute has its own unique character, though they shared common aim and task of teaching Chinese language, spreading Chinese Culture and strengthening the friendship between China and the rest of world. For example, some will play a business role in local with the companies who want to cooperate with Chinese partners

In summary, as exactly what the objective it is said in the “Welcome 2011to the Business Confucius Institute in Athens”, “Confucius Institutes, as non-profit educational organizations, develop a number of activities to satisfy the demands of people from different countries and regions in the world who wish to learn the Chinese language, enhance their understanding of the Chinese language and culture, strengthen educational and cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and other countries, and deepen friendly relations with other nations.”

**4.1.3 The influence, challenge and criticisms of Confucius Institute**

* **Influence**

Every year more than 7,000 Chinese Language teachers and volunteers are sent around the world to Confucius Institutes. Now there are more than 50 million of non-native Chinese language learners in Confucius Institutes in the world, which hints a passionate relationship between China and the world. Also most of the teachers are girls, they are gentle and soft. Many foreigners think that China is good because they think that their Chinese teachers are good.

Confucius Institutes is not only popular in universities, but also very influential throughout society. It also influences the community officials and businessmen, who are willing to attend to Confucius Institutes to know China and its culture. It is a platform for a group of mainland business person and academics to build their social network and business cycle as well as “teach westerners to treat kindly people that have different national values and lifestyle.”[[102]](#footnote-102)

But the most significant influence of Confucius Institute is the global brand appeal. Throughout the North and Southeast Asia, the China’s influence and Chinese character are widely recognized and respected. Beijing has not been shy about working on its branding efforts. The 2007 Confucius Institute Conference report emphasizes its “Effort to Build the Confucius Institute Brand”.[[103]](#footnote-103) This generates the social influence and gets support from local communities, such as in 2009, 3000 special stamps in Austrian Post Company issued in support of the local Confucius Institute at the University of Vienna.[[104]](#footnote-104) The Confucius Institute director claimed that Europeans are greatly influenced by Confucian thought and it needs to be gradually recognized as a way of “improving the harmonious relationship between man and nature”.[[105]](#footnote-105)

* **Challenge**

Now the biggest challenge the Confucius Institute itself faces is the culture difference and language system difference. Actually as we developed more and more, we found that foreigner’s understanding of China was far behind Chinese people’s understanding of foreigners like how many states are in the U.S; how many countries are in Great Britain. Until now there are still many Latin Americans think that the men in China have braid style as the ones in Qing Dynasty; the Chinese women are binding their feet because lots of Latin American they have never been to China before.

It should be stressed here that most Confucius Institutes have been set up smoothly and without protest. But recently an announcement issued by U.S. Department of State raised the global attention on China’s project of building Confucius Institute around the world and they seek to dig out the aim behind this action. Quoted from a member of House of Representatives named Dana·Rollbaker, “China uses the public education and private media as a propaganda tool to seek for its political support and unconsciously persuade others to accept its value and culture to further make its own rule, which could change or even destroy the western capitalist rule.[[106]](#footnote-106)

* **Criticism**

Despite the widespread acceptance and popularity of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms, some vocal critics by detractors have emerged under the practical and political concerns. They do feel scared and uncomfortable because Chinas’ rising hard power like the rapid economic development and its potential influence on the risk of undue leverage.

Differently, the similar institutes as mentioned before such as Germany’s “Goethe Institute, Spain’s “Cervantes Institute” and France’s “French Alliance” are being regards as operating independently and not having directly partner with schools or universities in other countries as what Confucius Institutes do. These institutes, argued by those people who criticize Confucius Institute on political ground, are significant different in that they are less government- directed and they are not “trying to attract foreign host”.[[107]](#footnote-107)

Many of these critics believe that Confucius Institutes are part of China’s national strategy to raise its soft power to infiltrate not only local communities but also influence the foreign government to accept its rise and its willing to enter into the world capitalist market. As stated before, despite the Confucius Institute are under charged by non-profitable institute, actually it indirectly controlled by Chinese Ministry of Education, which totally belongs to Beijing central government. This Chinese government-backed institutes cooperated with universities may easily confused people and local communities to cover some industrial and military espionage. Whatmore, this reluctance to embrace Confucius Institute has not been limited to the West, also in some Asian Countries as India and Japan.[[108]](#footnote-108)

**4.2. China’s soft power in Africa**

In this part, it will introduce the holistic knowledge between China and Africa. In these years, China’s rapid development in Africa has recently captured the world’s attention, its economic support and culture output in Africa has generated huge influence in this continent. After many years the soft power has gradually showed its power and it makes China more attractive than other western countries.

**4.2.1 The relationship between China and African in history stage**

Sino-African relationship dates back hundreds of years to the Middle Ages,[[109]](#footnote-109) to the Ming Dynasty, however the more relevant period is the Mao area and the current phase of Sino-African relations. According to Wang Zheng, the relationship between China and Africa can be analyzed from three different historical epochs.[[110]](#footnote-110)

The first one is from 1950’s to the late 1970’s, mainly to achieve political aims. Under the certain principles such as “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”, China has afforded a solid and common ground to build international relationship among all the newly emerged independent countries of Africa and Asia. Since 1956, China has provided assistance to African countries in a range of fields such as agriculture, fishery, food processing, textile and other light industries, energy, transportation. But all of these policies, according to the global background of the Cold War, basically related to ideology and were characterized by the use of aid as a moral, ideological and foreign policy tool to support other socialist countries and liberation movements.[[111]](#footnote-111)

During the second epoch, starting from the 1980’s to 1990’s, pragmatic economic relations played more important role in Sino-African relations while the factor of ideology gradually disappeared. After the national independence and liberation, African countries were on the road seeking for their own economic independence while the same period the “Open Door Policy” issued in mainland of China. This encounter led to a new mutually beneficial economic cooperation based on equality between China and Africa. In this period, under the “Four principles[[112]](#footnote-112) on Sino-African economic and technical cooperation raised by Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang, the relationship much deeply focused on the economic interaction, lifting the economic and technical cooperation between China and Africa onto a new stage.

The current (third) phase, the speeding-up development period of Sino-African relations, began with the end of the Cold War. China saw Africa states not only as a group of newly-emerged countries with rich raw materials, but also as potentially good and strong partners who will be interested in China’s loan and aids without conditions and in exchange support China after its contingency due to the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. the aid from China to Africa was much appreciated by Africans as after the United States became the winner of the Cold War, its diminishing interest on the continent gave China a good opportunity as well as another choice to African people.

After reviewing the history of Sino-African relations it may conclude that this is a new developmental cooperation relationship between China and Africa- from political and ideological relationships to the “All-Weather Friend” relationship-started to unfold during the upcoming decades. This multifarious cooperation has not only given the continent more choices, but also enriched the methods and ways, which different African countries (with different development levels) can apply on the global market.

**4.2.2 The economic support from China to Africa**

Since 2000, China has accelerated building an economic network of trade, investment and loan & aid with many African countries. In fact, China has become the “African continent’s largest trading partner, outpacing [both] Britan and the United States” in 2009, China’s economic engagement in Africa is not only limited in the trade area. China, the world largest FDI recipient, is also an active investor in Africa. Almost 900 Chinese companies have invested in various African countries, not only in oil industry but also in factories, farms and retail stores.[[113]](#footnote-113) Interestingly enough, China is also helping to build special trade and economic cooperation zones in African countries such as Nigeria, Egypt, Zambia, Ethiopia and Mauritius.[[114]](#footnote-114) This is exactly the strategy that China (and other Asian developing countries) used to do for its own industrialization when it launched the so called “Open Door Policy”.

More importantly, what makes China’s economic engagement in Africa deeper and wider is China’s financial support to African governments in the form of loan, aid, and debt cancellations. Even though China’s financial support to African countries started as early as in the 1950s, its amount has skyrocketed in the last decade. At the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2006, Chinese president Hu Jintao promised that China would double the amount of aid it gave in 2006 – to 3 billion US dollar preferential loan and 2 billion worth of export credits - by 2009.[[115]](#footnote-115) China is emerging as a new donor and a new creditor in Africa. Last, but not least, the Chinese government’s frequent announcements of debt cancellation make these loans more attractive to African governments.

The loans from China are not like traditional loans provided by traditional creditors in that China does not require certain conditions related to fiscal transparency, human rights issues, or democratic values to be met, or enforced. Furthermore, a re-payment period was given for 17 years at a 1.7% interest rate.[[116]](#footnote-116) What is interesting is that the Chinese loans and aid comes with a package of “public investment projects in infrastructure, telecommunication and agro-business under the Angolan government’s National Reconstruction Program.” (The Rise of China and India, pg. 196) more specifically, China’s investment in Angola is distinctly visible in two areas: extractive industry and non-extractive industries. In the extractive industry area, there is no longer a secret why Chinese oil always wins the bids for new contract because they are supported by the government. However, the Angolan government doesn’t always follow the wishes of the Chinese. In 2007, for instance, when the Lobito oil refinery Sonaref negotiations failed, Manuel Vicente, CEO of SONANGOL, criticized China: “we can’t construct a refinery just to make products for China.”[[117]](#footnote-117)

Besides extractive industry, China has also expanded its investment into non-extractive industry areas, predominantly in infrastructure area. By 2007, “[a]round 40 state-owned Chinese companies, mainly in the sectors of construction and telecom, entered the local market” through the projects backed by Chinese loan and aid.[[118]](#footnote-118) And there are also a growing number of Chinese private investments. like in Angola. “Between 2005 and 2007, fifty projects, valued at $ 73.6 million, were approved by the National Agency for Private Investment (AINP) and were under way by Chinese companies.”[[119]](#footnote-119)China International Fund Ltd (CIF) is a good example. As a private entity based in Hong-Kong, CIF has financed many construction projects in Africa.

All of the economic support from China to Africa, one important thing can’t be ignored – that is China’s health aid to Africa. China’s health policy under Mao period could be seen as “strategic health diplomacy.[[120]](#footnote-120) On the aim of expanding political influence and earn some international space for development, the first medical team went to Algeria in 1963 and until now forty-five of 20,000 medical practitioners has dispatched and 240 million treatments has given to Africa.[[121]](#footnote-121) Later under Deng’s leadership, China has linked its health aid with its foreign policy objectives. But during this period, after embarking on economic reforms, the economic development was taken as the top of China’s policy agenda, government’s national development plan and international aid were in the priority. In now days, especially in early 2006, Chinese government has claimed in “China’s African Policy that it will help to improve Africa’s public health service,[[122]](#footnote-122)which means the health aid has got its original status back again.

**4.2.3 The culture output in Africa**

In addition from the economic support, China’s effort also focuses on the educational and cultural exchanges to strengthen its influence in Africa. Different from African’s indigenous cultures, Chinese culture are hence appealing to the local citizens with China’s rapid economic development and its economic influence in Africa. There are two areas under progress, one is training future generations of African leaders and the other one is cross-cultural promotions.

On one hand for the training future generations of African leaders, China needs to build people-people contacts because these optional leaders will return to Africa and they will act as an unofficial ambassador role in the Sino-African relationship. Since beginning from 1996, the first comprehensive seminar run entitled “Understanding China Symposium” by China Foreign Affairs University, [[123]](#footnote-123) there are fifty African nations signed the educational exchange agreements. In 2000, there were 1.388 African college students involved in this program and the figure increased to 3,737 in 2006.[[124]](#footnote-124) From 1950 to 2005, 19,000 scholarships have been afforded by Chinese government to African students. [[125]](#footnote-125) According to Mr.Cui, President of China Language and Cultural University, which has trained more than 4,000 African students over the years, “Many African students consider China as their second home”[[126]](#footnote-126) and after going back to Africa, they will use their Chinese language and their social connections to contribute to the Sino-African relationship. Most eye-catching training program perhaps is the one for African media. In the information age, it could be a critical means to a better coverage.[[127]](#footnote-127)

What’s more, other similar training projects university presidents and officials are under the way. For instance, at Zhejiang Normal University, it runs the similar program for African university president; the seminar run by the Chinese Ministry of Education is on training the educational personnel; another one from the Chinese Ministry of Education is on health education for Africa officials. Chinese language and studies program such as Confucius Institute is supplemented to the training program. The first Confucius Institute China established is at the University of Nairobi in 2005,[[128]](#footnote-128) until now there have been 28 Confucius Institutes and four Confucius Classrooms in 18 countries.[[129]](#footnote-129) Though the number is relatively small at this point compared with the ones in other continents, this is largely due to the lack of resources in African universities to support the Confucius Institute, not for a lack of Chinese will to establish them.

On the other hand for the cross-cultural promotions, China has acted extraordinarily in recent years. Such as 65 cultural agreements have been signed and 150 cultural agreements planed were executed and more than 50 Chinese cultural delegations went to Africa while 160 African cultural delegations visited China, and 100 African artistic groups and 170 Chinese artistic groups have visited to each other, along with thousands of artists, actors singers and other entertainers.[[130]](#footnote-130) For instance, China’s National Ballet, the China Oriental Song &Dance Ensemble, the China Acrobatic Troupe and so on.[[131]](#footnote-131) Art exhibitions of different size have held through the whole continent as well. “China held the Chinese Painting and Sculpture Exhibition in Egypt, the Chinese Watercolor Exhibition in Zimbabwe and Tunis, the Chinese Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Benin, and the Chinese Contemporary Oil Painting Exhibition in South Africa. Meanwhile, African countries held many exhibitions in China”.[[132]](#footnote-132)

Meanwhile, in new century, Sino-African cross –cultural exchanges is somehow go along with the framework of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum such as Sino-African Cultural Year hosted by China in 2004.[[133]](#footnote-133) What’s more, in the cultural field, the fruitful cooperation between China and Africa has been under the way. For instance, China has sent 10 teams of experts and fourteen workshops to Africa, covering from archeology, dance and acrobatics, according to the Ministry of Culture.[[134]](#footnote-134)

**4.2.4 China-African political cooperation**

The most famous ones of China –African political cooperation are “Sino-African Cooperative Forum”, Africa Union and NEPAD.

After the cold war, the world is facing a new and great change, especially for the developing countries, how to establish a new, fair and reasonable international political and economic order is a pressing problem. Some African countries proposed to establish a mechanism to fit in with the needs of friendly cooperation, which got the echo from China after its earnest study. Major members are developing countries and they focus on how to promote the world’s peace and development. For China and Africa, they would like to strengthen coordination and exchanges, to express their common interest and the ideas of international issues, to outline the future cooperation through the multilateral consultation. The forum is the first of its kind both in African and Chinese diplomatic history and Sino-African relations.

* “The Sino-African Cooperative Forum: The Beijing 2000 Ministerial Conference” also called “The Sino-African Cooperative Forum” held in October 2000 was an important platform to conduct collective dialogue and to build effective system for pragmatic cooperation. To build a just and equitable new international order and ways for strengthening further socio-economic development, this conference established a long-term partnership strategy with Africa and under this framework the Chinese enterprise are also encouraged to invest in Africa. A ministerial conference every three years convened alternately in China and Africa was the following-up mechanism. The Beijing Declaration and the Program of Cooperation on Economic and Social Development were two important documents issued on this conference.[[135]](#footnote-135) During the forum, China acts as a very positive role. Firstly, 10 billion yuan debt write-off to African countries within two years. Secondly, to encourage the Chinese enterprises to invest in Africa, special foundations would be set up to support. For instance, to facilitate and support Chinese companies in Zambia, the Chinese government created Bank of China, which is ‘the state owned commercial’ bank, in Lusaka, capital of Zambia.[[136]](#footnote-136) Furthermore, the Chinese ministry of Commerce built a “Chinese centre for Investment Promotion and Trade” in order to look for a potential market and investment project.[[137]](#footnote-137)In short, after establishing the forum, exchanges between China and Africa are no longer limited to the political values but also extended to the area of cultural, health, education and so on. “Multi-layer and multi-faceted diplomatic relations between China and Africa are being built.”[[138]](#footnote-138)
* The Second Forum: the Beijing 2003 Addis Ababa Ministerial Conference followed and raised the whole world’s attention. The Beijing 2003 Ministerial Conference has focused on the review and implements the two previous documents in earlier meeting and to explore new ideas to solidify cooperation in areas such as human recourse development, infrastructure construction, investment and trade. Addis Ababa Action Plan (2004-2006) has finally issued, which reflected the consensus on not only political issues but also other important international issues with common interest.[[139]](#footnote-139) Particularly, on how to cooperation for China and African in all kinds of fields in the following three years the concrete ideas has laid down. What’s more, apart from the Ministerial conference the political conference, another conference a China-African Business Conference was being conducted, which encouraged more than a hundred Chinese enterprises to invest in Africa by directly discussing business with African counterparts.[[140]](#footnote-140) After developing three years, this forum has proved to be “important platform and dialogue mechanism” between China and African to enhance their cooperation and pursue common interest.
* The forum organized in 2006 on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was to strengthen cooperation in politics, economy, international affairs and social development. In this forum, it expects continuing the momentum of high-level visit and close dialogue to maintain and enhance the mutual trust, traditional friendship and coordination on bilateral relations and major international and regional issues.[[141]](#footnote-141) President Hu Jintao also presented key cooperation measures with Africa to promote and forge a new type of strategic partnership.[[142]](#footnote-142)

China’s political support also lives in Africa Union and NEPAD, both of which China actively supports. For NEPAD, 19 nations have joined this “New Partnership for Africa’s development”, an African Union strategic framework for pan-African socio-economic development. It is both a vision and policy framework for Africa in the twenty-first century. Its aim is on good governance, poverty reduction and stop avoid the marginalization of African economy in global world, which could be seen as a new starting point for African people to seek for an effective development model.[[143]](#footnote-143) The programmes and projects it involves are in six theme area: [Agriculture and Food Security](http://www.nepad.org/foodsecurity); [Climate Change and National Resource Management](http://www.nepad.org/climatechangeandsustainabledevelopment); [Regional Integration and Infrastructure](http://www.nepad.org/regionalintegrationandinfrastructure); [Human Development](http://www.nepad.org/humancapitaldevelopment); [Economic and Corporate Governance](http://www.nepad.org/economicandcorporategovernance); [Cross-cutting Issues](http://www.nepad.org/crosscuttingissues), including Gender, Capacity Development and ICT.[[144]](#footnote-144) It posits a multilateralist approach, which deem to solve African’s development problem and China strongly supports NEPAD through the framework of the China- Africa Cooperation Forum.[[145]](#footnote-145) China also has close relation with the African Union and the other regional organizations in Africa, but the African Union is the sole continental African organization, which contributes to the self-reliance, common development in Africa and a higher level of African integration. As stated in “Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Beijing Action Plan (2007-2009) stresses the cooperation between China and African Union in Africa.

“Firstly, both Africa and China has played a positive role in building up Africa's strength through unity, maintaining regional peace and advancing regional cooperation and economic development. The Chinese Government will continue to strengthen its cooperation with the AU and sub-regional organizations and institutions in Africa, support the AU's leading role in resolving African issues, and take an active part in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. Secondly, to support African countries in their efforts to strengthen themselves through unity and speed up integration, the Chinese side will help the AU to build a convention center in Addis Ababa. Thirdly, the two sides commended cooperation between FOCAC and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and resolved to strengthen such cooperation and further explore specific ways and areas of cooperation.”

**Chapter Five: Analysis**

**5.1. The Confucius Institute and its soft power**

When talking about China’s soft power, most domestic people and foreigners will recommend Confucius Institute as the symbol because Chinese government has put much effort to build it into a global brand. From that perspective, taking Confucius Institute as a case is a good choice.

**5.1.1 Theoretical consideration of Confucius Institute**

In this sub-chapter, it will use the diagram in Chapter three under theory application to analyze Confucius Institute and its soft power. The diagram is as below:



**Build China’s Soft power and Positive Image**

**Institution**

**Value/Idea**

**Culture**

**Peaceful Development Strategy**

Based on this diagram, it can be explained clearly that how the soft power theory and the peaceful development theory are applied in the Confucius Institute case. In the soft power theory from Nye’s perspective, there are three main resources of China’s soft power: culture, political value and foreign policy. Soft power theory is very popular in China now and many Chinese academic are working on it and examining China’s soft power under Nye’s theoretical framework, and later they also put forward to new theory called peaceful development theory to promote China’s soft power and its foreign strategy. So Confucius Institute itself is a good carrier to express both the three main resources of soft power from Nye’s theory and from Chinese perspective.

Coined by Joseph S. Nye, the term soft power refers to the ability to change what others do or shape what they want and persuade other nations to adopt the same goal willingly. China now is trying to enhance this ability to manage the international environment “by making its cultural resources and achievements know overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad.” [[146]](#footnote-146) Generally speaking, in China culture and cultural exchange are understood as important parts of a country’s foreign policy. Culture is taken as an effective tool in the balance of power and interests among other nations, which could also be used to attract societies and local people from other nations.[[147]](#footnote-147) Furthermore, if one country’s culture is the dominate position, it will lead to a global culture and it is the “winner in the international power struggle”.[[148]](#footnote-148) In this context, it is also necessary for China to take part in this cultural competition and promote its culture in the world.

Then when considering on what kind of tool China can use to exert its cultural diplomacy and its value to the world to get attention, Confucius Institute, as the major instrument is coming up. Like what stated in empirical data, there are some similar cases as well in western countries, which are mostly set up for rather practical (political) reasons.[[149]](#footnote-149) For instance, in France the Alliance Francoise founded in 1883 by “invoking her cultural patrimony as a means of rehabilitation” under the background of France’s defeat in the war against Prussia;[[150]](#footnote-150) in Germany the Goethe Institute was set up after World War II to rebuild its reputation in the world.[[151]](#footnote-151) In China the cases are Confucius Institute. In this context, Confucius Institute is not only designed to teach language and promote culture, but also aim at balancing the culture influence[[152]](#footnote-152) then further at least indirectly, contributes to China’s foreign policy.[[153]](#footnote-153)

* + 1. **The source of soft power in Confucius Institute**
* **Culture**

Firstly, from the culture perspective, Confucius Institute has its own unique advantages to spread its culture and expand the influence in Asian countries, which can be drawn from China’s history. From Tang Dynasty, China’s splendors culture has prevailed for centuries, which drew a steady stream of businessmen, emissaries, missionaries and scholars to come in seek of wealth, advanced technique and power. The peak time of this culture explosion is in the period of Admiral Zheng He’s voyage to west. It established a strong relation between China and other nations and put China into a dominant power position of culture civilization. This historical and traditional Chinese civilization has still been shining down in contemporary use, which is so-called Asian value. From this perspective, Chinese history and civilization are important resources for contemporary China to reconstruct its national image and to promote a common value accepted by the Asia countries. Confucius Institutes built in these countries are not facing too many difficulties. For instance the first Confucius Institute officially opened in Seoul, capital of South Korea, on November 21 in 2004 and in 2005, in Tokyo is the first Confucius Institute opened in Japan. China has taken the advantage from the past to enhance its soft power and build its national image among these areas, and it can attempt to build a common identity and value shared by these countries.

But the more intriguing thing is why Confucius Institute is given by this name. In March 2004, the member of the Chinese State Council in charge of Confucius Institute Chen Zhili, proposed to use this name[[154]](#footnote-154). According to Wang Ping, Confucius (Chinese character kongzi) represents China’s traditional culture and is widely recognized and respected throughout Asia. It is more famous in the West with its Latinized term “Confucius”, which always conjures up with the images of education, piety and respect. [[155]](#footnote-155) To choose this as titular Saint for teaching Chinese abroad may recall back traditional Chinese culture to the world.[[156]](#footnote-156) From this perspective, the name can be seen as “a branding issue”.[[157]](#footnote-157) And according to Nye in his soft power theory, policy-makers always like to penetrate their policies in culture, which will promote valueS and interests they like others to share and enhance the opportunities and increase the probability obtaining the desired outcomes, this can be argued in the following paragraph.

* **Value**

Secondly, from the value perspective, in Nye’s theory, he usually mixed “ideas”, “political value” and “ideology” together, but in a broad perspective, ideology or value is both the important parts of culture. It is the key factor that presents China’s value different from the West. The values in Confucius included hard-working, harmony and order, frugality, family as the basic factors of the society unit are familiar by Asian people, especially the East Asian people. These universal values are known among Asian countries on par with human rights or democracy in the West.

And in promoting Confucius, CCP (Chinese Communist Party) has played an important role in seeking support from Confucianism for its political purposes since China is aware of its hard power like the rapid economic development has raised worries and nervous from western countries, The Chinese leaders are well done in transforming Confucius traditional value into their governed values from Jiang Zemin era and further be strengthened in Hu Jintao era such as “the relational and communal nature of the philosophy the call for proper social ordering and stability and the inculcation of community values in the facing of increasing materialism”,[[158]](#footnote-158) especially through the Confucius Institute they construct the term “harmonious world”,[[159]](#footnote-159) which has political implications connected with “peaceful development theory”. Under the framework of peaceful development theory, the concept “accepts that power politics continues to exist and the democratization of international relations has yet to be realized; but dialogue, exchanges and harmonious coexistence have become the mainstream in international relations, and mutual respect and equality among states have emerged as the consensus of the international community”[[160]](#footnote-160), what’s more, it also shows that it has no intention to challenge the existing U.S.

* **Institution**

Thirdly, from the institution perspective, in Nye’s theory, he points out that if a state could build up international rules and lead the international norms and international institutions, then in the same degree it will influence the agenda of the world politics and further it will make other be consistent with its interests and values will lead to the “soft power” or institutional power.

As stated in empirical data chapter, most Confucius Institute is a partnership between a foreign university, one or more Chinese universities, classifying by their funding sources. Apart from the overwhelming majority, there are another two kinds of Confucius Institute as well, one is wholly financed by Beijing headquarters, and the other is wholly financed by local partners but Beijing headquarters issues the operation license. For instance, Confucius Institutes located on the university computers are:“the Confucius Institute at Japan Sapporo University, a partnership between Sapporo University and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies; the Confucius Institute at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, a collaboration between Chulalongkorn University and Peking University”.[[161]](#footnote-161) In these universities, they cooperate together on many academic researches and on promotion of Chinese culture. The academics in these universities are more eager to research on the international issues related to China, and they are more easily to accept Chinese culture and value, which looks more legitimate in their eyes. With the approach of the interference in academic life around the world and of locating Confucius Institute either on campus or in local communities, Confucius Institute applied its institutional power to persuade others and shape their preferences.

The basic and original aim of Confucius Institute as introduced in empirical data is to follow the call at the time and please the passion of people around the world to learn Chinese and enhance their understanding of Chinese culture. Confucius Institute has collaborated with other foreign academic institutions to promote friendship and cooperation between China and the rest of the world. Though the main task of Confucius Institute now is still teaching Chinese language (so after all it is still a culture carrier), it generates the “institutional power” and makes others feel interesting and eager to know their values. Such a comment was also found by a participant numbered interview-EP-2 in the case study in Rui Yang’s paper:

“While some people consider the Confucius Institute a diplomatic approach, most people welcome this……To my knowledge, many institutions are keen to host a Confucius Institute ……I believe Confucius Institute have a very bright future. I do not see them as China’s cultural expansion. They are aiming at promoting foreigners to understand China, and Chinese language and culture, very different from the western history of modernization, which was indeed cultural expansion.”[[162]](#footnote-162)

**5.1.3 The influence of soft power in Confucius Institute**

After analyzing the three sources of soft power in Confucius Institute, it is still hard to say whether the establishment of Confucius Institute is helping China to enhance its soft power and build its national image in the world. Because soft power is too hard to be measured. As Nye said, just like the weather, everyone can talk about it but few understand it. Still, through the public opinion polls, one could try to get to the influence and issue of soft power.

There are two famous polls in the world, one is BBC World Service poll, and the other one is the Pew Global Attitudes Project. On the one hand from BBC World Service poll, one survey in March 2005 found that 48% of people keep a positive attitude towards China’s influence and 30% mainly negative.[[163]](#footnote-163) The results in BBC poll in February 2006 show the numbers of positive image were 45% and the negative ones were 27%. [[164]](#footnote-164)And the one announced in March 2007 gave an average of 42% of people polled in 26 countries mainly have positive view of China’s influence in the world and the counterpart was 32%.[[165]](#footnote-165) On the other hand from the Pew Global Attitudes Project from 2002 to 2012, it makes a poll of one’s opinion of China: do you have a favorable or unfavorable image of China.[[166]](#footnote-166) The year 2007 should be highlight here because in this year, it involved the largest numbers of countries around the world, which reaches to 43 countries in the poll. More than half of these countries were shared a favorable image of China, but many of them are Asian countries. But another two polls have somehow change the case, for instance, French opinion in 2010 was 41% of favorable view, but it raised 10% from 41% to 51% in 2011, another one is in Britain, the favorable view of China has risen from 46% to 59%.[[167]](#footnote-167) These global polls have showed us that China has getting better image in the world.

After analyzing the resources of soft power in Confucius Institute under the theoretical framework of Nye’s soft power theory and after evaluing the influence Confucius Institute may gain from the global public polls’ statistics, it can draw a conclusion that Confucius Institute can be regarded as a soft power tool by China’s government to enhance its soft power and contribute its building national image project. This fits in well with China’s peaceful development strategy.

**5.1.4 The limitations of Confucius Institute in its soft power**

However, there are also some limitations and weakness in Confucius Institute, considering its role in generating soft power and build China’s national image.

Firstly, though Confucius Institute contributes a lot of Chinese traditional culture, there are still some criticisms. As in Francois Jullien’s view, a prominent French Sinologist and Philosopher, the Confucius Institute merely presents cultural stereotypes, which could not represents the complexity of Chinese civilization.[[168]](#footnote-168) And both in “the culture resource of soft power in Confucius Institute” and “the global public poll of the opinion of China”, Chinese culture is more appealing to the developing countries and gets more solid relationship with them. Even more than half of Confucius Institute is established in USA and European countries, their interests in Chinese cultural and their views of positive image are far behind the numbers of Confucius Institute. What’s more, people in civil society would like to know more about China’s contemporary culture, but it seems in this area there still vacuum exists. And some will critic that no matter either spreading the traditional culture or lack of the contemporary culture, there is just whatever communist party cultural in the name of Chinese culture.[[169]](#footnote-169)

Secondly, the less political color and less government-support as an advantage in Confucius Institute in turn is also a disadvantage. Though lots of economic support from government but most focus on improvement of teaching resource and teaching materials, and from the staff like teachers to leaders in Confucius Institute, they are acting more like a culture and language ambassador than political-makers and government officials, which makes the promotion of foreign policy in some way indirectly and less influential. Though the Confucius now is a world grand brand and has been accepted by most nations and countries, however, unlike America, which has various channels to output its soft power such as Hollywood movies, Coke cola and the American-style media diplomacy approach, the China’s government has limitation on that. Until now only Confucius Institute can be called the grand brand. What’s more In this global and information age, the advantage from media and internet rarely timely apply appropriately and still not globally integrated, which also reflects the lack of public diplomacy in China.

Thirdly, as an institute, it is still far behind the international organizations like UN and IMF. Its aim, task and function are relatively simple, neither be the international prestige and reputation. It is just a cultural institute which could not so effectively produce international rules, orders or international norm to make others be consistent with its interests and value and gain the ability to further influence the agenda of the world politics. From that perspective, it hardly has enough cohesion to appeal people and change the international order. What’s more, due to the fact that China provides money to establish Confucius Institute, it does not fulfill Nye’s definition of soft power as to use soft approach to influence others without hard power.

The last but not the least, in recent years, the perception of the “China’s threat” has been the main bias for creating a friendly international environment and improving China’s positive international image. The obstacle as raising worries and fears from western countries can be seen vividly in the resent case in America. The Confucius Institute is asked for qualification requirements and some Chinese teachers have to leave. “Peaceful development” theory was a response to “China Threat Theory”. But the deconstruction of peaceful development is always taken by western scholars like what John J. Mearsheimer argues in his article “China’s Unpeaceful Rise”, he doesn’t believe China’s peaceful development announcement to the world and in his concept of powers, he takes China as a great power, seeking for the hegemony. Further he gets to his conclusion that China will not rise peacefully. Many scholars basically share the similar value with him. So the attempting from Chinese government to set up Confucius Institutes to reduce the anxiety on China’s increasing economic and military power is somehow limited by this thinking. So in this context the guideline of peaceful development theory is hardly help to build an image of peace- love and benign country.

To review the Confucius Institute under the diagram applied in the beginning of this chapter, Confucius Institute itself plays an important role in the world stage. The main sources of soft power as culture, value and institution has been expressed by this cultural institute. Confucius Institute contributes to China’s soft power and its national image building process. From this perspective, the answer drawn from the diagram can be answered. However, due to the limitations of applying soft power and its hardly measurable nature, the actual impact will still far to be examined, this gives a reasonable explanation to keep the question mark in front of the “Bulid China’s Soft Power and Positive Image”.

* 1. **China’s role in Africa**

**5.2.1 Theoretical consideration of China’s role in Africa**

In this analysis part, it will apply New-Gramsci theory and soft power theory to examine China’s effort on building its national image in Africa by exploring the soft power and the soft approach. As provided in theory chapter, there is a diagram drawn from Cox’s view of history structure, it shows how the internal dynamics and interactions works between states by using the historical structure approach. And in this chapter, it will apply on the case of China’s soft power in Africa to explore and examine China’s soft power and its influence in Africa. As the diagram shows as below, in Cox view, there are three categories of forces interact in a structure. They are ideas, material capacity and institutions. These three actors can actually explain all the activities China has done in Africa in the historical phrase and by exploring from a theoretical perspective it can draw a clear picture of China’s role in Africa.

**Ideas**



**Institutions**

**Material Capacity**

Another diagram generated form soft power theory will apply in this sub-chapter as well. It shows as below:

**Soft Approach of Power**

**Hard Power**

**Resource**

**Soft Power**

This analysis thinking could apply in the case of China’s soft power in Africa. China’s material capacities have been showed in China’s economic support in Africa in the empirical data chapter. China’s investment, fund and aid issued to Africa has gotten significant influence and generated their interests to follow Chinese development model. These economic supports so called traditionally hard power have generated soft power influence through China’s soft approach as “non-interference and no condition aid &fund” and to put more investment on infrastructures and projects than western countries. All of these material capacities enhance African people to accept Chinese value more easily. Through this soft approach, the “value factor” and “material capacity factor” in Cox historical structure have been playing well. For better understanding China’s role in Africa, historical background should be analyzed firstly because it affords a solid basement between China and Africa.

**5.2.2 The role of Sino-African historical relationship**

First of all, as introduced in empirical data chapter, it is clearly that the historical relationship between China and Africa affords an understandable background for China to play its role in Africa. To examine China’s soft power in Africa from the historical perspective, we can draw that the method China has applied is mostly the idea or value changed.

During the first epoch, the “People’s Republic of China” as a nation newly found was in nervous because the international environment was not friendly and China needed to seek for support from developing countries, Africa is a good choice. Mainly for the political aims, China’s continual political value exported such as “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”, “Five Positions” and “Eight Principles”.[[170]](#footnote-170) These political principles gave a solid and common ground to build international relationship among all the newly emerged independent countries of Asia and Africa. But according the international background at that time, the values and ideology were characterized by the use of aid as a moral, ideological and foreign policy tool to support other socialist countries and liberation movements.

During the second epoch, it changed its behavior to go out. In this period, African countries had completed the historical mission of national independence and liberation. They went on the road of seeking for their own economic independence and development, meanwhile China was in the De Xiaoping time with the landmark of “Open Door Policy”. This encounter led to a new mutually beneficial economic cooperation based on equality between China and Africa. By the end of 80’s, more than 40 African countries have signed more than 2000 contracted projects and labor contracts with Chinese government involved more than 2000 workers there.[[171]](#footnote-171) The number of countries and regions which set up business and trade relations with China has reached 55. By the year of 1989, the total trade amount of import and export between China and Africa has reached $ 11.64 billion, added 42 percent more than that in 1979.[[172]](#footnote-172) All these economic interactions make China not only get support from Africa but also earned good marks from the world. For instance for America people who had “mostly unfavorable” to “very unfavorable” perception of China reduced sharply from 65 percent to 10 percent.[[173]](#footnote-173)

 The third period phase opened up a new stage to China and Africa. In this period, China’s huge appetite of natural resource in Africa captured the whole world attention. China is playing a complicated and significant role in this continent. The economic assistance of loan and aids systemically applied in this period. Because in the post-Cold War era, the absent-mindedness and negligence, the indifference from European countries makes Africa no longer considered as a strategic priority, Africa then appreciated more on the loan and aid without condition and non-interference from China. The soft approach is emerging as well in this period. China has seized the golden opportunity which western countries have lost to pay close attention to output its soft power. These economic actives get the African people’s attention and follow their heart and wish to develop along with their strategy and aim as what Nye called “the desired outcomes”

Looking though the historical relationship between China and Africa, no matter the former political idea and value output to Africa or the similar historical tragedy as a colonized country or the material support continually explore to the continent, especially the loan and aid projects issued by China, has gradually appeal to African people and gained their favorable impression, which contributes to the soft power enhancement in Africa. All of these have built a solid and good basement for future culture output, economic and political cooperation between China and African relationship.

**5.2.3 China’s value in Africa**

From the value perspective, according to Cox, it means the value “that shape our view of the world such as shared notions of the nature of social relations meanings” and the ideas such as “collective image of social order and common development path”. So from this perspective, China has put effort on transporting these values to African by cultural diplomacy.

* **Cultural Output**

Culture, as what Nye said in the soft power theory, is one of the main sources of soft power. China has a splendid traditional culture history, influencing not it’s neighboring countries but also spreading to the western countries by Macro Polo, Matteo Ricci these pioneers and missionary. From that perspective, Chinese culture has its traditional strength and position. So it is a brilliant idea to enhance soft power and to build national image starting from culture export, which is less political and less strong compared to the economic support or military coercion as what is inducement called “economic carrots” or threat called “military sticks”.

Confucius Institute, as a good cultural carrier, plays an important role in teaching Chinese and studies program. These Confucius Institute, according to the empirical data previously, 28 have been established in 18 countries, plus four Confucius Classrooms. More and more African countries would like to establish Confucius Institute. Like in 2009 there were 6 countries which had signed the agreements with Hanban to build either Confucius Institute or Confucius Institute Classroom.[[174]](#footnote-174) Chinese government also strengthens the education cooperation in Africa to help its development and the Confucius Institute is the specific examples. As introduced in empirical data, by the end of 2010, there are in Africa, there have been 28 Confucius Institutions in 18 countries. The spread of Confucius Institute has influenced African people so much. One vice present Nicola in Zimbabwe University said: “it is the first time we introduce the real world to Zimbabwe. People always think that the so-called world is only Western world, but this is not true. I hope our work can make Zimbabwe businessmen have the ability to do business with China and Zimbabwean scholars communicate with Chinese scholars through approaches”.[[175]](#footnote-175) Even Zimbabwe President's wife has been learning Chinese for a year and a half. The cultural influence and popularity can be seen in Africa.[[176]](#footnote-176)

As introduced in Chapter four, Confucius Institute is supplemented to the training program in Africa. Chinese government focuses not only public but also in training future generations of African leaders, as well as university presidents and officials, which is called “people to people” contact. Confucius Institute’s audience is mostly from local citizens but the audience from the training program aimed at high-level education students as potential leaders or elites from either educational or economic or political areas. The African students after going back to China will use their Chinese language skill and their social connections to either build their own business or play an unofficial ambassador role to contribute Sino-African relationship.

In this training program, African students will be sent to China to study. That is not only the language study but like all-level experience. They can totally immerse in the cultural, social, economic and political environment and they also get a chance to observe Chinese people’s daily life. What’s more, every day there are millions of news from TV, books, magazines and newspapers for them to read on “collective image of social order, justice, and public good and common development”, furthermore, it will somehow cultivate their views of the world at a fundamental level as well. China will get potential benefit from it. When they go back to Africa, they may more easily accept China and its rising than others and may largely influence their family, their friends and the community they live in. if in the future they will be either the elites or the leaders in their country, their views of world will get influence on the domestic polity or foreign strategy then further leads the direction of the relationship between China and Africa. this training program could be regards as a long-run plan to cultivate China’s own soft power.

The other cross-cultural promotions are introduced previously, such as to send Chinese cultural delegation to Africa and to sent fourteen workshops to Africa covering from archeology, dance and acrobatics, which show the fruitful cooperation in cultural field. The Chinese values and cultural have output through all these cultural activities. China may get support from its cultural presence in Africa. Like behind the 2008 Olympic Games and to select the Head of the World Health Organization (Chen Feng Fuzhen from Hong Kong), China has obtained substantial votes from African countries.[[177]](#footnote-177)

**5.2.4 China’s material capacities in Africa through “soft approach”**

The material capacities as the economic support from China to Africa is a good case to explain that by using soft approach: hard power or resource of hard power could be turned into soft power and generate soft power influence.

Traditionally speaking, the actor such as economic or military is considered as hard power. But as introduced in soft power theory, after the development of soft power by Nye himself, the smart power is on the table nowadays. He argued that in this global information age, raw materials have less important and nations attempt to mix hard power and soft power together to make their foreign strategies more effective, which he called smart power. By using the smart power the given situation should be considered. So inspired by Li Mingjiang, rather than a concept, the smart power could be applied as a soft approach, which is smoothly used in the Africa case.

The strength of China’s role in Africa in recent years stems from the trade, investment, fund and aid. In 1995, there was only 3 billion dollar from trade, but in 2008, this number has reached to 107 billion dollar. China is Africa’s second largest trade partners, which has contributed to economic growth reached 20% in Africa.[[178]](#footnote-178) Unlike western economic support always coming along with conditions such as to protect human rights, promote democracy or cut some welfare from education or living expense support by government, China’s aid and loan neither with any condition nor non-interference related to fiscal transparency, human rights or democratic value. China’s technical support, without political “strings attached” (other than affirmation of a “one China policy”)[[179]](#footnote-179) has made China’s support more attractive to African countries because China seems to share more intellectual property than western partners. [[180]](#footnote-180)As Joshua Kurlantzsick, the American journalist comments:

“Even if China’s technology lags behind that of American or Janpanese or European competitors, some poorer nations think that Chinese companies will be more willing to share what they know, and that Chinese firms with backgrounds in the developing world’s might be better suited for Africa or Latin America or Southeast Asia.”[[181]](#footnote-181)

Both African people and political leaders get benefit from this because it will neither affect people’s living situation nor the domestic policy or issues. In addition to this, Chinese loan and aid comes with a package of “public investment projects in infrastructure, telecommunication and other basic ones such as hospitals or highways or culture centers or schools. All these effort made on changes will be seen by African public day by day and the public finally get the benefits.

Not only the extractive industry but also in the non-extractive industry China has expanded its invest in. all the approaches stated above are so different from the western ones, which afford not only lots of job opportunities but also improve daily life for local people. The most impressive project China has issued in Africa is its health aid, which helps China get high reputation much in poorer African countries and earns the gratitude from many African leaders for providing public goods to their citizens.

Considered the given condition in Africa, their aim of development and independent and gaining bargaining power in global market are all fulfilled. Traditional hard power as economic support here by appropriated using can be regarded for appeal and attraction. The respect, amity and positive reciprocity from African public and political leaders are easy to win.

What’s more, in New-Gramsci theory, China’s economic effort to Africa enhances its material ability and reaches almost its peek point. This kind of approach combined with China’s domestic economic development which has been theorized as “Beijing Conesus” appeals to African people, involving their interests and values. China’s influence in Africa is the result of its continuous investment, trade, aid, cultural and technical exchange and the dispatch of medical teams, as well as the key components of China’s influence in Africa. All these effort made by China will more attractive and more likely appear legitimate in African countries’ eyes. In 2007, in Pew Global Attitude Survey, ten African countries had been interviewed of comparing the influence from China and America. Roughly 61% to 91 percent from nine countries thought the better influence was from China, weighing highly over America.[[182]](#footnote-182) This good win-win economic image leads African countries from top to bottom get fad into Chinese culture as well.

**5.2.5 China’s political influence in Africa**

The political perspective of analyzing China’s soft power in Africa is mostly located in the Sino-African Cooperative Forum and Africa Union and NEPAD according to the empirical data in Chapter Four.

The Sino-African Cooperative Forum is organized by China and Africa, the forum is the first of its kind both in Africa and Chinese diplomatic history and Sino-African relations. There are many institutions China has participated in the world from the international ones like UN and IMF to the regional ones like APEC and Asian Development Bank.

China plays a very important role in the organization of the China-Africa Forum. Even the Ministerial Meeting between China and Africa convenes in turn, this is rare in the participating organizations in China. China has devoted a great deal of effort in this China-Africa Forum. Through the institutions, the relationship between China and Africa is leading to a new level.

Through the forum it strengthens the political, economic, cultural, direct exchanges between China and Africa, influencing the African leadership and businessmen largely. China has largely set up their own rules to influence the direction of the relationship between China and Africa. As America influences the world through the United Nation to realize their political values, to expand their strength of impact, and to intervene the domestic affairs of other countries. China has put itself in the operation of the organization. From the regional norm established by the regional institution, China thus affects the agenda of the regional politics and establish regional rules. After cultivating their own soft power in political, economic and culture perspective, China has attract other developing countries like Latin America to began to pay attention to the Chinese Develop Model, which looks more attractive and more likely appears legitimate in the eyes of the Latin American countries. To some extent, the smooth operation of the China-Africa Forum has generated the Halo Effect in other developing countries and China's national image has improved, regional influence has also expanded. What’s more, because Latin America, especially African continent are still regards as the backyard of raw material and a huge but not fully developed market for the United States and Europe. China's influence in these countries has increased, leading to China's status in international organizations and international discourse raised, thus paving the way for China of the worldwide use of soft power and enhance the national image.

On the other hand, deeply involved in African organization is not an easy task. The Chinese government has always maintained good relations with the AU and NEPAD, which has not only promoted the sound development of China-Africa Forum, but also makes their influence further into the interior of the heart of the African countries. China’s approach of soft power in Africa is just a good way to practice the central factors in Neo-Gramsci’s theory. According to his theory, a solid institution should include the material capability and ideas, which also happens to coincide with the three sources of soft power. As in the capitalist world or the US-led world capitalist system, the Western developed countries dominate the world order by strong control of international institutions and then affect the direction of the international issues, affect the domestic or foreign policies in other countries. What’s more, it will potentially increase one country's soft power image but from the hard power resource. Because the power produces economically and militarily for one country, so it will be easy to produce psychological worship to let other countries follow. That also applies similarly to the case of China’s soft power in Africa.

**5.2.6 Could China have an institutionalized influence in Africa?- the limitation of China’s role in Africa**

After the analysis, China has done a good job in “value” and “material capacities” from Cox perspective. From the history relationship between China and Africa, we know that China has focus on building relationships mostly with African leaders, not African public and differentiate itself from Western countries by highlighting their common colonial history. But through the cultural output, China has established many Confucius Institute in Africa, which contributes a lot to the “value factor”. Many African leaders were looking for a new model of development not only for the slow growth following “Western-oriented economic reforms”, but also due to “a decade of African democratization”.[[183]](#footnote-183)China’s aid without conditions makes it popular in African leaders’ eyes. Beijing’s advertisement of its “no tariffs” export seizes chance of African complaints on Western trade barriers so these “new democratically elected African leaders” attempt to build relations out of the traditional power ones-Western powers-than their “authoritarian predecessors”.[[184]](#footnote-184)And in turn they have supported China economically and politically like introduced in cultural part, behind the 2008 Olympic Games and to select the Head of the World Health Organization (Chen Feng Fuzhen from Hong Kong), China has obtained substantial votes from African countries.

According to Cox’s theory, a state is actually the thing we build ourselves. So does the national image, it also fit in this theory. It is the thing we build ourselves as well. The national image is draw from the constant interaction and with other entities in the international system. In short, it just results from and in turn influences one nation’s value and material capabilities. However, here it could lead to a question when it is going to the third factor: institution. After all the cultural, economic and political effort and influence China has done in Africa, is that possible for China to have an institutionalized influence in Africa?

First of all, from the international level, China has gained a lot of criticisms of its value and economic approach from western countries. Cox’s notion of Institutions is used to encourage public to be in consistency with the prevailing power relations, however, just this point gets most criticisms. John Kampfner, a British journalist, in his article says: “the question is not which countries are acquiring wealth and power but which value systems”,[[185]](#footnote-185) because Western countries stress their concept of democracy in a unilateral way while China has continuously advertize their policies and principles to support African’s own development and independence through varies approach such as public diploma including cultural output and economic support like aids and without any conditions.

And China’s one-party dictatorship (“one party state, with little participation in political decision-making processes given to its polulation, issues of transparency, corruption and human rights and labor abuses”[[186]](#footnote-186)) and its economic activities in Africa raised their suspects in many areas but most related to the human rights and the neocolonialism approach. For instance, like China’s dealing in Zimbabwe and its involvement in Sudan. Those countries has international criticized due to the humanitarian crisis but China’s aid and investment are still coming and China’s approach is so different from the western ones, which are not just tend to export crude oil and refine it and always assess their domestic situation like human rights and dormancy first. However, China does not care this so much and it is willing to share their technology and expertise. China’s heavy involvement in these countries has been heavily by western countries Professor Tan Taylor from St Andrew’s University points out, China’s approach in Africa makes itself radical different from the western ones and it uses its “non-interference” to invest in those heinous regimes without considering their domestic situation[[187]](#footnote-187) and in accordance with international standards.

However, John Kampfner raised another thought: “What if, as is already the case in parts of the developing world, the Chinese message of rapid development, unencumbered by lectures about human rights and democracy, is proving more attractive? Meanwhile, leaders in the so-called developed countries scurry round the world ingratiating themselves with the chancelleries of Beijing…”. That maybe the reason why the value criticisms mostly from western civil society and they will worry that China is now “transferring that power into influence, from Africa to Latin America, without making enemies along the way”.[[188]](#footnote-188)

Secondly, from the domestic point of view from Africa, China’s economic activities get a lot of criticisms. though African civil society warmly welcomed China’s role in Africa, there still different voices came from South Africa worried about China’s rising power may not benefit African people so much due to the “poor environmental regulation”, “low labour standards”, “weak corporate governance”[[189]](#footnote-189) and dumping of cheap goods. African public they also have doubts and complains on China’s behaviors in Africa. Like the environment pollution, many China’s investments are in natural resource factors such as mine and coal, which could easily generate pollution if not control properly. In the case of Shougang, a Chinese state steel company, under its investment activities, its ignorance of “environmental rules”, “safety standards” and “the welfare of workers” [[190]](#footnote-190) seems to echo the local African people’s complains. What’s more, in Nigerian, Chinese migrants are expelled by the government because they got complain that they are dumping Chinese good to undercut the local products.[[191]](#footnote-191)

Even some African leaders also have to China’s economic support an whether it could give Africa another type of power relationship. Will Chinese development model which depends on vast stocks of foreign investment is appropriate for Africa than Western model? This concerns has been haunting around in some African leaders’ minds. In some cases China seems to go across its promise of non-inference policy and no condition aid, for the case in Zambia, in 2006 Chinese ambassador warned the local people that if they picked Michael Sata as their president then China might cut diplomatic relationship with this country.[[192]](#footnote-192) Darfur case is another example to confirm that the doubt from African elites.

A recent survey may show the mixed feeling about China in African public and elites’ eyes. It is conducted by Beijing official media on China’s national image.[[193]](#footnote-193) On the one hand, as many western people give a “neocolonialism hat” to China due to its diplomatic offensives and economic expansion in Africa, but the majority African people they don’t believe; on the other hand, due to the criticism previously on the issues of “poor environmental regulation”, “low labor standards” and “weak corporate governance” and so forth, the negative perception from African people are developing.[[194]](#footnote-194)

**Chapter Six: Conclusion**

In this thesis, it applies three theories: one is soft power theory, one is New-Gramsci theory from Cox’s perspective, and the other one is peaceful theory, to examine the problem-formulation: ***How does China build its national image by using and enhancing the soft power in its peaceful strategy***. Two macro cases are used in this thesis as the empirical data as well to support this problem- formulation, one is Confucius Institute’s development at abroad, and the other one is China’s role in Africa. After putting the theories into practice, this thesis finally answers the problem it interests in.

Firstly, from the Confucius Institute case, it is obviously that China built its soft power and its national image by mostly teaching Chinese language and spread its traditional culture, which has combined the soft power theory introduced by Nye. On the one hand, Confucius Institute is a grand brand around the world now, which means it has been accepted by many nations and regions. From teaching Chinese language to organizing all kinds of interesting courses, from promoting traditional cultural to organizing cultural activities, Confucius Institute influenced profoundly in the world and Chinese language is more and more popular. From those we can conclude that Using Confucius Institute to build a national image is successful mostly from the cultural perspective. What’s more, it is attempting to assure the world that the intention of China’s development is kind and peaceful, which fits the peaceful development as well. On the other hand, according to Nye’s soft power theory and the limitations in Confucius Institute, it shows that the resources of soft power in Confucius Institute as cultural, value and institutions are still limited. The influence from Confucius Institute as one of China’s soft diplomacy still needs to be assessed.

Secondly, from the case of China’s role in African, China has launched a sophisticated strategy in African. On the one hand, China has entwined its political non-interference, economic support coupled with equality, common development, mutual beneficial co-operation,[[195]](#footnote-195) incentive culture output and solid historical relationship together to enable China to not only access to vast natural and material market but also build its soft power and national image. China’s material capacities and value applied in African from Cox’s perspective have generated some institutional influence, and China now is a great competitor against western countries in Africa, which means the existing order in Africa in facing challenges. But the criticizes and worried from both international society and African people, including elites and public on China’s policies and activities in Africa have made the China’s development and its willing to involve into the world order peacefully harder than expected. The reflection of China’s national image in Africa is still mixing and not clear.

However, both of these two cases have supported peaceful development theory. No matter the Confucius Institute at abroad or the soft power China has applied in Africa, there is always an internal clue to string them together´-- the peaceful development theory. They all served this aim, which is more and more popular not only in China but also to the world to help to build an image of peace-love and benign country. What’s more, one of the aims of the theory is attempting to project a more positive image of China and assure the world that the intention of China’s development is kind and peaceful; another aim is to response some anti-China theories such as China threat theory or China’s collapse theory. It shows China is awareness of the importance of seizing discourse because a powerful and popular theory is good at controlling the discourse and then in turn to influence the structure of the world theorized by the discourse.

In the end, this thesis would like to present some critical and open thinking here to refresh not only the author’s but also the readers’ thought to look through the topic more deeply or analyze it from a new perspective. Both combined the views from Professor Wang Yiwei and the author of this thesis, there are some considerations as followed:

* Chinese people and the government always assume that national strength is a key factor for international image. So Chinese leaders they pay much attention to the gross domestic product (GDP) than the soft power. China has gained rapid economic growth from its export and foreign direct investment (FDI). “This mind-set has tended to make Chinese diplomacy too pragmatically oriented. China has neglected to cultivate real affinities with foreign publics and has thereby invited the so-called China threat theory.”[[196]](#footnote-196) If that is true, a strong and big country can make others more respectful to it, then, in fact, the Switzerland and the Nordic countries are small and militarily weak, but their images are positive. From this perspective, as stated in the introduction chapter, China is like a lame giant with one leg longer (strong and repaid economic development) while the other one shorter (weak soft power). So is this a good explanation of why China’s national image does not come along with the rapid economic development in the same step, like the case in Africa?
* China has focused on its economy internationally, and the culture has been considered as the Confucius Institute project issued around the world—the Confucius Institute has focused on expanding the traditional culture, which may cause China’s neighboring countries nervous due to Confucius value may recall their memory of the ancient imperial tributary system. What’s more, the historical significance could not come into contemporary influence automatically. People will then ask: where is China’s contemporary value and what is it? However, no matter whether it exists or not, the value is always promoted by CCP and its propaganda machines controlled by central government. Only this has been already opposite to democracy, the western core value. Is this the explanation of why the boosting of Confucius Institute does not dispel westerns’ doubts of China’s development and the effort China has put on to build its peaceful development is always being misunderstood by western countries?
* China has faced seriously domestic problems than ever. For instance, world-famous officials’ corruption, food security problem in vary areas from egg, flour to soy bean source and milk, air and water pollution and human rights problem, of which has reduced China’s reputation and its credibility in the world. In soft power theory, it says the popularity of “soft power” comes across the national boundary between international and domestic politics because the three resources of soft power also imply how the ruling elite use soft power in their domestic countries and their own people, which will be observed by people outside to examine them and associate that practice with their performance in the international context. So from that perspective, is it true that the serious domestic problems examined by westerns generate all of these negative images of China and reduce the effort China has put on to the soft power ?

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