

Cultural Diplomacy & the Expansion of Chinese Soft Power

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Abstract

The following thesis contains an analysis of the role that China's cultural diplomacy efforts play in the expansion of Chinese soft power in the U.S., as well as a theoretically based assessment of the effectiveness of these initiatives. Political scientist Joseph Nye argues that the importance of coercive forces, or 'hard power', is on a rapid decline in international relations, and instead contends the notion that states acquiring foreign policy goals through attraction, or 'soft power', is becoming an increasingly significant strategy. China has acknowledged this growing importance and they have spent billions in the past decade on improving their soft power through instruments of cultural diplomacy. This thesis focuses on China's initiatives in the U.S., which include the vast expansion of Chinese media, the immense Chinese investment in the Hollywood film industry, and the establishment of the Confucius Institutes (CI).

In order to analyze the role and effectiveness of these initiatives, the theories of 'soft power' and 'cultural diplomacy' have been utilized. The theory of 'soft power' has been included with the objective of obtaining a better comprehension of the motivation behind China's immense investment in its global soft power initiatives. The theory of 'cultural diplomacy' has been selected in order to analyze the different elements that can act as a hindrance to the desired production of soft power and thus influence the effectiveness of the initiatives e.g. when the target audience will view the instruments of cultural diplomacy as being means of propaganda.

The analysis of the following thesis will initially provide the background for China's growing interest in the concept of 'soft power', as well as provide an analysis of the motivation behind China's recently established cultural diplomacy initiatives in the U.S. The three subsequent chapters will each focus on one of China's instruments of cultural diplomacy. These chapters will each be divided into two sections: one providing the sufficient

background knowledge related to the respective initiative; and one focusing on analyzing the related controversies, as well as providing an assessment of the effectiveness of each initiative in relation to the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S. The final chapter of the analysis will provide a brief evaluation of the effectiveness of the three cultural diplomacy initiatives before finally heading to the conclusion of the thesis.

The following thesis argues that China's cultural diplomacy efforts do hold the potential of playing a significant role in the expansion of Chinese soft power in the U.S., but it also acknowledges the fact that a heavy interference by the Chinese government in relation to the execution of the various initiatives may act counterproductively and thereby function as a hindrance in regard to the desired production of China's soft power.

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Introduction

Our shared global society, as we recognize it today, represents the undisputable product of antecedent power struggles among nation states. Throughout history, power relations in our international system have been distinctly defined by the military and economic capacities of states; whoever controlled the largest army would ultimately occupy the prestigious position as the global leader. Historically, this notion has predominantly been regarded an objective truth. However, in the world of today, the straightforward power exchange has become progressively blurred. The increasingly interdependent, complex, and multi-dimensional world, caused by the ever-growing globalization, has resulted in the concept of 'power' being more diffuse than ever before. This has led scholars to contest the notion that the utilization of coercive forces functions as the predominant power factor in international relations, by arguing that its significance is in fact on a rapid decline. Political scientist Joseph Samuel Nye Jr., among the most prominent predecessors of this notion, argues that the world of the future is "not merely going to be a world of whose army wins, but also whose story wins", as he emphasizes that "power with others can be more effective than power over others" (Nye, 1990, p. 154). From his perspective, the increasingly interdependent nature of today's complex global system will ultimately impede states from utilizing military force against one another and thus, he contends that the use of coercive forces, which he characterizes as 'hard power', will gradually experience a loss of significance in international relations. Instead, states obtaining their desired objectives through the attraction from the surrounding world, a concept he describes as 'soft power', is becoming a progressively prevalent strategy in the international system.

Among the many countries that have seemingly acknowledged the increasing significance of Nye's concept of soft power, we find China. China has experienced an unprecedented economic growth following its economic reforms in 1978 and the authoritarian

state has been predicted by the widely recognized Forbes Magazine to surpass the economy of the U.S. in 2018 (“China’s Economy”, 2016). On the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2007, former President Hu Jintao stressed the importance of China following up the country’s expeditious economic growth with a focus on the global expansion of their soft power (Lai & Lu, 2012, p. 12). Since then, professor of political science David Shambaugh reports that China has spent roughly \$10 billion annually on various global cultural diplomacy initiatives aimed at improving its soft power (Shambaugh, 2015, p. 100). One of the countries in which the CPC has invested heavily in regard to the expansion of Chinese soft power is the U.S. The most prominent initiatives include the vast expansion of Chinese media within the country; the immense Chinese investment in the Hollywood film industry; and the establishment of the cultural institutions, the so-called Confucius Institutes (CI). These heavy investments in the building of Chinese soft power in the U.S. can be seen as an extenuating approach from the CPC, as Manheim and Henrikson state the partial aim of cultural diplomacy to be “influencing the behavior of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens” (Rodin, 2012, p. 10). As the rapid economic and military rearmament of China has evoked political insecurity in the U.S., the Chinese soft power efforts could be considered an attempt at emphasizing to its largest global competitors the peaceful nature of China’s rise.

However, China’s cultural diplomacy initiatives have since their implementation met extensive criticism within U.S. borders. The CI’s ostensibly cooperative approach has been widely criticized, with the accusation of the institutes operating under highly undemocratic conditions strictly controlled by the CPC. Similarly, the expansion of Chinese media in the U.S., such as the China Central Television (CCTV), along with the growing influence of the CPC on the American film production in Hollywood, have left critics raising questions concerning freedom of reporting, as well as distortion and inaccuracy in the representation of

China. The following thesis will aim at examining the cultural diplomacy initiatives of China within the U.S. in regard to the production of Chinese soft power, and the three aforementioned initiatives – the expansion of Chinese media, the investment in Hollywood, and the Confucius Institutes – will function as the central topics in the analysis hereof. The backgrounds concerning the different initiatives will be explored, along with the related controversies, and a theoretically based assessment of the effectiveness of these measures on the expansion of China's soft power in the U.S. will be provided. The following analysis will be conducted with the utilization of the theories of 'soft power' and 'cultural diplomacy'. This leads us to the overall problem formulation of this thesis:

What role do China's cultural diplomacy efforts play in the expansion of Chinese soft power in the U.S. and how effective are these initiatives?

Literature Review

When concerned with the field of China's soft power and cultural diplomacy initiatives, several studies have been engaged in the exploration of this topic. The studies that have advanced our understanding of a variety of aspects within the aforementioned field include academic sources in the form of books and online journals, as well as less academic sources in the form of a wide range of published news articles and interviews. This variety of aspects includes the recent interest in and popularity of soft power in China, China's efforts of expanding the country's soft power globally, as well as the tools employed with the aim of reaching the goal of a global expansion of Chinese soft power. However, although these sources have greatly increased our comprehension of the scope and relevance of Chinese soft power in today's world, there are still noticeable gaps within this field that are yet to be adequately explored in academic circles. The following section will account for the currently

existing literature within the field of China's soft power and cultural diplomacy with the aim of clarifying the gaps that allow for further analysis to be conducted.

In relation to the growing popularity of soft power in China, several sources have accounted for its various reasons. Minjiang Li reported that Chinese top leaders, most notably former President Hu Jintao along with Chairman of the Chinese Political Consultative Conference Jia Qinglin, had stressed in the period between 2004-2007 on several high-profile meetings the immense importance of China striving for the expansion of their soft power (Li, 2009, p. 4). Lai and Lu further stressed the increasing significance of Chinese soft power by citing the keynote speech of President Hu at the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in October 2007 in which he declared that China should “enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country to better guarantee the people's basic cultural rights and interests” (Lai & Lu, 2012, p. 12). The Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the South Korea-based East Asia Institute conducted a survey in 2008 on the leaders of soft power in Asia in which six countries participated – the U.S. and five Asian countries, including China. Aimed at comparing the soft power of respectively the U.S., China, Japan, and South Korea, the survey demonstrated that China ranked merely third in soft power for the remaining five populations surveyed, which would suggest that the notion of President Hu was well-founded (“America's Soft Power”, 2008). The notion of the importance of Chinese soft power was further elaborated on by Deng, arguing that the motive behind the increasing popularity of the concept of soft power could be traced to the desire of the CPC to “fend off the China threat argument, and to ensure the world about the peaceful nature of a rising China” (Li, 2009, p. 5).

Next to the growing recognition of soft power in China and the reasons for this development, the bulk of discussion in the existing literature has primarily been formed by China's efforts of cultivating soft power on a global scale. Among the more noticeable

publications, Kurlantzick described China's efforts of cultivating a favorable image in the developing world (Kurlantzick, 2007). He especially focused on the documentation of the country's building of soft power in Africa, Australia, and South-East Asia, and specifically emphasized great success in the African region (Kurlantzick, 2007). When aiming at providing an overview of China's initiatives to project soft power around the globe, Ding noted that the CPC's promotion of traditional Chinese culture assisted in gaining desired external attraction (Ding, 2008). Specifically, in examining the cultural diplomacy tools of China, he reviewed the promotion of Chinese language learning abroad and its importance (Ding, 2008). In extension of this notion, Gill and Huang noted that the globally established Confucius Institutes in particular became a significant resource of Chinese soft power (Gill & Huang, 2008). Nye later reviewed China's cultural diplomacy initiatives, arguing that their efforts especially achieved the desired effect in Africa and Latin America, but however questioned whether the policies of the CPC could function as a hindrance in relation to the country's global projection of soft power (Nye, 2013). Shambaugh followed up this notion, agreeing that success was most evidently notable in the two aforementioned regions, but claimed that the investment in the various cultural diplomacy initiatives had not yet reached its desired intention in Europe and North America (Shambaugh, 2015). The USC Center on Public Diplomacy, along with the contributions of a number of reputed scholars, published for the first time in 2015 an extensive report on soft power called the 'Soft Power 30'. Coined by Nye himself as the "clearest picture of global soft power to date", the report provided a comprehensive comparative assessment of soft power in the global system, ranking the 30 countries in the world with the greatest soft power (McClory, 2017, p. 10). The report demonstrated that China had risen significantly in soft power in the short period of the reports existence, going from the spot as number 30 on the list in 2015 to number 25 in 2017, which partially validated the success of China's soft power efforts (McClory, 2017, p. 71).

In spite of the aforementioned advances, the currently existing literature on China's soft power and cultural diplomacy has left noticeable gaps to be further explored. Much research has been conducted in relation to the different soft power efforts of China, but most research focuses primarily on either specific regions, most notably Africa and Latin America, or on China's soft power on the globe as a whole. This has left a merely scarce amount of academic research to be undertaken in relation to the cultural diplomacy initiatives in the U.S. and the effectiveness hereof. This could be considered an immensely relevant gap to analyze, as the U.S. currently functions as China's number one contender on the global stage. Building Chinese soft power within U.S. borders would thus arguably serve the agenda of the CPC well, in part due to the notion that a downplay of the 'China threat argument' could reduce potential sanctions and general resistance, and partly because a China-friendly mindset within the population of the U.S. would strengthen economic and political ties between China and its largest competitor in the global environment. Some research has been conducted on the issue, such as the extensive report on Confucius Institutes in the U.S., put forward by the National Association of Scholars and led by Peterson (Peterson, 2017). However, this study merely attempts to illuminate the controversies related to the Confucius Institutes and does not assess the effectiveness in regard to the Chinese soft power projection in the U.S. Although the concept of soft power is touched upon in the report, it is not nearly discussed to a satisfactory degree, from a theoretical viewpoint. On the empirical front, many of the latest developments are yet to be adequately examined, such as the expansion of Chinese media in the U.S., as well as China's heavy investment in Hollywood. Kang discussed in the *Journal of Contemporary China* the spread of Chinese media outlets in the U.S. such as the China Central Television (CCTV), but with minimal inclusion of the concept of soft power (Kang, 2012). Apart from this study, the two aforementioned initiatives have merely been the topic in various online news articles, which yet again lack a theoretical connection in terms of the

potential soft power projection. Hence on a general level, in terms of the effectiveness of China's cultural diplomacy initiatives in the U.S., only a scarce amount of the current research utilizes Nye's theory in detail in their assessment, but instead decides to provide a rather shallow evaluation. The 'Soft Power 30' report does critically assess the success of China's soft power efforts, but this is solely focused on the global scale and not on the impact within the U.S. Lastly, current research lacks a comparison of China's different cultural diplomacy efforts in the U.S., which is an interesting approach as some initiatives are arguably functioning as intended while others do not serve the desired effect of the CPC. The following thesis will aim at analyzing these aforementioned gaps.

Methodology

The following chapter of this thesis will account for the reasons behind the inclusion of the chosen theories that will be utilized throughout. Additionally, it will account for the various criteria for data collection that have been taken into consideration during the process of the thesis, as well as provide an account for the chosen research design. Finally, it will account for the various limitations of the thesis, both in terms of empirical data, but also in terms of the selected theories.

With the aim of analyzing the research question of the following thesis, the selection of theories has determined the theory of 'soft power' as well as the theory of 'cultural diplomacy' to be the most suitable. With the paramount focus on the ever-growing significance of attraction in the global arena, the theory of 'soft power' has been included with the objective of obtaining a better comprehension of the motivation behind China's immense investment in its global soft power initiatives. The theory of 'cultural diplomacy' has been selected in order to identify the various cultural diplomacy efforts that China has initiated in the U.S. in the past decade, as well as to analyze the different elements that can act

as a hindrance to the desired projection of soft power and thus affect the effectiveness of the initiatives e.g. when the target audience will view the instruments of cultural diplomacy as being means of propaganda.

The sources that have been utilized in this thesis in order to complete a thorough investigation of the research question have primarily consisted of qualitative data. This type of data focuses mainly on advancing an in-depth comprehension of fundamental reasons and motivations in which findings are not conclusive and this fits exactly with this thesis. The selection of qualitative data is based on its inclusion of written documents as well as second hand interviews, due to the fact that these elements have been considered the most germane when analyzing the role of China's cultural diplomacy efforts in the expansion of Chinese soft power in the U.S. The qualitative data that has been utilized in the following thesis consists primarily of online source material in the form of journals, news articles, and video files. The motivation behind this selection is based on the fact that the explored topic can be considered a relatively new subject and thus, the currently existing literature merely includes a limited number of books, but instead includes an abundant amount of online news articles, as well as a fair amount of academic journals. However, many of these sources are highly current and are thereby immensely relevant in relation to the exploration of the chosen topic. Furthermore, this thesis includes a limited amount of external quantitative data. This data consists mainly of calculations, which have been utilized with the aim of exemplifying the past decades' immense expansion of Chinese media in the U.S., the increase in the Chinese investment in Hollywood, and the significant increment in the number of Confucius Institutes in the U.S. Additionally, a proportion of the utilized quantitative data consists of official poll results on favorability, which is aimed at assisting in the assessment of the effectiveness of China's cultural diplomacy initiatives. This thesis further attempts to utilize a wide variety of sources in order to explore the research question, due to the obvious risk of political bias. The

complete avoidance of biased sources is rarely achievable and can therefore be considered a methodological limitation.

The analysis of this thesis has been designed as follows. The initial chapter of the analysis will focus on the background of China's growing interest in the concept of 'soft power', as well as provide an analysis of the motivation behind China's recently established cultural diplomacy initiatives in the U.S. The three subsequent chapters will each focus on one of China's instruments of cultural diplomacy. These chapters will each be divided into two sections: one providing the sufficient background knowledge related to the respective initiative; and one focusing on analyzing the related controversies, as well as providing an assessment of the effectiveness of each initiative in relation to the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S. The final chapter of the analysis will provide a brief evaluation of the effectiveness of the three cultural diplomacy initiatives before finally heading to the conclusion of the thesis.

Naturally, there are various limitations which may interfere with the outcome of this thesis. An apparent limitation may be that of biased sources of which an identification can be considered difficult. A significant percentage of the primary sources of this thesis consists of news articles and thus, one must always be aware of the potential of political bias. One may speculate that a fragment of the sources could be inclined to hold a China-friendly mindset, as well as more sources having a preconceived bias against the actions of China, and this is an aspect that has been taken into account throughout the development of the thesis.

Furthermore, the academic journals included as sources in this thesis may also contain biased views. An example of this could be the report 'Outsourced to China', developed by the National Association of Scholars (NAS), which examines the controversies of the Confucius Institutes in the U.S., in which one may suspect that a negative attitude towards the global expansion of Chinese soft power could be present. The president of the organization does

dismiss all allegations of bias by stating in the preface of the report that the content is limited to “what we know for sure”, but one must yet be aware of the possibility of a presence of political bias (Peterson, 2017, p. 14). Another limitation in regard to this thesis could arguably be considered the lack of quantitative data clearly displaying the effectiveness of China's cultural diplomacy initiatives on the production of the country's soft power in the U.S. Naturally, measuring soft power in the global system is an immensely intangible matter of which the evaluation will always depend on a subjective assessment and thus, this could arguably be considered the largest limitation of this thesis. However, poll results on favorability have been included in this assessment and this can arguably be considered the closest possible method of quantitatively measuring the effectiveness of China's cultural diplomacy efforts in relation to the intended production of soft power.

In the following thesis, the research has been driven by a combination of a preformulated hypothesis as well as data collection. This has been accomplished by the utilization of a deductive approach, in which a hypothesis has been formulated on the basis of the selected theories of ‘soft power’ and ‘cultural diplomacy’. Based on the theoretical framework, the author of this thesis has expected to see the role of China's cultural diplomacy efforts as being potentially highly prominent in relation to the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S. However, the behavior of the CPC in relation to the different cultural diplomacy initiatives is of pivotal importance when assessing the effectiveness in terms of soft power production, according to the theoretical framework. The theory of ‘soft power’ would suggest that China's cultural diplomacy initiatives having a positive impact on the country's soft power is greatly dependent on the prerequisite that the country's values and policies are found credible by the target audience i.e. the American population, or else soft power would be consumed rather than produced. The theory of ‘cultural diplomacy’ would suggest that the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S. is highly dependent on the

condition that the methods utilized by China do not resemble propaganda in the eyes of the target audience, because if this would be the case, it could severely impact the effectiveness of such measures in a negative manner for the soft power of China. This preformulated hypothesis will thus be tested in the impending analysis with the inclusion of second hand sources.

Theory

Soft Power

As the objective of the following thesis is to investigate the role of China's cultural diplomacy efforts in the global expansion of the country's soft power, the theoretical framework provided in the following chapter will be presenting the theory of 'soft power' from the perspective of Joseph Nye, the acclaimed American scholar who pioneered the theory, with the purpose of facilitating an expansive perspective in the impending analysis.

The concept of 'soft power' was developed in the late 1980's by political scientist Joseph Samuel Nye Jr. and emerged as a reaction to the past decades' decreasing significance of hard power in the global system. Nye defines the general concept of 'power' as "the ability to affect others to get the outcomes that you want" (Nye, 2008a) and propounds three primary approaches that function as measures for states to accomplish the acquisition of power in the international arena: they can threaten the desired target through coercion, which Nye refers to as 'sticks'; they can financially entice them, which he refers to as 'carrots'; or they can affect their behavior through attraction, and thereby persuade them into sharing the same desired outcomes (Nye, 2008a). This distinct ability to attain aspired objectives through attraction from the desired target functions as the main element in the theory of Nye and it is exactly what distinguishes the concept of 'soft power' from that of 'hard power'. The concept of 'hard power' is thus constituted by a deliberate change in the position of others through the

utilization of economic or military coercion, whereas the concept of 'soft power' refers to "the ability of a country to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its own" (Nye, 1990, p. 169).

Nye argues that the alteration of the preferences of others is accomplished through "co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes" (Nye, 2011, p. 20) and advances the notion that "the more you spend on attraction, the less you have to spend on carrots and sticks" (Nye, 2008a). Hence, it is argued that as opposed to the rather costly utilization of hard power, both financially as well as politically, soft power can be considered 'free' to a much greater extent (Nye, 2016). Nye substantiates this claim by arguing that the conceivable consequences of failing to satisfactorily utilize hard power for the benefit of the preferences of one's own nation are significantly more detrimental than the potential consequences of failing to utilize soft power, as hardly any substantial resources are required in regard to the use of soft power (Nye, 2016). Nye expands on this notion by arguing that the utilization of hard power can be considered arrogant in the eyes of the surroundings of a state and thus, it can unintentionally function as being counterproductive to the intended purpose and instead entail repulsion, which is never beneficial in relation to the desired outcomes of the state (Nye, 2008a). Hence, Nye further argues that "soft co-optive power is just as important as hard command power. If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes." (Nye, 1990, p. 168). This notion emphasizes the growing importance of a co-operative approach to international relations in a world characterized by various rising powers and the natural feeling of threat that these emerging powers can evoke in the remaining global system. However, it is acknowledged that the use of soft co-optive power does not always entail good purposes, as Nye considers propaganda to be a form of soft power (Nye, 2011, p. 81). He argues that states often have the intention of telling the story merely from their own

side and thus, they are attempting to reduce the level of soft power of their political rivals by reducing their voice (Nye, 2004, p. 8). In spite of this notion, Nye strongly emphasizes that the intended projection of soft power can only function if the target audience does not realize that methods of propaganda are utilized (Nye, 2008a). To this statement, he notes that “if something looks like propaganda, people do not trust it, it loses credibility” (Nye, 2009) and thus “it is not necessarily better to twist minds than to twist arms” (Nye, 2011, p. 81).

According to Nye, material capabilities have historically been the focal point when concerned with power in international relations, as he argues that the ability to exert control over others has been “associated with the possession of certain resources” (Nye, 1990, p. 154). Hence, the concept of ‘power’ has among politicians and diplomats been commonly defined as “the possession of population, territory, natural resources, economic size, military forces, and political stability” (Nye, 1990, p. 154), a notion criticized by Nye through the argument that “in general, power is becoming less transferable, less coercive, and less tangible” (Nye, 1990, p. 152). He expands on this claim by further stating that factors of “technology, education, and economic growth are becoming more significant in international power, while geography, population, and raw materials are becoming somewhat less important” in order to illustrate the idea that the commonly known definition of ‘power’ “is losing its emphasis on military force and conquest that marked earlier eras” (Nye, 1990, p. 154). Nye later backed up this claim by arguing that the information age of today, along with its increasing availability of online information, as well as an ever growing global interdependence, has resulted in soft power constituting a progressively significant role in international relations, as he stated that the world of the future is “not merely going to be a world of whose army wins, but also whose story wins” (Nye, 2016). Thus, he puts forward the claim that the history of international relations has never before experienced a prevalence in the limitations of hard power to the extent that is present in today’s world, due to the notion

that the utilization of military force by states against one another is naturally impeded by the immense economic interdependence that we now experience in our globalized system (Nye, 2016).

Nye argues that soft power as a concept is more diffuse than the traditional economic and military elements of hard power, which are by many considered “straightforward”, due to the notion that a considerable amount of the imperative resources of soft power are “outside the control of governments, and their effects depend heavily on acceptance by the receiving audiences” (Nye, 2004, p. 1). Much less direct and tangible than the resources of hard power, the tools of soft power instead function “indirectly by shaping the environment for policy, and sometimes take years to produce the desired outcomes” (Nye, 2004, p. 1). Nye presents three primary resources that function as the main producers of soft power in the international system, as he states that “the ability to establish preferences tends to be associated with such intangible assets as attractive *culture*, political *values*, and *policies* that are seen as having legitimacy or moral value” (Nye, 2008a). Regarding the first resource, *culture*, Nye states that “if a country has a culture that is attractive to others, it may make other countries more willing to hear its views or to sympathize with its views” (Nye, 2016). He divides the concept into elite culture and popular culture, often recognized as high and low culture, and he argues that the potential production of soft power depends heavily on the target audience (Nye, 2009). As an exemplification of his point, Nye draws on an example concerning the movie industry where he illustrates a distinct correlation between content, target audience, and the potential projection of soft power. He argues that concepts such as e.g. female nudity as well as individualism might be considered attractive in certain countries and thereby function as producers of soft power for the country in which the movies are created, whereas the same concepts might be considered rather repulsive in other places of the world, in which case soft power will contrarily experience a reduction (Nye, 2009). Regarding the second resource,

values, Nye argues that broad and universal values of states can produce positive outcomes in relation to the soft power of the given state, namely if they appear attractive to the surrounding world (Nye, 2009). He states that if the values of a state are able to attract, this “attraction often leads to acquiescence” and that “if a leader represents values that others want to follow, it costs less to lead” (Nye, 2008a). However, Nye further stresses the notion that it is of pivotal importance that countries live up to the values that they attempt to project (Nye, 2009). To exemplify his point, he argues that “if a country openly speaks of freedom and liberty, but does not act on it at home, that can undercut the attraction or possible soft power” (Nye, 2009). Regarding the third resource, *policies*, Nye argues that the policies of a country, and specifically its foreign policies, can produce soft power, as he states that “when our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced” (Nye, 2004, p. 256). Thereby, he emphasizes the notion that merely proclaiming your policies to be legitimate cannot be considered a sufficient strategy in itself, but the pivotal importance lies in the way they are perceived by the receiving audience. As an exemplification of this notion, Nye argues that the U.S. administration under former President George W. Bush cost the U.S. a significant amount of soft power, due to the fact that their invasion of Iraq was considered illegitimate in the eyes of a substantial part of the global population (Nye, 2009). Nye further propounds two additional aspects within the policies of a nation that may influence the production of its soft power. Firstly, he argues that the legitimacy of a country's policies is inclined to increase if the policies pursued are “not only in its own national interest, but also in the interest of others”, a concept he defines as ‘global public good’ (Nye, 2009). This encompasses global matters such as e.g. “clean air, access to global internet, or dealing with climate change” and can greatly enhance the soft power of a state (Nye, 2009). Regarding policies represented by state that are not favorable to others, Nye argues that “even the best advertising cannot sell an unpopular product, and policies that appear as narrowly self-serving

or arrogantly presented are likely to consume rather than produce soft power” (Nye, 2004, p. 10). Secondly, Nye presents the notion that states displaying criticism towards policies of their own can function as a resource of soft power by stating that “the presence of dissent and self-criticism can be beneficial: it enhances the credibility of messages” (Nye, 2011, p. 109). This self-criticism may portray a proof of authenticity and freedom of speech in the eyes of others and may thus produce soft power.

Albeit Nye presents a convincing argument for his claims of an increased necessity for states to focus on an expansion of their soft power, critics have still challenged the credibility of his theory and argue that the tools of soft power are yet ineffective when compared to those of hard power, when concerned with conducting foreign policy in today's world. Niall Ferguson argues that the reach of soft power is severely limited as he states that “soft power is merely the velvet glove concealing an iron hand” (Gill, 2005, p. 59). This notion is further substantiated by Colin S. Gray who argues that the fundamental instrument of policy must remain the tools of hard power, as he asserts that the utilization of soft power is an unsuitable strategy for policy direction and control, due to the notion that soft power is so reliant on the perception of foreign states (Gray, 2011, p. 9). The criticism of Minjiang Li follows up on this idea as he notes that the intangibility of the tools of soft power creates an environment of insecurity for states, as the measurability of success is complex and not absolute, so likewise he argues that hard power should remain the essential foreign policy tool (Li, 2009, p. 6). However, although Nye seems to merely favor soft power in international relations and dismiss the efficacy of hard power in the world of today, this image is indeed not the case. On the contrary, Nye strongly emphasizes the importance of an effective combination between hard and soft power, a concept he terms ‘smart power’ (Nye, 2009). Hence, the utility of hard power in international relations is not neglected, but according to Nye, it must be accompanied by a strong involvement of soft power, as he argues that the fundamental skill

for leaders in the world of today is to “understand changing contexts and changing situations, and to know how to adjust the mix of hard and soft power skills into smart strategies” (Nye, 2009). However, although he considers the use of military force legitimate in exceptional circumstances, he remains determined in regard to the notion that the utmost focus for states should be on the expansion of their soft power, as he considers this form of power more significant in the long run (Nye, 2009). This is because soft power is oriented towards long-term solutions, as it has the ability to affect the behavior and preferences of others in a co-optive manner by the use of attraction, whereas hard power is both financially and politically costly, as well as being merely short-term in scope (Nye, 2009).

Cultural Diplomacy

As the objective of this thesis is to investigate China's desired expansion of the country's soft power in the U.S., the theoretical framework provided in the following chapter will be exploring the theory of ‘cultural diplomacy’ from the perspective of various scholars, as the utilization of cultural diplomacy initiatives is indeed among the most effective tools for the production of soft power.

‘Cultural diplomacy’ as a theory can be considered an evolutionary concept that contains a broad variety of definitions in contemporary diplomatic theory and practice. Thus, it seems rational to initiate the following review by providing the reader with a basic definition that encapsulates the underlying content of the concept of ‘cultural diplomacy’, a definition that holds true regardless of context in which the concept is applied. Prof. Dr. Jessica Gienow-Hecht expresses a rather simplistic definition of the term, as she describes cultural diplomacy as a “tool and a way of interacting with the outside world” (Donfried & Gienow-Hecht, 2010, p. 11), a definition slightly expanded by Senior advisor Dr. Simon Mark who propounds the simple definition of “the deployment of a state's culture in support

of its foreign policy goals or diplomacy” (Mark, 2010, p. 64). Political scientist Milton C. Cummings further expands on this notion, describing functional cultural diplomacy as the two-way exchange of “ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding” (Cummings, 2003, p. 1). Mark follows up on this idea and argues that the concept is viewed by some as a practice that is undertaken by states to achieve “normative, idealistic goals, to enhance ‘mutual understanding’, but recognizes that others focus more on “the practice’s contribution to advancing national interests, rather than enhancing mutual understanding” (Mark, 2010, p. 64). Cummings acknowledges how the concept in these cases can refer to a mere one-way exchange, as he exemplifies by stating “when one nation concentrates its efforts on promoting the national language, explaining its policies and point of view, or “telling its story” to the rest of the world”, without willingness to receive cultural inputs from the opposite direction (Cummings, 2003, p. 1). According to post-doctoral researcher Falk Hartig, the concept of cultural diplomacy is “the act of communicating with foreign publics, and therefore is the instrument to facilitate or project a country’s soft power” (Hartig, 2016, p. 49). Following up on this notion, he argues that as soft power originates from the attraction from the other, cultural diplomacy is thus the “instrument in the hands of governments aimed at persuading” (Hartig, 2016, p. 49). When discussing the purpose of cultural diplomacy, Joseph Nye argues that “by definition, soft power means getting others to want the same outcomes you want, and that requires an understanding of how they are hearing your messages and fine-tuning it accordingly. It is crucial to understand the target audience.” (Nye, 2004, p. 11). Cultural diplomacy could be considered a concept can take varied forms, which is a notion further emphasized by PhD. Erik Pajtinka. He attempts to explain the varying nature of cultural diplomacy and ascribes it to the efforts of various scholars to highlight merely fragments of the phenomenon “depending usually on the context of the issue discussed” (Pajtinka, 2014, p.

99). Mark agrees on this notion, adding that there is a “lack of clarity about what precisely the practice entails” and thus no agreed upon definition of the concept (Mark, 2010, p. 63).

Although the definition of cultural diplomacy is inconsistent, scholars agree that the concept should be considered “a subset of public diplomacy” (Mark, 2010, p. 64). The concept of ‘public diplomacy’ is defined by Manheim and Henrikson as communication from “government to people of another country”, with the utilized process of “government actors speaking by way of the media”, as well as communication from “the level of people more generally of one country to people of another country”, with the utilized process of “people-to-people exchanges”, e.g. academic exchange among professors of universities from different states (Rodin, 2012, p. 10). They divide these approaches into two different functions: either it refers to the deliberate attempt from the government to convey “understanding for its nations ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and policies”; or it can refer to the “influencing [of] the behavior of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens” (Rodin, 2012, p. 10). Professor of communication Benno Signitzer argues that the operation of political information is functioning “within a short-term time frame”, whereas the mutual understanding that functions as the purpose of cultural diplomacy is “long-term in scope” (Rodin, 2012, p. 10). According to Mark Leonard and Juliet Sablosky “long-term relationship building is what distinguishes cultural diplomacy from public diplomacy” (Rodin, 2012, p. 11) and the concept of cultural diplomacy can thus be viewed as the fraction of public diplomacy that is attentive to the “building of long-term relationships” (Mark, 2010, p. 64). Leonard formulated an influential three-tiered conceptualization of public diplomacy defined by the frame of time. The first tier is short-term and it may take “hours or days”; the second tier is medium-term and it may be “executed within months”; the third tier is long-term and is tied to the “long-

term relationship building and may take years”, and it is exactly within this tier that cultural diplomacy has its place (Rodin, 2012, p. 11).

Mark argues that one method that has become an increasingly significant element of the practice and in which cultural diplomacy supports the building of long-term relationships is that of ‘nation-branding’ (Mark, 2010, p. 64). According to Hartig, this can be accomplished through a variety of cultural diplomacy initiatives e.g. cultural institutes, as he argues that these have become widely acknowledged by scholars to function as important instruments for states to enhance cultural exchange as a part of their foreign policy, with the aim of establishing long-term relationships with the public of other nations (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). In line with the writings of Nye, Hartig argues that culture can be utilized into attracting the publics of the remaining world and thus considers cultural diplomacy an “effective tool in the struggle of power and interests among nations” (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). He further argues that the country with the most dominant culture in the global system is inclined to be the “winner in the international power struggle” (Hartig, 2011, p. 56) and thus, the objective of the utilization of cultural diplomacy initiatives may to some extent be intended as “balancing the dominant American (popular) cultural influence” (Hartig, 2011, p. 57). John Mitchell proposes three models for cultural diplomacy instruments, in extension of the notion that these instruments play a significant part in the foreign policy agendas of states. Firstly, he present the model of “government control” in which he argues that governments exercise direct control with the help of “a ministry or an official agency” (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). Secondly, he presents the model of “non-governmental, autonomous agencies” in which policy control and execution is delegated to an independent agency, but is still funded through an official agency or ministry (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). Thirdly, he presents a “mixed system” in which governments continue to retain overall control, but choose to fund and contract non-

official agencies, which will “operate independently within their competences” (Hartig, 2011, p. 56).

The notion that Mitchell's aforementioned models are considered instruments of cultural diplomacy, has led the concept to face accusations of propaganda. As cultural diplomacy can be interpreted as diplomatic activity from governments aimed at “the public in foreign countries in order to realize its own national interests and create a favorable international environment”, it is considered inevitable to dismiss a discussion of propaganda, according to Hartig (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). He seeks to separate cultural diplomacy from propaganda by arguing that the first of the two concepts is associated with “the known facts”, whereas the latter concept relies heavily on a “mixture of facts and untruths” (Hartig, 2011, p. 55). Hartig further states that the most neutral definition of propaganda is “to disseminate or promote particular ideas” to which Professor Garth Jowett responds that the word has lost its neutrality and that a positive connotation is rarely associated with the concept (Jowett, 2015, p. 2). On the contrary, Jowett argues that the term has now been rendered pejorative, as he argues that “to identify a message as propaganda is to suggest something negative and dishonest” (Jowett, 2015, p. 2) and he contends that propaganda should be defined as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (Jowett, 2015, p. 7). Jowett follows up this definition and explains the word ‘systematic’ by stating that “governments and corporations establish departments or agencies specifically to create systematic propaganda” (Jowett, 2015, p. 7). Professor Mette Lending further proposes that propaganda is fundamentally “the dissemination of more or less doubtful truths for the purpose of influence and manipulation” (Rodin, 2012, p. 12), a notion to which Professor Jacquie L'Etang responds by equating propaganda and cultural diplomacy, with the argument that the latter concept supposes tight control, as the actors are “narrowed to instrument of the

state to produce specific 'positive attitudes' towards a nation" (Rodin, 2012, p. 12). Joseph Nye adds to the discussion that "good public diplomacy has to go beyond propaganda" (Nye, 2008b, p. 101), proposing the argument that if information appears as propaganda in the eyes of the target audience it "may turn out to be counterproductive if it undermines a country's reputation for credibility" (Nye, 2008b, p. 100).

Although a variety of scholars express the view that the concepts of cultural diplomacy and propaganda are closely linked, Mark contests this characterization by arguing that it is "wrong simply to suggest that cultural diplomacy is merely a type of propaganda" (Mark, 2010, p. 66). He points to the notion that cultural diplomacy instruments utilizing "selective self-projection' would undermine the credibility of cultural diplomacy, a key property of effective soft power" (Rodin, 2012, p. 13). Hence, Mark argues that it would be "an error to see cultural diplomacy as synonymous with propaganda" which is backed up by Professor Jan Melissen who argues that propaganda engages in the "rather primitive business of peddling one's own views and narrowing other people's minds" (Rodin, 2012, p. 13). On the contrary, Melissen argues that cultural diplomacy may in some cases involve "the peddling of the state's own views, but it seldom seeks to narrow other people's minds" (Rodin, 2012, p. 13). Instead he contends, in agreement with the notion of Cummings, that successful cultural diplomacy is defined by the nature of the two-way exchange involving "dialogue and mutuality", as opposed to the one-way nature of the instruments of propaganda, which lacks dialogical aspects (Rodin, 2012, p. 13). Hence, if cultural diplomacy initiatives are recognized as propaganda, they will not contribute to the intended purpose of the soft power production of states and this is thus the crucial distinction between propaganda and cultural diplomacy.

Analysis

Chinese Soft Power – Background & Purpose

According to Joseph Nye, the founder of the theory of 'soft power', the significance of his renowned concept is gradually increasing in international relations and is becoming more important than ever before in the history of our global society. He argues that the ever-growing economic interdependence that we experience in our globalized system, along with the consistently expanding array of technological means enabling the constant acquisition of endless information and knowledge, have led the traditionally known definition of 'power' to become "less transferable, less coercive, and less tangible" (Nye, 1990, p. 152). Emphasis on coercive forces in the form of economic and military might, or what Nye describes as 'hard power', is on a decline as he contends the notion that the world of tomorrow is "not merely going to be a world of whose army wins, but also whose story wins" (Nye, 2016). Thus, he argues that the successful execution of the foreign policy goals of nation states will be increasingly dependent on the attraction from the surrounding world (Nye, 2016). China is among the many countries that have seemingly acknowledged the increasing significance of the ideas of Nye. Since former President Hu Jintao in 2007 stressed the importance of China following up the country's expeditious economic growth with a strong focus on the global expansion of their soft power, the Communist Party of China (CPC) have spent billions on improving the country's global reputation (Lai & Lu, 2012, p. 12). Shambaugh reports that China has spent roughly \$10 billion annually over the past decade on a variety of global initiatives aimed at expanding the soft power of the authoritarian state (Shambaugh, 2015, p. 100).

One of the states in which the CPC have invested most heavily in regard to the expansion of Chinese soft power, and which is also the concern of this thesis, is the U.S. They have accomplished this through the establishment of various cultural diplomacy initiatives.

Hartig argues that a utilization of instruments of cultural diplomacy is the method for states to increase the attraction from the surrounding world as he states that the concept of 'cultural diplomacy' is "the act of communicating with foreign publics, and therefore is the instrument to facilitate or project a country's soft power" (Hartig, 2016, p. 49). The most prominent initiatives include the vast expansion of Chinese media within the U.S.; the immense Chinese investment in the Hollywood film industry; and the establishment of the cultural institutions formally named the Confucius Institutes (CI). These three initiatives can certainly be interpreted as an attempt from China to "structure a situation so that other countries [in this case, the U.S.] develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its own" (Nye, 1990, p. 169) and thereby "eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes" (Nye, 2011, p. 20). Hence, the immense Chinese investment in these initiatives gives a clear indication that the CPC have recognized, in accordance with Nye, that the increasing relevance of soft power in the international arena is indeed a reality, as they are evidently seeking to gain as much soft power as possible.

One may contemplate whether these initiatives should really be distinguished as instruments of 'public diplomacy' as opposed to 'cultural diplomacy'. The two concepts greatly overlap one another and many scholars utilize the terms interchangeably. However, many agree that the concept of cultural diplomacy should be considered "a subset of public diplomacy" (Mark, 2010, p. 64) and Leonard and Sablosky argue that "long-term relationship building is what distinguishes cultural diplomacy from public diplomacy" (Rodin, 2012, p. 11). Hence, they argue that the concept of cultural diplomacy can be viewed as the fraction of public diplomacy that is attentive to the "building of long-term relationships" (Mark, 2010, p. 64). This notion is further elaborated on by Leonard who in the formulation of his three-tiered conceptualization of public diplomacy states that cultural diplomacy has its place within the third tier, which is long-term and "may take years", and is thus tied to the "long-term

relationship building” (Rodin, 2012, p. 11). This distinction is arguably applicable in relation to all three of China’s aforementioned initiatives aimed at producing soft power in the U.S. In accordance with the theory of Nye which states that soft power is oriented towards long-term solutions, the three initiatives of the CPC all aim to serve a purpose that is long-term in scope and not merely directed at achieving interim results (Nye, 2009). The desired outcomes that follow from soft power are intended to be incessantly effective over a long period of time, so merely achieving short-term and momentary results would not be satisfactory for China in this regard. This fits well with the notion of Nye that the tools of soft power function “indirectly by shaping the environment for policy, and sometimes take years to produce the desired outcomes” (Nye, 2004, p. 1) and thus, it would arguably be fair to determine China’s initiatives to be instruments of ‘cultural diplomacy’ rather than merely belonging to the broader term ‘public diplomacy’.

One may speculate why China have decided to invest so immensely in their efforts of producing soft power within the U.S. A possible explanation could be identified by combining the remarks of Manheim and Henrikson with the remarks of Nye. Manheim and Henrikson contend two primary purposes of engaging in public diplomacy activities: one is the deliberate attempt from a government to convey “understanding for its nations ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and policies”, and the other refers to the “influencing [of] the behavior of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens” (Rodin, 2012, p. 10). Although the initiatives of the CPC could arguably be considered a combination of both, the second purpose is the most notable in this case. The reason for this is that Nye argues that nation states rapidly expanding their hard power capabilities may unintentionally lead other nations to feel increasingly threatened in the international system, which may potentially result in them forming effective coalitions against the rearming state (Nye, 2016). As China have over several decades experienced a state of

immense economic growth and have been deemed by the widely recognized Forbes Magazine to surpass the economy of the U.S. in 2018, the CPC have naturally expanded the military capacity of China as well ("China's Economy", 2016). According to the remarks of Nye, this rapid expansion may lead to a counter-reaction from the surrounding world and as the U.S. currently functions as the global economic leader, it would be plausible to assume a degree of resistance from the American government to occur, as they could undoubtedly perceive the Chinese rearmament as a national threat. Nye further argues that "soft co-optive power is just as important as hard command power. If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes" (Nye, 1990, p. 168). Thus, the heavy Chinese investment in the expansion of their soft power within the U.S. could arguably be based on an aim of "influencing the behavior of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens" (Rodin, 2012, p. 10). If the CPC manages to generate a positive image of China within U.S. borders by indirectly influencing U.S. citizens through the projection of soft power, the prospect of resistance from their most prominent competitor on the global scale, the U.S. government, may potentially be significantly lowered. As a counter-reaction could function as a considerable hindrance towards China's further economic expansion, downplaying the 'China threat argument' and avoiding notable opposition could most certainly be considered a top priority of the CPC.

Another plausible reason for China's heavy investment in the cultural diplomacy initiatives in the U.S. could be a sign of the CPC wishing to challenge the current position of the U.S. and thus attempting to take over the role as the cultural leader on the global scale. Hartig argues that the country with the most dominant and mainstream culture in the global system is inclined to become the "winner in the international power struggle" (Hartig, 2011, p. 56) and thus, the purpose of the CPC's extensive utilization of cultural diplomacy initiatives may to some extent be intended as "balancing the dominant American (popular)

cultural influence” (Hartig, 2011, p. 57). As China is on the verge of overtaking the position of the economic leader of the world, becoming a dominant global culture would most certainly be desirable for the CPC and thus, it can be argued that they attempt to realize this development through this “effective tool in the struggle of power and interests among nations” (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). However, Nye argues that in order for the production of soft power to occur, the values and policies of the given state must be viewed as credible in the eyes of the target audience, to which he adds that “good public diplomacy has to go beyond propaganda” (Nye, 2008b, p. 101). He follows up this notion proposing the argument that if information appears as propaganda in the eyes of the target audience it “may turn out to be counterproductive if it undermines a country’s reputation for credibility” (Nye, 2008b, p. 100). Lending further proposes that propaganda is fundamentally “the dissemination of more or less doubtful truths for the purpose of influence and manipulation” (Rodin, 2012, p. 12). Since the extensive Chinese expansion of their soft power efforts, many observers have questioned China’s innocence in relation to the country’s utilization of the instruments of cultural diplomacy, which have left critics raising questions concerning freedom of reporting, as well as distortion and inaccuracy in the representation of China, with the accusation of propagandist measures being utilized. Hence, in order to sufficiently assess the role, as well as the effectiveness, of China’s cultural diplomacy efforts in the U.S., an examination of the various controversies related to the initiatives seems an essential aspect and this will thus be explored in the following analysis.

Chinese Media in the U.S.

Background. The initial topic to be explored in the following chapter will be the heavy expansion of Chinese media in the U.S. initiated by the CPC with the aim of improving the production of China’s soft power. Manheim and Henrikson state that one of the

fundamental aspects of 'public diplomacy' consists of communication from "government to people of another country", with the utilized process of "government actors speaking by way of the media" (Rodin, 2012, p. 10). This is a notion that has clearly been adopted by the Chinese officials. According to Kang, the Hong Kong-based newspaper the South China Morning Post reported in January 2009 a Chinese government program that would fund "international ventures undertaken by the state media" with the headline "China launches national publicity campaign to improve its international image" (Kang, 2012, p. 915). It was reported that the initiative was intended to target global audiences by establishing multilingual versions of the largest media outlets in China (Kang, 2012, p. 916). Shambaugh reports that the CPC decided to invest "\$8.7 billion in 2009-2010 in its 'external publicity work'", which was primarily allocated to what is known as the 'Big Four': China Central Television (CCTV), Xinhua News Agency, China Radio International (CRI), and the China Daily newspaper (Shambaugh, 2010, para. 5). Shambaugh further states that all four of the aforementioned external media outlets had undergone major makeovers in order to increase the appeal among Western consumers, such as e.g. foreigners now being brought in to anchor news broadcasts, radio programs being more diversified, or newspapers publishing more investigative stories (Shambaugh, 2010, para. 6). This makeover is an evident example of the CPC's acknowledgement of the increasing significance of Nye's notion of attraction in the international environment, presumably with the intention of influencing audiences into sharing an increasingly China-friendly view (Nye, 2008a).

Li reports that the Xinhua News Agency is the largest media organization in China, with more than "13,000 employees worldwide", as well as "40 offices within China's mainland" (Li, 2013, para. 11). He further states that the organization has been actively seeking to transform itself into a global news agency with its "130 branches and bureaus outside of China" (Li, 2013, para. 11). In January 2010, the agency inaugurated the television

agency, the China Xinhua News Network Corporation (CNC), which was described by the President of Xinhua, Li Congjun, as an important action for Xinhua to “embrace the multimedia world” (Li, 2013, para. 11). In July 2010, CNC World News first began offering an English service that would be running 24/7 with the aim of covering “breaking news as well as major political, economic, and cultural news around the globe” (Li, 2013, para. 12), an initiative which Shambaugh argues to be an attempted imitation of and competition to the well recognized media outlet Al Jazeera (Shambaugh, 2010, para. 7). In January 2011, CNC's English channel expanded its broadcasting whilst establishing a cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in the area of TV news service, which ensured that U.S. citizens would be able to watch the channel through basic cable network (Li, 2013, para. 13). This cooperation would significantly broaden the number of viewers and thus enhance China's potential for the production of the country's soft power within the U.S. population.

The China International Radio (CRI) was founded in 1941 and the service currently broadcasts in 58 languages across the globe (Li, 2013, para. 19). Li states that the service established cooperation with the London-based company the World Radio Network (WRN) in 2000, a company which is a known provider of “transmission services for radio and television broadcasters worldwide” (Li, 2013, para. 19) and this cooperation would allow CRI to be broadcast across the U.S. without short wave. Shambaugh reports that CRI has increasingly been buying airtime on AM and FM radio markets in the U.S. (Shambaugh, 2010, para. 7) and the service is now available in a wide number of markets across the country, including “New York, Washington D.C., Philadelphia and Portland” (Li, 2013, para. 19). The China Daily is a state-owned newspaper that was founded in 1981, but in February 2009 launched a U.S. edition in New York (Li, 2013, para. 22). Although the newspaper had been publishing in the U.S. since 1983, the Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Qu Yingpu, argued that the new edition would be tailored to the U.S. audience and would focus more on “the interactive

communication between China and America” (Li, 2013, p. 22). Li reports that the China Daily now own offices in major U.S. cities, including “New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Houston” (Li, 2013, para. 22) and The Economist states that the newspaper pays substantial amount for inserts in U.S. newspapers such as “the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal” (“China Is Spending Billions”, 2017, para. 10).

Of China's four external media outlets, the ‘Big Four’, the most notable in relation to this thesis is the China Central Television (CCTV). According to Li, CCTV has rapidly speeded up its global outreach since 2010 (Li, 2013, para. 14). In April 2010, the channel was renamed from ‘CCTV-9’ to ‘CCTV News’ to “reflect its comprehensive news coverage which includes newscasts, in-depth reporting, commentary programs, and presentation of features” (Li, 2013, para. 14). Shambaugh argues that the channel was established by the CPC as an attempt to compete with the globally renowned media networks CNN and BBC, and thus to act as an Eastern counterpart (Shambaugh, 2010, para. 7). In February 2012, ‘CCTV News’ launched its ambitious ‘CCTV America’ from its production center in Washington D.C., which was described by the general director, Ma Jing, as a natural action for CCTV in “seeking growth in the global market” (Li, 2013, para. 14). Shambaugh states that the Washington D.C. operation would eventually go on to become “the global hub of [CCTV's] newsgathering and broadcasting operations” (Shambaugh, 2015, p. 103). In 2016, the state broadcaster decided to rebrand ‘CCTV America’ as the ‘China Global Television Network (CGTN)’ (“About CGTN America”, 2018). It is stated on the official website that the channel “aims to provide alternative global coverage with a Chinese perspective” and they argue that “through cable and satellite, [CGTN America] is in nearly 30 million households (encompassing 75 million viewers) in the United States” (“About CGTN America”, 2018). According to The Economist, President Xi Jinping urged the media outlet to “tell the China

story well, spread China's voice" and "showcase China's role as a builder of world peace" ("China Is Spending Billions", 2017, para. 10). The initiative has since been described as "an attempt by China to spread its soft power globally" (Allen & Groll, 2017, para. 3) and fits well with the notion of Hartig who argues that the purpose of cultural diplomacy is "the act of communicating with foreign publics, and therefore is the instrument to facilitate or project a country's soft power" (Hartig, 2016, p. 49). When discussing the instruments of cultural diplomacy, Mitchell proposes three distinct models that governments can utilize in their foreign policy agendas (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). Specifically Mitchell's third model, in which he presents a "mixed system" where governments continue to retain overall control, but choose to fund and contract agencies, which will "operate independently within their competences", has a particular relevance in regard to this case (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). When analyzing the aforementioned media outlets of China, this distinct model of cultural diplomacy instruments undoubtedly presents itself as the most applicable. It can be argued that while the execution of the media planning is delegated to the various aforementioned agencies, the CPC still function as the legitimate owners and thereby also the funders. President Xi Jinping stated in 2016 that Chinese media abroad "must tell China's story to the world better", adding that they should consistently "follow the party line" ("China's CCTV Launches", 2017, para. 5). Hence, determining this instrument of cultural diplomacy as being an example of Mitchell's third model seems appropriate, as it could certainly be argued that although the media outlets are seemingly working autonomously, the CPC still possess overall control of the content reaching the target audience.

Controversies & Effectiveness. China's heavy expansion of their media outlets in the U.S. has experienced a mixed reception with critics raising numerous questions primarily regarding concerns of editorial freedom. Hartig argues that as cultural diplomacy can be

interpreted as diplomatic activity from governments aimed at “the public in foreign countries in order to realize its own national interests and create a favorable international environment”, it is considered inevitable to dismiss a discussion of propaganda (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). Exactly this notion of propagandist measures being potentially utilized has been a central topic in many U.S. news outlets and journals, with the strong accusation of the CPC deliberately assuring that exclusively positive portrayals of China are reaching U.S. audiences. Senior Research Analyst for East Asia Freedom House, Sarah Cook, argues that the CPC coerce the various external media outlets into exerting self-censorship (Cook, 2017, p. 11). She further argues that this is accomplished by the CPC taking conscious action “to prevent or punish the publication of content critical of Beijing” (Cook, 2017, p. 5). This statement is further elaborated on by Allen and Groll who argue, in relation to the news coverage of CGTN America, that although the presentation of domestic issues in the U.S. is “professional and not clearly slanted in one direction or another”, the same cannot be considered the case when discussing issues related to China (Allen & Groll, 2017, para. 4). On the contrary, they state that any China-related reports “strictly follow Chinese Communist Party media guidelines, presenting China as a positive, peaceful force whose geopolitical interests are righteous” (Allen & Groll, 2017, para. 4), which is a notion that fits well with President Xi’s statement that the Chinese external media outlets should “follow the party line” (“China’s CCTV Launches”, 2017, para. 5).

One may contemplate whether this strategy of censorship from the CPC is beneficial in terms of the effectiveness of the Chinese cultural diplomacy efforts and in relation to the intended production of China’s soft power. The observations of Nye would suggest it to be negative. Nye states that “good public diplomacy has to go beyond propaganda”, suggesting that soft power in this case would likely be consumed rather than produced (Nye, 2008b, p. 101). As the external media outlets of China have been widely accused of being instruments

of propaganda, the intended production and expansion Chinese soft power in the U.S. could thus be considered less effective than desired by the CPC. Jowett contends the notion that propaganda should be defined as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (Jowett, 2015, p. 7). Based on this notion, the external media outlets of China could certainly be argued to fall under the definition of instruments of propaganda. The deliberate attempt by the CPC of withholding news stories from the U.S. public that are critical of Beijing is arguably an evident illustration of Jowett’s notion of the attempt to “shape perceptions” and “manipulate cognitions” of the American citizens (Jowett, 2015, p. 7). Jowett further elaborates on his definition, clarifying that his utilization of the word ‘systemic’ refers to “governments and corporations establish[ing] departments or agencies specifically to create systematic propaganda” (Jowett, 2015, p. 7). Once again, this notion fits well with the discussed media outlets of China. As they all function as state-owned agencies and are urged by President Xi to “showcase China’s role as a builder of world peace” (“China Is Spending Billions”, 2017, para. 10) and to promote “positive propaganda as the main theme” (“China’s CCTV Launches”, 2017, para. 5), whilst simultaneously being hindered from raising a critical voice towards the actions and policies of the CPC, defining these media outlets as agencies aiming at creating “systematic propaganda” can arguably be considered a reasonable act (Jowett, 2015, p. 7). On the basis of the notion of Nye that “if something looks like propaganda, people do not trust it, it loses credibility” (Nye, 2009), this categorization of the Chinese media outlets constituting instruments of propaganda will undoubtedly have a negative effect on China’s soft power.

Not everybody accepts the notion that the Chinese external media outlets function as instruments of propaganda that is subjected to censorship. CCTV America Business News Anchor, Phillip T.K. Yin, argues that the allegations are simply providing a distorted picture

of reality, as he states that the channel is “covering stories from sometimes very controversial angles” (Folkenflik, 2013, para. 4), to which he adds that their perspectives are “certainly not one-sided” (Folkenflik, 2013, para. 17). Professor of media culture at City University of New York's College of Staten Island, Ying Zhu, does acknowledge the network's attempts of incorporating Western journalism standards by hiring “dozens of staffers from ABC, Bloomberg, CNN, the BBC and similar outlets” (Folkenflik, 2013, para. 15). However, she further argues that what is yet conspicuously missing from the broadcasts are “actually any real political news about China itself” as CCTV America is still “very much on the party's short leash”, a condition that in her opinion results in the channel being unable to “reveal anything that's beyond [the] scripted version of what happened in China” (Folkenflik, 2013, para. 16). Lead Consultant for CCTV America, Jim Laurie, argues that the editorial freedom on the channel is greater than ever before, but does acknowledge that CCTV America would be unlikely to air subjects that are deemed too controversial for the CPC e.g. “an interview with the Dalai Lama's criticisms of the Chinese regime” (Folkenflik, 2013, para. 11). When discussing the difference between cultural diplomacy and propaganda, Hartig argues that the first of the two concepts is associated with “the known facts”, whereas the latter concept relies heavily on a “mixture of facts and untruths” (Hartig, 2011, p. 55). One could argue that the idea of not including or reporting critically on subjects that are considered overly controversial is not entirely equivalent to providing “untruths”, as it is rather omitting certain truths as opposed to openly lying. However, Melissen argues that propaganda engages in the “rather primitive business of peddling one's own views and narrowing other people's minds” whereas cultural diplomacy may in some cases involve “the peddling of the state's own views, but it seldom seeks to narrow other people's minds” (Rodin, 2012, p. 13). Although withholding information in the form of deliberately avoiding to report on sensitive subjects could be argued to not be equal to telling untruths, it can from a news broadcaster's

perspective undoubtedly be interpreted as an act of “narrow[ing] other people’s minds” and thus, it could definitely be considered propaganda on the basis of Melissen’s definition (Rodin, 2012, p. 13). Nonetheless, it is arguably the way in which the information is perceived by the target audience that fully determines the outcome, which is a notion backed by Nye as he states that information that appears as propaganda in the eyes of the audience “may turn out to be counterproductive if it undermines a country’s reputation for credibility” (Nye, 2008b, p. 100). Hence, it could certainly be argued that no matter the reality, if the target audience i.e. the American population, perceives the news input as containing untruths or narrowing minds, China’s cultural diplomacy initiative in relation to the expansion of their external media outlets may in fact serve a counterproductive purpose and thus, the level of Chinese soft power may experience a reduction as opposed the initially intended production.

Wang argues that the management of national reputation is “not just about projecting a certain national image, but rather negotiating understanding with foreign publics” (Wang, 2006, p. 94). When discussing the purpose of cultural diplomacy, Nye expands on this notion by stating that “by definition, soft power means getting others to want the same outcomes you want, and that requires an understanding of how they are hearing your messages and fine-tuning it accordingly. It is crucial to understand the target audience.” (Nye, 2004, p. 11). On the basis of this notion, one could argue that the CPC in their external media initiative has not fully understood the target audience i.e. the U.S. citizens. Shambaugh argues that the CPC have not yet received a sufficient return for their investment as merely a scarce percentage of U.S. citizens utilize the Chinese media outlets that are now so widely available (Shambaugh, 2016). There may be different explanations for this lack of impact. One possible explanation could arguably be that American consumers greatly cherish values such as freedom of press and if they perceive a lack hereof in the media outlets of China, the appeal will be significantly diminished. This lacking appeal could certainly be exacerbated by negative press

stating controversies about the CPC's management of Chinese media outlets such as e.g. the article by Time.com reporting that China "just earned its worst ever score in an annual global press freedom survey" (Campbell, 2016, para. 2) or the article by ForeignPolicy.com reporting that CGTN America has refrained from registering for the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), an act which is "meant to provide some basic disclosure about an outlet's operations" in order to counter propaganda (Allen & Groll, 2017, para. 11). Hence, if the CPC wishes to increase the production of Chinese soft power, it could certainly be argued that loosening the government's requirements to the external media outlets on what is editorially acceptable would be a necessity, as this would be an evident step in the way of "understand[ing] the target audience." (Nye, 2004, p. 11).

However, a decreased level of government control does not appear to be approaching in the near future. In March 2018, the CPC announced its creation of their giant international media outlet called 'Voice of China', which is combining the three broadcasters China Global Television Network (CGTN), China Radio International (CRI), and China National Radio (CNR) (Yip, 2018, para. 1). Yip reports that the initiative was enacted with an intention to "streamline departments and centralize control, re-emphasizing the Chinese Communist Party's ultimate authority" (Yip, 2018, para. 6) and was formed with the official goal of "propagating the party's theories, directions, principles and policies" (Yip, 2018, para. 11). According to the theory of 'cultural diplomacy', this increased media control by the CPC, along with the fact that the media outlet will be under "direct control of the party's central propaganda department" (Jiang, 2018, para. 6), will not lead to a positive increase in the effectiveness on China's soft power in the U.S. Due to the widespread availability of internet use, as well as the popularity of social media, people are arguably more averse to state-run propaganda than ever before. Yip argues that "as long as China's leadership cannot differentiate between propaganda and journalism", the national image of China will be

unlikely to improve as “no amount of repackaging and rebranding can succeed if the product itself is unchanged” (Yip, 2018, para. 22). This statement fits well with the notion of Nye that “even the best advertising cannot sell an unpopular product, and policies that appear as narrowly self-serving or arrogantly presented are likely to consume rather than produce soft power” (Nye, 2004, p. 10). Furthermore, this is in accordance with the opinion of Mark who argues that instruments of cultural diplomacy that utilize “selective self-projection” will ultimately “undermine the credibility of cultural diplomacy, a key property of effective soft power” (Rodin, 2012, p. 13). Kang reports that the well-known Chinese journalist Yan Lieshan argued in 2009 that if governments do not wish the audience to believe that reporters are not free to report the truth “the first thing you need to do is to establish credibility and win trust” (Kang, 2012, p. 916). Nye argues that a rewarding way of establishing credibility is through the use of self-criticism. He presents the notion that states displaying criticism towards policies of their own can function as a resource of soft power by stating that “the presence of dissent and self-criticism can be beneficial: it enhances the credibility of messages” (Nye, 2011, p. 109). Hence, the CPC eventually allowing its external media outlets to publish content critical of Beijing and the policies of the CPC may actually portray a proof of authenticity and freedom of expression in the eyes of U.S. citizens and could thus assist greatly in the production of Chinese soft power. Whether this cultural diplomacy initiative in the form of the heavy expansion of Chinese media will eventually bear fruit and build an increasingly positive image for China in the U.S. remains to be seen. Nye does state that soft power can take “years to produce” (Nye, 2004, p. 1), but in conclusion, as long as China’s external media outlets are perceived as propaganda by the American population, the possibility of the effectiveness living up to the desired goals of the CPC can be regarded minimal at best.

Investment in Hollywood

Background. Nye argues that the world of the future is “not merely going to be a world of whose army wins, but also whose story wins” and states that this increasingly significant aspect of foreign policy in international relations is what constitutes soft power (Nye, 2016). China correspondent Matthew Carney from ABC News argues that American soft power is currently positioned at the top of the tables in the global arena and that this position is largely connected to the country’s “popular culture, like Hollywood films” (Carney, 2016, para. 3). The CPC has in the past decade indeed acknowledged the potential of Hollywood in the shaping of perceptions and as a rich source of soft power, and as President Xi Jinping urged China to become a “cultural superpower”, the country’s investment in the American film industry has escalated enormously, with the intention of gaining cultural influence in contemporary popular culture (Carney, 2016, para. 9). This has led Chinese media giants to buy Hollywood studios in the pursuit of influence in the stories that are being presented and U.S.-China National Security Reporter for the Epoch Times, Joshua Philipp, argues that the CPC is now indirectly gaining increasing control “over what Hollywood can and cannot produce” (Philipp, 2016, para. 3). However, this control is not solely accomplished through the economic acquisition of Hollywood assets.

Carney states that the CPC intends to “take back some of the popular global narrative to drive their message home” and that China as a country has “the market power to make sure it happens” (Carney, 2016, para. 11). According to Philipp, the immense economic potential of the Chinese market has facilitated willingness among Hollywood producers to being “open to the CPC’s censorship because it believes there is a golden opportunity” (Philipp, 2016, para. 21). Founding Executive Editor at Radio Free Asia, Dan Southerland, reports that with U.S. ticket sales being “relatively flat”, analysts have predicted China’s box office market to become the largest on the globe by 2018 (Southerland, 2016, para. 3). Carney stated in

November 2016 that “22 new cinemas” were opening in China everyday as a result of the country’s ever-growing middle class, which provides an enormous economic incentive for film producers to enter the Chinese market (Carney, 2016, para.). However, entrance on the Chinese market is not an uncomplicated process, as China has established a barrier in the form of a quota system, a system that Philipp describes is intended by the CPC to manipulate “Hollywood’s desire to cooperate by limiting how many foreign films are allowed in” (Philipp, 2016, para. 22). Carney states that “a quote of 34 foreign films a year” is allowed to be shown in Chinese cinemas, which results in Hollywood studios being left to compete with one another for the CPC’s favor (Carney, 2016, para. 24). Hence, Philipp argues that Hollywood producers are increasingly exerting self-censorship, as films are now being severely “altered to appease the Chinese regime” in the search for increased profit (Philipp, 2016, para. 2). Based on Nye’s notion of the increasing importance of attraction in the global system, this initiative can arguably be considered a profitable move by China in the pursuit of defining the cultural narrative and gaining desired soft power. Having a say in the development of popular culture which is likely to subconsciously influence audiences’ view of the world can undoubtedly be considered a great source of power.

Southerland states that the ultimate decision as to which films will be approved for Chinese investment is in the hands of China’s State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT) (Southerland, 2016, para. 20). Philipp argues that the terms of entrance are highly strict and that Hollywood studios must “choose between getting a 25 percent cut of box office sales or selling their films to the CPC at a set price” (Philipp, 2016, para. 23). He further states that the CPC “isn’t consistent about what film content it allows and what it rejects” and that eligibility for one of the 34 slots thereby can be considered ambiguous, which thus leads filmmakers to go beyond the CPC’s “surface-level standards and make more direct attempts to appease Chinese censors” (Philipp, 2016, para.

25). As a direct result of this ambiguity, Celine Ge from the South China Morning Post reports that China's top media mogul, Lu Ruigang, states that "in U.S. films nowadays you rarely see Chinese characters as bad guys. The scriptwriters hardly ever portray dodgy Chinese characters. Chinese don't like it, of course" (Ge, 2017, para. 2). This statement is further backed by Robert Daly, director of the Washington D.C.-based Kissinger Institute on China and the United States at the Wilson Center, who notes that "there have been no films in recent years that depict the Chinese Communist Party or mainland Chinese characters in a critical light" (Southerland, 2016, para. 38). According to Philipp, this form of censorship is becoming ever more prevalent in Hollywood as "Chinese companies [are] on a spree of buying or partnering with foreign film assets", the most notable being the Dalian Wanda Group's acquisition of the major Hollywood studio Legendary Entertainment, as well as AMC Entertainment Holdings, which "operates AMC Theaters - the second largest cinema chain in the United States" (Philipp, 2016 para. 35). This can certainly be argued to be an evident example of Nye's notion of "the ability of a country to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its own" (Nye, 1990, p. 169), which is accomplished by "means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes" (Nye, 2011, p. 20). By ensuring that Hollywood producers do not "depict the Chinese Communist Party or mainland Chinese characters in a critical light" (Southerland, 2016, para. 38), the CPC are arguably framing the agenda to their advantage and are thus attempting to induce viewers into unknowingly developing a favorable image of China. Furthermore, the CPC hereby attempt to elicit "positive attraction" (Nye, 2011, p. 20) by not only presenting China in an positive light, but also by preventing elements that could potentially present China and the CPC as unattractive.

When considering the three models of Mitchell describing variations of the instruments of cultural diplomacy, one could certainly argue two different models to be in play in this specific case. When discussing the acquisition by Chinese companies of Hollywood assets, Mitchell's third model in which he presents the "mixed system" of which governments continue to retain overall control, but choose to fund and contract non-official agencies, which will "operate independently within their competences" (Hartig, 2011, p. 56), is arguably the most applicable, although this an unusual example that cannot be directly compared to the example of China's external media outlets discussed earlier in this thesis. This is due to the notion that these companies are not state-owned, nor are they funded by the CPC and thus, they cannot be determined as direct cultural diplomacy instruments of the state. However, Philipp states that the companies are "required to have a CPC liaison" and notes that "the Party constitution stipulates that organizations of more than three members" should have a CPC branch (Philipp, 2016, para. 38). What this entails practically is that regardless of whether or not the various companies themselves possess motives to promote the CPC, being based in China results in them being held to the laws of the CPC - "including its laws on censorship" (Philipp, 2016, para. 39), and thus, it can definitely be argued that they function indirectly as instruments of cultural diplomacy by being forced to portray China in a positive light in their production of films. When discussing the SAPPRT and their process of selecting the 34 foreign films eligible for the Chinese market, Mitchell's first model is undoubtedly the most applicable. This is the model of "government control" in which Mitchell argues that governments exercise direct control with the help of "a ministry or an official agency" (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). The reason for this selection is that the SAPPRT functions as an official government agency and according to Philipp, the mandate of the SAPPRT "specifically includes provisions protecting the interests of the CPC" (Philipp, 2016, para. 24). Philipp further states that the agency's director, along with the remaining

SAPPRFT officials, is himself as member of the CPC (Philipp, 2016, para. 24). Hence, it can certainly be argued that the selection of eligible films is guaranteed to follow the strict guidelines of the CPC and thus, the interpretation of this instrument of cultural diplomacy belonging to Mitchell's first model is arguably appropriate, as this is an evident example of the government exercising direct control.

Controversies & Effectiveness. The actions of the CPC in relation to their influence on the Hollywood film industry have brought along extensive criticism. Once again, Hartig's notion stating that a discussion of propaganda will inevitably be a result of diplomatic activity from governments aimed at "the public in foreign countries in order to realize its own national interests and create a favorable international environment" (Hartig, 2011, p. 56) could be considered highly relevant. A report from the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC) accuses China of perceiving film "as a component of social control" and notes that when regulating content in films "the CPC's concerns are positioned above all other interests" (Philipp, 2016, para. 6). Author of "The Art of Industrial Warfare", Amar Manzoor, further argues that the CPC utilizes Hollywood films as a way of promoting their otherwise unfavorable brand, by stating that "through censoring film, the Party aims at skewing international perceptions in its favor", as it forces Hollywood not to portray "any of [its] negative elements" (Philipp, 2016, para. 15). An example of the result of this censorship could be the 2012 film remake of "Red Dawn", which originally featured Chinese communists invading the United States, but was forced into altering the antagonists to North Koreans (Philipp, 2016, para. 28). Other examples include the 2010 film "Karate Kid", which encountered trouble due to its villain being Chinese, or the 2015 film "Pixels" that was forced to remove a scene of the Great Wall being damaged (Philipp, 2016, para. 26). Allegations of

propaganda were further raised by the Huffington Post, who in a 2012 report accused the CPC of practicing "thought control" (Philipp, 2016, para. 44).

One may feel enticed to conclude that these allegations of propagandist measures being utilized by the CPC will undoubtedly entail negative consequences in relation to China's soft power production in the U.S., as Nye states that "if something looks like propaganda, people do not trust it, it loses credibility" (Nye, 2009) and that "good public diplomacy has to go beyond propaganda" (Nye, 2008, p. 101). However, Nye proposes the argument that information *must* appear as propaganda in the eyes of the target audience for it to become counterproductive and undermine "a country's reputation for credibility" (Nye, 2008, p. 100). One could certainly argue that this is not the case in relation to China's influence on Hollywood films. Although a number of scholars criticize the measures of the CPC, it would yet be reasonable to assume that the average American viewer is completely unaware that China possesses any influence at all over the content of the U.S. produced films to which they are being exposed. As opposed to the Chinese external media outlets discussed in the previous chapter, this attempt by the CPC of producing soft power is much more well disguised and far more subtle, as it is achieved through external agencies i.e. the Hollywood production companies. Thus, it could surely be argued that the target audience is not realizing the presence of Chinese censorship in contemporary Hollywood films and is thereby not interpreting the content as propaganda. From that perspective, it is definitely arguable to claim that the U.S. audience will develop an increasingly favorable view of China on the basis of the CPC's efforts of influence and the effectiveness on China's soft power could certainly have the potential to be positive. In this way, the American population may eventually find the culture of China more attractive and thereby be increasingly inclined to "sympathize with its views" (Nye, 2016).

One may contemplate whether the CPC's efforts of influencing Hollywood films to portray China in the best possible light could be a mere attempt to control the narrative about China within the China itself. However, in an interview by China Uncensored, Philipp argues that this is not the case and that the efforts are not only about preventing Chinese citizens from seeing films that do not adhere to the core socialist values of the CPC, but also undoubtedly about "altering the perceptions of the Chinese Communist Party and Chinese governance" within the U.S. (China Uncensored, 2016). He further argues that this is based on the notion of former Chinese President Hu Jintao who argued in a speech in October 2012 that a "culture war" is taking place (China Uncensored, 2016). David Major, founder and president of U.S.-based company offering training in counter-intelligence, the CI Centre, explains the concept of 'cultural warfare' as the act of "influencing the cultural biases of a targeted country by imposing your own cultural viewpoints" (Liang & Xiangsui, 2015, p. xii). This can evidently be related to the notion of Hartig, which states that the country with the most dominant culture in the global system is inclined to be the "winner in the international power struggle" (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). Hartig expands on this statement by arguing that the objective of the utilization of cultural diplomacy initiatives may to some extent be intended as "balancing the dominant American (popular) cultural influence" (Hartig, 2011, p. 57). This could certainly be argued to be the intention of the CPC, a notion that is further exemplified by Zhang Hongsen, the head of the SAPPRT. According to South China Morning Post, Hongsen argues that "it must be recognized we are in a full state of competition with American films. ... This is about defending and fighting for cultural territory" (Philipp, 2016, para. 56).

A way in which the CPC is arguably attempting to balance American cultural influence can be identified by observing another one of the censorship requirements that the SAPPRT asks from the Hollywood producers. Amar Manzoor states that Hollywood films

are forbidden from providing a positive portrayal of the United States (Philipp, 2016, para. 15). As examples of this demand, the report by the USCC states that the 2013 film "Captain Phillips" featuring Tom Hanks was blocked from being shown in China "because of the film's positive portrayal of the United States and U.S. military", as well as the 3-D release of the 1985 film "Top Gun" being rejected due to the fact that it "portrayed U.S. military dominance" (Philipp, 2016, para. 11). Nye argues that states often have the intention of telling stories merely from their own side and thus, they are attempting to reduce the level of soft power of their political rivals by reducing their voice (Nye, 2004, p. 8). This statement can certainly be considered evident when observing this particular requirement from the CPC. In order to balance the cultural influence of the Chinese regime's largest competitor on the global stage, they are arguably "reducing their voice" with the deliberate intention of reducing the level of U.S. soft power. However, according to the theory of Nye, the CPC should be aware of the degree to which they attempt to undermine the positive projection of the U.S if they wish to produce soft power within the borders of their political rivals. The reason for this is that Nye states, in relation to popular culture, that the level of soft power significantly depends on the audience. Thus, the CPC severely undermining American culture as opposed to Chinese culture to a significant extent could potentially undercut the attraction from viewers in the U.S. and thus lead to a decrease in Chinese soft power. However, it could certainly be argued that the CPC has ensured the Hollywood films still being allowed to remain recognizably American and thus, the potential for the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S. does still persist. Philipp argues that Hollywood is "America's dream factory" which more than any other cultural form "shapes the American imagination" (Philipp, 2016, para. 5). China's direct insertion into the making of the stories that many Americans value deeply will most likely not have an immediate effect, but as Nye states, it may "take years to produce the desired outcomes" (Nye, 2004, p. 1) and if China keeps

subconsciously influencing U.S. citizens into developing an increasingly China-friendly view, this can definitely assist greatly in increasing the level of China's soft power in the long run.

Confucius Institutes

Background. Mark argues that one method that has become an increasingly significant element of the practice and in which cultural diplomacy supports the building of long-term relationships is that of 'nation-branding' (Mark, 2010, p. 64). Hartig states that 'nation-branding' can be accomplished through i.a. the utilization of cultural institutes, as he argues that these have become widely acknowledged by scholars to function as important instruments for states to enhance cultural exchange as a part of their foreign policy, with the aim of establishing long-term relationships with the public of other nations (Hartig, 2011, p. 56). As an evident example of this attempted enhancement of cultural exchange, we have the establishment of the Chinese cultural institutes known as the Confucius Institutes (CI). The CI's function as a project of the CPC that consists of non-profit institutions, which according to the Confucius Institute Headquarters, aim at "promot[ing] Chinese language and culture in foreign countries" ("About Us – Confucius", n.d., para. 1). The function of the CI's is to offer courses concerning Chinese culture and language and they are rapidly being disseminated to colleges and universities around the world, as well as to lower level educational classrooms (Peterson, 2017, p. 15). All CI's are funded by the Chinese government agency known as the Hanban, which is "the executive body of the Office of Chinese Languages Council International" and which is under the authority of the Chinese Ministry of Education (Peterson, 2017, p. 21). According to Rachelle Peterson of the National Association of Scholars (NAS), the leadership of the Hanban consists primarily of "leaders and career bureaucrats" from the CPC (Peterson, 2017, p. 22).

The CPC claims to sponsor “512 Confucius Institutes and 1,074 Confucius Classrooms in 131 nations, for a total of 1,586 educational outposts” (Peterson, 2017, p. 24). Within the U.S., which is the concern of this thesis, 103 CI’s are currently in operation, and similarly organized Confucius Classrooms (CC) further operates at “501 primary and secondary schools” (Peterson, 2017, p. 15). Peterson states that the 103 CI’s currently operating in the U.S. comprise 20% of the total amount on the globe, and the 501 CC’s comprise 47% of the total global amount, which in total amounts to 38% of the CPC sponsored CI’s and CC’s being “located in the United States” (Peterson, 2017, p. 24). According to Peterson, the U.S. thus has more CI’s and CC’s than any other nation in the world and the amount is seemingly ever increasing (Peterson, 2017, p. 24). Since April 2016 and until April 2017, when the extensive report on Confucius Institutes in the U.S. ‘Outsourced to China’ was published by the NAS, Peterson reports that the U.S. experienced an increase in the number of CI’s and CC’s of nearly 35% (Peterson, 2017, p. 15). The establishment of the immense number of CI’s in the U.S. can yet again be considered an acknowledgement from the CPC of the accelerating significance of Nye’s notion of “eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes” in the international system (Nye, 2011, p. 20). Through the ability of directly educating the youth of their largest global competitor, China evidently attempts at increasing their level of attraction and thus, their potential level of soft power. This further relates well with Nye’s notion that “if a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes” (Nye, 1990, p. 168). The act of convincing the youth of the political rivals into recognizing the growing Chinese power in the global system as being legitimate may arguably result in less resistance in the future, which can only be in the interest of China in regard to the country’s further economic expansion.

When analyzing the CI's in relation to Mitchell's three models of the instruments of cultural diplomacy, his third model representing the "mixed system" of governments funding and contracting non-official agencies, while still retaining overall control (Hartig, 2011, p. 56) yet again functions as the most applicable. The reason for this selection is that although each CI officially operates as a joint venture between the American university hosting the CI, the Hanban, and a Chinese partner university, it could still be argued that the CPC remains in control of the general execution of the various CI's. This is because the CPC is in charge of the funding and contracting of the various American partner universities and thus, they are in charge of the selection of teachers and materials (Peterson, 2017, p. 27). Peterson states that the Hanban selects professors from the Chinese partner university that will serve as the CI's Chinese teachers and the American teachers from the respective host university are required to sign a contract with the Hanban, which means that the entirety of teachers "sign contracts with the Hanban, not the host university, and are paid by the Hanban" (Peterson, 2017, p. 32). Additionally, Peterson states that the Hanban is in charge of the selection and supply of textbooks to be utilized during the various classes (Peterson, 2017, p. 27). Hence, it would certainly be reasonable to argue that although the execution of the CI's are officially delegated to the American host universities, the Hanban's selection of teachers and textbooks still ensures that the CPC retain overall control of the operation and thus, the decision of characterizing the CI's as instruments of Mitchell's third model seems appropriate.

Controversies & Effectiveness. As was the case with the two Chinese instruments of cultural diplomacy that have previously been examined in this thesis, the CI's have also met extensive criticism from outside observers. Peterson and the NAS state in their report that the most prominent controversies related to the CI's are the issues of *intellectual freedom* and *transparency*. Thus, in order to adequately assess the effectiveness of the CI's in regard to the

intended production of Chinese soft power in the U.S., these controversies will be explored in the following chapter.

In relation to the issue of *intellectual freedom*, John Sudworth of the BBC argues that as the quantity of American CI's has risen significantly, so has the apprehension of American academics, as he states that they perceive these cultural institutes to present a severe "threat to freedom of thought and speech in education" (Sudworth, 2014, para. 11). This concern is shared by the NAS who fear that academic freedom is being undermined in relation to the hiring policies of the CI's, the textbooks that are being utilized, and the topics that are allowed to be discussed in class (Peterson, 2017, p. 9). In relation to the hiring policies, Peterson states that the Chinese teachers are ultimately selected by the various American host universities, but this selection can exclusively be chosen from a previously determined pool of candidates who have been nominated by the Hanban in advance (Peterson, 2017, p. 39). It is further stated that a number of criteria, presented by the Hanban, must be complied with in order for teachers to qualify as eligible candidates. The Hanban's website states a list of official requirements that all can be considered fairly benign, but Peterson argues that interviews that the NAS have conducted with anonymous teachers of 12 different American CI's revealed that the eligibility criteria of the Hanban includes a screening of applicant teachers, which excludes all applicants "who practice Falun Gong", a religious movement that is considered "heretical" in China (Peterson, 2017, p. 40). Additionally, the interviews revealed that many teachers felt that the Hanban was pressuring them into behaving as "representatives of the state" (Peterson, 2017, p. 44). These accusations were further substantiated through an interview with the director of the CI at Texas A&M University, Randy Kluver, who told the NAS that all of the Chinese teachers at the CI had acknowledged, when asked if they had received political training, that "they [Hanban] say do not talk about

politics” (Peterson, 2017, p. 44). This has led the NAS, among others, to accuse the CI's of religious discrimination as well as political motivations in their hiring policies.

In relation to the soft power production of China, these policies may arguably have the potential to entail a positive effect for the CPC. Employing teachers who feel pressured into representing the values of the CPC and thus into exerting self-censorship, could be considered an obvious strategy of “framing the agenda” (Nye, 2011, p. 20) and fits well with the notion of Hartig that instruments of cultural diplomacy are the “instrument[s] in the hands of governments aimed at persuading” (Hartig, 2016, p. 49). Students attending CI's in the U.S. will thus be likely to develop an increasingly China-friendly mindset if merely positive representations of China are presented to them and therefore, in regard to the soft power agenda of the CPC, these hiring policies may indeed be beneficial. However, this positive effect relies on the condition that the students do not obtain this information and develop a perception of the CI's as exerting propagandist measures, as Nye states that information that appears as propaganda in the eyes of the target audience “may turn out to be counterproductive” in relation to the intended production of soft power (Nye, 2008, p. 100). However, Peterson states that the interviews have revealed that the Hanban's pressure is “implicit rather than explicit”, meaning that there exist no explicit rules which prohibit teachers from discussing sensitive topics (Peterson, 2017, p. 82). Hence, it could certainly be considered extremely difficult to prove to students that the Hanban engages in any acts of censorship in relation to their hiring policies and the effectiveness may certainly be positive on the soft power of China. It would further be reasonable to argue that the individual teachers would not be inclined to reveal these limitations to the students of the CI's, as emeritus professor of East Asian Studies at Princeton, Perry Link, argues that Chinese teachers are aware that if instructions from the Hanban are not complied with, they will likely be “recalled and punished and their families could be punished” (Peterson, 2017, p. 85). Thus,

if the students of American CI's remain uninformed of the possible underlying agenda of the CPC, the hiring policies may surely benefit the production of Chinese soft power. When discussing the policies of states, Nye argues that "when our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced" (Nye, 2004, p. 256) and thus, if the students regard the policies of China to be legitimate, Nye's notion of positive attraction is likely to be identified.

Apart from the controversies regarding the hiring policies of the Hanban, the CI's have also met criticism in regard to the utilized teaching resources. Peterson states that all "textbooks, lesson plans, audio-visual guides, and other materials" are provided by the Hanban and this has naturally awoken suspicion from critics (Peterson, 2017, p. 64). This has yet again led to accusations of censorship in regard to sensitive political topics, as an anonymous teacher at the University of Binghamton argued that she found the materials to be "lacking academic credibility" (Peterson, 2017, p. 106). As examples of this lack, she states that the material excludes all information on topics such as e.g. Taiwan or the Tiananmen Square massacre (Peterson, 2017, p. 106). Additionally, professor at the University of Miami, June Dreyer, stated in an interview with the NAS that she had identified a variety of political videos shown at the university's CI, which she deemed historically inaccurate and biased towards the U.S. (Peterson, 2017, p. 65). This has yet again led to accusations of propaganda being utilized. According to Lending, propaganda is fundamentally "the dissemination of more or less doubtful truths for the purpose of influence and manipulation" (Rodin, 2012, p. 12). However, as was the case with the Chinese media in the U.S., not including subjects in the CI's teaching materials that are considered overly controversial is not entirely equivalent to providing "doubtful truths", as it is rather omitting certain truths as opposed to openly lying. But nonetheless, it could arguably be considered a form of deliberate manipulation and may not have the desired effect if discovered by students at the various CI's.

As another example of the degree of intentional censorship exerted by the Hanban, BBC's John Sudworth held an interview in 2014 with the head of the Hanban, Xu Lin, an interview that unexpectedly turned controversial. Sudworth raised questions concerning an academic conference in Portugal, sponsored by the Hanban, in which Xu discovered that the official program had "contained publicity for a Taiwanese educational organization" (Sudworth, 2014, para. 26). Xu reportedly demanded an alteration of the program, which eventually led to four pages regarding Taiwan being removed (Sudworth, 2014, para. 29). Sudworth states that after the interview had finished, Xu was immensely discontent with being asked questions about the incident in Portugal and she allegedly demanded for an hour, along with her press officers, that the BBC would delete the section of the interview concerning the incident, which the BBC refused (Sudworth, 2014, para. 32). This is an evident example of the extent to which the Hanban will go in order to avoid press that could in any way negatively affect the reputation of the CPC. This determination to have this particular section deleted strongly indicates a conviction that not censoring specific sensitive topics will hurt the CPC in their pursuit of the production of soft power, but according to the remarks of Nye, this lack of self-criticism may turn out to be counterproductive for the soft power of China (Nye, 2011, p. 109).

Another aspect of the operation of the CI's that has led to controversies is that of *transparency*. Peterson and the NAS argue that acquiring specific information regarding the details of the agreements between the Hanban and the American host universities is a challenging task (Peterson, 2017, p. 72). Hua Chunyu, who functions as a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, stated in 2014 that "all class and cultural activities are open and transparent" and argued that the Chinese side has "never interfered with academic freedom" ("China Defends Confucius", 2014, para. 6). However, this statement is not in accordance with the report published by the NAS. Peterson contests the notion of Chunyu and questions

its sincerity by arguing that only few of the CI's are willing to publicly disclose the contracts that exist between the host university and the Hanban (Peterson, 2017, p. 72). She further argues that the American CI's are immensely hesitant in relation to the arrangement of interviews with external researchers. Peterson mentions a number of cases in which the NAS have attempted to arrange meetings with directors of the various CI's, but were either refused or continuously hindered due to varying explanations. An example of this is the case of the University of Binghamton in which director Zu-yan Chen initially consented to be interviewed, but strangely decided to cancel immediately before the meeting was due with the argument that he had suddenly become "extremely busy" (Peterson, 2017, p. 74). Peterson further states that the legal office of the university, to which the NAS were directed instead, was closed upon arrival (Peterson, 2017, p. 74). Another example includes the case of the New Jersey University in which an interview was initially arranged with director Daniel Julius (Peterson, 2014, p. 74). In this case, Peterson states that Julius "rescheduled or cancelled our meeting four times" and that they eventually never met and that these instances were merely two of many failed attempts by the NAS to gain insight into the specific activities being present within the setting of the CI's (Peterson, 2017, p. 74).

One may question the ostensible innocence of the CI's when considering this lack of transparency. The unwillingness to arrange interviews with external researchers could certainly be interpreted as a deliberate attempt from the Hanban to conceal information revealing indications of an interference with academic freedom. By maintaining sincerity in terms of the legitimacy of the CI's operation in the eyes of the students, the CPC arguably desires the maintenance of a positive attraction within the various classrooms. In this way, the CI's lack of transparency could actually function as being beneficial in relation to the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S., as a full disclosure of their activities could entail a negative effect if the students begin to recognize methods of propaganda being

utilized. However, this could certainly also be considered a precarious strategy. When describing the difference between propaganda and cultural diplomacy, Melissen argues that the first concept engages in the “rather primitive business of peddling one’s own views and narrowing other people’s minds” (Rodin, 2012, p. 13). On the contrary, he argues that the latter concept may in some cases involve “the peddling of the state’s own views, but it seldom seeks to narrow other people’s minds” (Rodin, 2012, p. 13). This aforementioned lack of transparency along with the issue of the lack of academic freedom could certainly be interpreted as an act of “narrowing other people’s minds”, as it undoubtedly involves withholding information from the target audience. Hence, as long as the students of the CI’s remain ignorant in relation to this deliberate lack of transparency, the prospects of Chinese soft power production could be considered prominent, but if the students suddenly begin interpreting the conduct of the Hanban as being measures of propaganda, the level of Chinese soft power will be likely to decrease.

When discussing the difference between propaganda and cultural diplomacy, Jowett contends the notion that propaganda should be defined as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (Jowett, 2015, p. 7). The Hanban’s interference with the academic freedom of the CI’s, in the form of the deliberate selection of teachers, textbooks, and topics that are not allowed to be discussed, as well as the extensive lack of transparency in relation to the actual contracts and conduct of the CI’s, could certainly be considered evident examples of the “systematic attempt to shape perceptions”, as well as to “manipulate cognitions” (Jowett, 2015, p. 7). Thus, according to the theory of Nye, this approach from the CPC should from a theoretical perspective function as counterproductive and thereby undermine the potential soft power production, as the approach could undoubtedly be identified as a measure of propaganda. However, one may yet consider the

possibility that students attending the CI's are completely unaware of these controversies, in part due to the lack of transparency. Nye states that the actions of a state has to appear as propaganda in the eyes of the target audience for it to lose credibility and thus, soft power (Nye, 2008b, p. 100). Hence, the role of the CI's in relation to the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S. is arguably heavily reliant on the aforementioned controversies remaining undetected by the students, or else the level of China's soft power will in all probability be consumed rather than produced.

However, the possibility of the knowledge about the related controversies ultimately spreading to students of CI's across the U.S. must be considered, especially as Nye's notion of soft power could become ever more prevalent in the future. Two CI's have already been closed in the U.S. in the aftermath of the controversies being increasingly discussed, namely the CI's of the Pennsylvania State University and the University of Chicago (Foster, 2015, para. 2). These closures occurred in the wake of a report critical of the conduct of the CI's, which was published by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Similarly to the report by the NAS, the AAUP report raised concerns regarding academic freedom and interference by the Chinese state (Graham, 2014, p. 1). One could speculate whether the relatively new report by the NAS could have the same effect. If this would eventually show itself to become a reality and the resemblance between the approaches of the Hanban and measures of propaganda would become increasingly illuminated to the general public, this would undoubtedly have a negative effect in relation to the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S. and the initiative could thus be considered a relative failure. However, Nye states that the tools of soft power sometimes "take years to produce the desired outcomes" (Nye, 2004, p. 1). On the basis of this notion, and as the CI's in the U.S. have only existed for marginally longer than a decade, it can thus be argued that it is yet too early to provide a definitive conclusion in relation to their impact on the soft power of China in the

U.S., but it could undoubtedly be argued that they do possess the potential for a rich production of soft power if the resistance in the U.S. does not become too prominent.

Evaluation of Effectiveness

The following section will provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the cultural diplomacy initiatives in the U.S. in relation to the soft power of China, on the basis of the findings in the previous analysis.

The initial cultural diplomacy initiative that has been explored in this thesis is the heavy expansion of Chinese media in the U.S. On the basis of the selected theories as well as the collected data, the analysis has primarily demonstrated that this specific initiative has not yet had the adequate effect on China's soft power, as the CPC would otherwise have intended. The heavy interference by the CPC, disallowing the various external media outlets to publish any news stories that portray China and its policies in a negative light, have been found to act as counterproductive as they resemble propagandist measures in the eyes of the U.S. public to a large extent. On the basis of the theory of 'soft power', it has been found that the CPC have not adequately understood its audience and until they eventually loosen the requirements to the external media outlets on what is editorially acceptable and allow them to publish stories containing content deemed controversial, the prospects of soft power production in the U.S., in regard to this specific initiative, can be considered minimal at best.

The second cultural diplomacy initiative that has been explored is the immense Chinese investment in the Hollywood film industry. The analysis hereof has demonstrated that this initiative does indeed possess the potential for the production of soft power within U.S. borders. The reason for this evaluation is based on the lack of knowledge among U.S. citizens about the conduct of the CPC in this regard. Although the theory of 'cultural diplomacy' would suggest that propagandist measures are being utilized to a certain degree, the theory of

'soft power' would argue that the prospects of soft power production are still prominent if the target audience does not perceive the information as propaganda, and this has been found to be the circumstance in this specific case, as the interference by the CPC is much more subtle than in the previous example. As a large quantity of the American population is heavily influenced by Hollywood films and as it has been argued that the majority of U.S. citizens are likely to be unaware of China being portrayed in a mere positive light, the effectiveness of this initiative have been considered rather successful in relation to the expansion of China's soft power.

The third cultural diplomacy initiative that has been explored is the establishment of the Confucius Institutes (CI) across the U.S. In this case, the analysis has demonstrated that this initiative certainly also possesses the potential for the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S. However, it has been found that the positive impact of the CI's on the soft power of China is greatly dependent on the prerequisite that students attending the CI's do not eventually perceive the conduct of the Hanban as propaganda. The theory of 'cultural diplomacy' would once again suggest that propagandist measures are being utilized, due to the notion that the Hanban is interfering with the academic freedom of the CI's with the deliberate purpose of presenting China in a mere positive light, but it has been considered that students are likely to be unaware of this interference. The analysis has considered the controversies related to the CI's to potentially become more widely acknowledged in the U.S. and has found this possibility to be the decisive factor in regard to whether the effectiveness on China's soft power will become predominantly positive or negative in the future.

Measuring the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy initiatives, as well as the level of soft power, will naturally always be an intangible matter that comes down to the interpretation of the individual. However, the closest possible method of the quantification of soft power is arguably through the utilization of favorability polls. The widely recognized Pew Research

Center published in April 2017 a survey, which showed the U.S. views on China having increased from 37% of Americans having a favorable opinion of China in 2016, to 44% when the survey was published (Wike, 2017, para. 2). It was further demonstrated that younger Americans were more inclined to have a favorable view on China, as the survey showed that 51% of people in the age group of 18-29 had a favorable view on China, as opposed to merely 36% of people in the age group of 50+ (Wike, 2017, para. 5). One may contemplate whether this result could reflect an impact of the cultural diplomacy initiatives of China. Considering that the younger generation is arguably more inclined to be affected both by the Hollywood films as well as the CI's, there may be a slight correlation when analyzing these statistics. Of course, no definitive conclusion can be drawn merely from these poll results, as they do naturally represent the result of an immense variety of factors, but at least for China, their initiatives do not currently seem to have a negative effect on their soft power within the borders of their largest global competitor in the international system.

Conclusion

The intention of this thesis has been to analyze the role that China's cultural diplomacy efforts play in the expansion of Chinese soft power in the U.S., as well as to provide a theoretically based assessment of the effectiveness of these initiatives. According to political scientist, Joseph Nye, the increasingly interdependent nature of today's complex global system will ultimately result in the traditional use of coercive forces, or what is known as 'hard power', to experience a gradual loss of significance in international relations. Hence, states obtaining their desired objectives through the attraction from the surroundings, a concept he describes as 'soft power', is becoming a progressively prevalent strategy in our globalized society. China is among the many countries that have acknowledged the increasing significance of Nye's concept. The authoritarian state has spent billions on improving its soft

power through various cultural diplomacy initiatives. China's largest competitor on the global scale, the U.S., is one of the nations in which they have invested most heavily, specifically through the three cultural diplomacy initiatives: the vast expansion of Chinese media; the immense Chinese investment in the Hollywood film industry; and the establishment of the Confucius Institutes (CI). However, this thesis argues that the intended positive effect on the production of Chinese soft power has been varying.

In order to analyze the research question, the theory of 'soft power' as well as the theory of 'cultural diplomacy' was found to be the most suitable. The theory of 'soft power' was included with the objective of obtaining a better comprehension of the motivation behind China's immense investment in its global soft power initiatives and the theory of 'cultural diplomacy' was selected with the aim of identifying the various cultural diplomacy efforts that were initiated by China in the U.S. during the past decade, as well as to analyze the elements that may act as a hindrance to the desired production of soft power and thereby play a role in the effectiveness of such initiatives. In analyzing the research question, this theoretical framework was primarily accompanied by qualitative data in the form of online journals, news articles, and video files.

Based on the theory of 'cultural diplomacy', this thesis argues that the main motivation for China to invest so heavily in the U.S. is based on a combination of the wish to influence the "behavior of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens" (Rodin, 2012, p. 10), with the aim of downplaying the threat of a rising China, as well as to balance the "dominant American (popular) cultural influence" (Hartig, 2011, p. 57), in order to advance the cultural position of China in the global system. According to the theory of 'soft power', information that appears as propaganda in the eyes of the target audience "may turn out to be counterproductive" in relation to a nation's desired production of soft power (Nye, 2008b, p. 100). Many observers had questioned the innocence of the Communist Party of

China (CPC) in relation to their instruments of cultural diplomacy, claiming that these were characterized by the use of propagandist measures.

In relation to the heavy expansion of Chinese media in the U.S., this thesis argues that this instrument of cultural diplomacy has not had the intended positive effect on China's soft power. The CPC has been argued to interfere with the content of the external media outlets to a degree that hinders the production of soft power significantly, as this interference has been found to act counterproductively, due to the notion that the initiative resembles propaganda in the eyes of the U.S. public. This thesis thus concludes the effectiveness of this soft power effort to be predominantly negative.

In relation to the Chinese investment in the Hollywood film industry, this thesis argues that this instrument of cultural diplomacy does undoubtedly have the potential for the production of soft power in the U.S. In spite of the notion that the theory of 'cultural diplomacy' would suggest that the CPC do utilize instruments of propaganda, the theory of 'soft power' still argues that the production of soft power is likely to occur when the target audience does not perceive the information as propaganda, which this thesis argues to be the case with the U.S. citizens. Hence, this thesis concludes the effectiveness of this initiative to be predominantly positive.

In relation to the establishment of the CI's across the U.S., this thesis argues that this instrument of cultural diplomacy certainly does possess the potential for the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S., but it is also acknowledged that the positive impact on the soft power of China is heavily dependent on the notion that students of the CI's do not eventually perceive the conduct of the Hanban as propaganda. As the Hanban is interfering with the academic freedom of the CI's, the theory of 'cultural diplomacy' suggests that methods of propaganda are being utilized, but it has been considered that students of CI's are likely to be unaware of this interference. If the related controversies do not become widely known in the

U.S. this thesis argues that the CI's will indeed be able to function as an instrument assisting in the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S. Thus, this thesis concludes the effectiveness of this instrument to be mixed, as the effects are heavily reliant on the students remaining unknowing of the conduct of the Hanban.

Hence, this thesis concludes that China's cultural diplomacy efforts do carry the potential of playing a significant role in the expansion of Chinese soft power in the U.S., but it also acknowledges the fact that the continued interference by the CPC in relation to the execution of the various initiatives may act counterproductively and thus function as a hindrance in regard to the desired production of China's soft power. The findings of this thesis seem to fit well with the preformulated hypothesis, which expected to find the role of China's cultural diplomacy efforts as being potentially highly prominent in relation to the production of Chinese soft power in the U.S., but with the pivotal importance that the methods utilized by the CPC would not resemble propagandist measures in the eyes of the target audience, because if this would be the case, it could severely impact the effectiveness of such measures in a negative manner for the soft power of China.

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