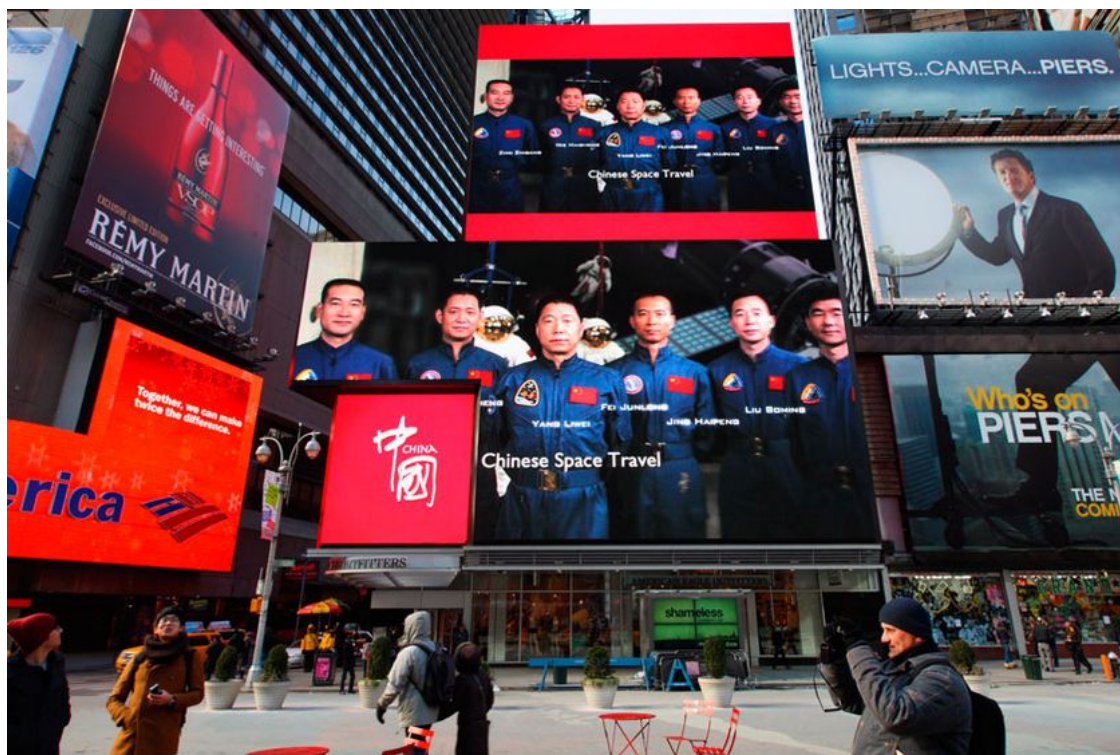


What Are the Necessary Factors for the Functional of Public Diplomacy



Zhang Yifan

Summary

After the end of the cold war, the United States became the super power of the world. But with time goes by, the development rate of the United States became slower while China developing in a very fast speed and became an emerging power that objectively challenging the current world system which is dominant by the United States.

In the 21st century, new media and Internet made the public became more influential of social opinion. Joseph Nye's soft power theory and Wendt's constructivism theory contributed theoretical support of the importance of immaterial factors to the international relations. National image building and public diplomacy has attracted more and more attention among international society including China.

In order to cooperated with the visit of President Hu Jintao (at that time) in 2011, the State Council Information Office of China entrust a professional company made two videos and together formed the China's national publicity video. The first part which named the Character was displayed on the screen of Time Square in the New York at 17 January 2011, while the second part named the Angles was later displayed on American cable TV. It is the first time that China made national publicity efforts in the developed country which actually became the millstone of China's public diplomacy towards the United States.

After the display of China's national publicity video in the United States, there were several American media has reported this issue and provided comments towards it. It can be found that the result of this public diplomacy action was not as expected, due to the Americans holding negative attitude to both the video and China more than positive attitude. The reason why China's public diplomacy was not successful is complicated, this project tries to find the necessary functional factors for the functional of public diplomacy based on the case study of the dissemination of China's national publicity video in the United States.

The author adopted Soft power theory, Wendt's constructivism theory and power transition theory to constructed the theoretical framework and selected empirical data to prepare for the analysis process. In the analysis chapter, based on the theoretical framework and empirical data, author divided the content into 7 aspects, analyze the necessary factors for the functional of public diplomacy: Both the Channel and Target Need to be Accurate; No Tendency of Propaganda; Under the Value of Target Group; No Core Interest Competition;

Systematical and Continuity; Influential media ability; Real Information. Finally reach the conclusion that the functional of public diplomacy need to combine instantly communication and long-term image construction; combine both domestic society construction and international information dissemination to the target country.

Key words: Public diplomacy, soft power, China, American

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Introduction

After 40 years high speed economic development, China has become one of the most influential countries in the world. Under the horrible balance of nuclear weapon, the hot war between big countries are not very possible to happen. Besides traditional hard power, a nation’s soft power became more and more important. China as an emerging power also pays much attention in the field of public diplomacy, especially after 2008. Because China was already too giant to operate by herself, she need to cooperate with the whole world, form super power to the developing countries. When talking about the international cooperation, it means that the two sides are almost equal and both side are willing to trust and work with each other. Such kind of awareness cannot be purchased by money. That’s one of the reason why national image building and public diplomacy is becoming more and more important accompanying with the process of globalization.

Until today, there is still haven’t a unified definition of public diplomacy, but the concept of public diplomacy must be delimited. Therefore, author adapted the definition of public diplomacy in the book of *Introduction to Public Diplomacy*: “A country in order to enhance its visibility, reputation and recognition, the central government itself or to authorize local government and other social sectors to entrust a domestic or foreign social behavior actor conduct diplomatic activities with global public through the methods of information dissemination, public relations and media. Using the method of information clarifying, knowledge spreading and value shaping to better service the realization of its national interests.¹” From this definition, it can be summarized that the final purpose of public diplomacy is to increase a countries positive national image among foreign publics and create friendly environments among the international society.

It is very difficult to define the successful standard of a country’s public diplomacy, due to it related a lot of factors which will influence the final result. But due to public diplomacy

¹ Han Fangming, et al. *Introduction to Public Diplomacy*. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2012, pp8.

activity is kind of diplomatic action which aim for enhancing positive image of the host country. The most distinctive standard is the changes of favorable/unfavorable viewpoint after the implement of a specific public diplomacy activity. This standard also can be used for the long-term public diplomacy strategy which means that if the host country's public diplomacy is successful, the favorable viewpoint of target country's public should be increasing in general or at least keep stable in a same level with time goes on. The data from Pew Research Center shows the positive attitudes of Americans towards China are fluctuating, not sustainable growing. And it should be highly noticed that the unfavorable percentage even increased in recent years.

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?

Favorable Unfavorable View all countries on this question

Custom Group: Percent responding **Favorable** all years measured

COUNTRY	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
United States	43	52	42	39	50	49	51	40	37	35	38	37	44

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?

Favorable **Unfavorable** View all countries on this question

Custom Group: Percent responding **Unfavorable** all years measured

COUNTRY	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
United States	35	29	39	42	38	36	36	40	52	55	54	55	47

Source: <http://www.pewglobal.org/database/custom-analysis/indicator/24/countries/233/>²

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of cold war, the United States became the super power of the world. China very care about the relationship with the United States and invested tremendous amount of money and manpower into the public diplomacy towards the United States. But China's public diplomacy towards the United States cannot say very successful. Confucius Institution is a non-profit agency that mainly focus on disseminating Chinese culture and enhancing China's soft power all over the world. The first Confucius Institution was started operation in the United States on 2005, until 31 December 2018 China have 548 Confucius Institutions and 1193 Confucius Classrooms all over the world. Among

² "The United States Opinion of China" in *Pew Research Center* < <https://www.pewglobal.org/database/custom-analysis/indicator/24/countries/233/> > [2018]

those number, 105 Confucius Institutions and 501 Confucius Classrooms is operating in the United States, respectively occupied 19% and 42% of the whole world³. The data show that China is eager to spread Chinese culture in the United States, especially to the American teenager which are the main service object group of Confucius Classroom.

Although China has invested a lot into the public diplomacy actions towards the United States, the result was not as good as what China expected. In 2018, the university of North Florida decided to close its Confucius Institute which is the third university in the United States that announced plan to close its Confucius Institute⁴. The boycott of Confucius Institute reflects the negative attitudes of Americans towards China's public diplomacy. Not need to mention the protesting of the Belt and Road Initiative and the trade war between China and the United States, all these phenomenon shows the confronting relationship between the two countries and the unsuccessful of China's public diplomacy towards the United States.

Problem formulation

Facing these result, this project takes China's public diplomacy towards the United States as the background, seeks to explore the question of **What are the necessary factors for the functional of public diplomacy**⁵. Why China made countless efforts towards the relationship building with the United States but failed to reach the expected goal and even make it worse? What necessary functional factors or conditions that China's public diplomacy were absent or need to pay more attention to?

Public diplomacy is one of the main method to obtain soft power which became more and more influential in contemporary international relations. The former research is mainly focused on the analysis of the achievements and weakness or content analysis of China's public diplomacy activities. This project will systematically analyze what are the necessary factors for the functional of public diplomacy, based on the case study of the dissemination of China's national publicity video in the United States.

³ About Confucius Institute/Classroom: http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm. The data was collected by author.

⁴ Elizabeth Redden. "North Florida Will Close Confucius Institute." in *INSIDE HIGHER ED*, <
<https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2018/08/16/north-florida-will-close-confucius-institute> > [16 August 2018].

⁵ The word "functional" in here means "able to work", it is same with the word "effective" —— Author.

Methodology

Literature Review

Before start writing of this project, the author has read some academic production that related with public diplomacy. By reading those academic material, the author has a basic knowledge of the research progress of public diplomacy. It is a field that involving many academic subjects, until today there is still not have a unified and widely accepted theory or model in this field. EYTAN GILBOA illustrates the weaknesses of academic research in the thesis *Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy*. The value of this article is that it had carding the academic constitution of public diplomacy and what already have done in this field⁶. One of the valuable point of this article is that it indicated the researchers that public diplomacy is very comprehensive, they need to consider the influence of the subjects which they do not familiar with. This cognition inspired the author to consider the problem in a wider perspective and adopt different theory for analysis process.

After the theoretical consideration, the author tried to find the former research about the weakness or deficiency of China's public. In the thesis *China's Soft-Power Push-The Search for Respect*, David Shambaugh illustrate China has invested much more into global soft power construction at different aspects after President Xi Jinping in power but the outcome was not successful. He pointed out one of the key reason that China's public diplomacy investment missed expectation is that there were contradictions within China's publicity and actual actions. And one of the characteristics of China's public diplomacy is state-centered approach that leading by central government. The author also pointed out the importance to combine domestic society construction and international soft power construction⁷.

David Shambaugh pointed out the opposite effects of stereotype and political system to China's soft power construction. While Ingrid d'Hooghe have a more comprehensive research about this question, based on the profound Chinese experience of herself and high-power perception, contributed one of the most systematical research about China's public diplomacy in she's book *China's Public Diplomacy*. Ingrid d'Hooghe firstly combs the existing research

⁶ EYTAN GILBOA: *Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy*. THE ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY, AAPSS, 616, March 2008, pp55-75.

⁷ David Shambaugh. *China's Soft-Power Push-The Search for Respect*. Foreign Affairs, July/August 2015, pp99-105.

framework of public diplomacy in the first two chapters, and makes a multi-angle narrative of the characteristics of China's public diplomacy. In the third chapter, the author reviews and summarizes the debate on China's public diplomacy. After summarizing China's public diplomacy system, based on in-depth case studies, a more thorough analysis of China's public diplomacy methods is conducted – analyzing how China's public diplomacy was influenced by China's political system and Chinese culture. Finally, the book also evaluates China's public diplomacy activities and effects⁸.

In the past decades, the network approach of public diplomacy rather than state-centered model attracted more and more attentions. Professor R.S. Zaharna proposed the Network Communication Approach in the article *China's Confucius Institutes: Understanding the Relational Structure & Relational Dynamics of Network Collaboration*. She divided the Network Communication Approach into three inter-related dimensions: network structure, network synergy and network strategy. Compare with the international communication approach in cold war era, the advantage of Network Communication Approach is that it emphasizes dynamic information exchange rather than one way dissemination. The final purpose is to build common identity between the host and target country through network communication⁹. This academic production is consistent with Wendt's constructivism theory which also emphasize building common knowledge and identity.

Another important part is the relations between public diplomacy and the hard power of host country. Jennifer Hubbert take a Chinese Bridge Summer Camp which funded by Confusions Institution as case study to analyze China's soft power construction in the article *Authenticating the Nation: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power*. In the end of the article the author described a very interest phenomenon that after the students completed this communication activity, most of the students expressed they do not want to study in China but they prefer to learn Chinese in the future. This phenomenon shows that the students neither interested in Chinese culture that they experienced during the activity nor China itself. But why they still interested in learning Chinese? The explanation may be that Chinese related to their personal career in the future. This result is not the achievement of China's public diplomacy but the development of Chinese economy¹⁰.

⁸ Ingrid d'Hooghe. *China's Public Diplomacy*. BRILL, Diplomatic Studies, volume 10, 2014.

⁹ R.S. Zaharna. *China's Confucius Institutes: Understanding Relational Structure & Relational Dynamics Network Collaboration*, in CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF CHINA'S SOFT POWER, FIGUEROA PRESS, September 2014, pp9-26.

¹⁰ Jennifer Hubbert: *Authenticating the Nation: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power*. "CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF CHINA'S SOFT POWER". FIGUEROA PRESS, pp33-42.

Those academic material provides different angles for how to understand public diplomacy and helping author to form the whole thesis.

Research method

The analysis in this project including both macro and micro perspective. Public diplomacy is a field related to the international relations between countries, in this project focus on the relations between China and the United States and China's public diplomacy actions towards the United States.

For the macro perspective analysis will be based on the finished academic material and statistic data related to China's public diplomacy towards the United States. And according to the theoretical framework and empirical data, author tries to analyze what factors will be necessary for a successful public diplomacy action and what factors will hinder the functional of soft power promoting or even make the opposite effects. In the same time, author will try to analyze another important sub-question which is why China and the United States failed to develop harmonies friendship with each other based on the power transition theory and empirical data.

For the micro perspective, the author will take the dissemination of China's national publicity video in the United States as a case study, try to find the problems that existing in China's public diplomacy activity towards the United States¹¹. The reason why takes the dissemination of China's national publicity video in the United States as the case study is that public diplomacy is a very general academic subject, it is hard to analyze public diplomacy only in a macro perspective. It need to narrow down into a micro perspective to make the analysis become valuable and possible. First, China's national publicity video is a case that in a micro perspective. Second, it is the first time that China has actively released national image publicity action on a large scale in the media and public places of developed country, which was launched by the State Council Information Office, it reflects the expansion and improvement of China's external communication strategy; Third, China's national publicity video was a very specified case that clearly related to China's public diplomacy activity towards the United States which means that it was an effort that China try to make Americans to receive more information about China and to have more positive attitude towards China

¹¹ China national publicity video was formed by 2 parts: the Characters and the Angles. The analysis of the video including both of two parts. ——Author

after watched the video. Third, there were Americans' comments and reactions towards the China's national publicity video after it displayed in Time square, those clear feedbacks are very valuable material for analyzing China's public diplomacy was effective or not, also the weaknesses and shortages within it.

Choice of theory

In this project, the author applied soft power theory, Wendt's constructivism theory and power transition theory to form the theoretical framework for analyzing the research question.

Soft power theory is the most classical theory strongly related to the academic field of public diplomacy which indicates why national soft power is important, especially in the information era. Soft power theory also indicated how to build soft power in an effectively way from the practical level. The international relations scholars always pay more attention to the question which closely related state governance, public diplomacy seems too comprehensive and impractical. But Nye's soft power theory had drawn much attention from those scholars for public diplomacy.

Joseph Nye's soft power can provide theoretical support for author's arguments in this thesis. First, soft power theory explained the importance of a country's soft power in current world; Second, it indicated the factors that need to be noticed in practical, like the destruction function of propaganda, the influence of political system and the resource of soft power; Third, soft power theory also emphasizes the importance to coordinating the domestic construction and international advertisement. Those points are very relative with the author's discussion in this thesis.

Although Joseph Nye's soft power theory also have some deficiencies, for example it has not explains the synergy of soft power and hard power. After soft power theory Nye also developed the concept of smart power, but the contribution of soft power theory for public diplomacy should never be neglected.

The constructivism theory, especially Alexander Wendt's constructivism theory contributed strongly theoretical support for the motivation of public diplomacy. Traditional realism believes that a country's behavior and foreign policy is determined by the country's economic and military forces. The most influential factor for decision making lies in power that is power determinism. New realism believes that a country's foreign policy is decided by the international structure. For example, either you fall to the United States or to the Soviet

Union in the bipolar structure that is structural determinism. New liberalism believes the relationship between states is not chaotic, each country's foreign policy is restricted by the international system, which is institutional determinism. Wendt's constructivism theory regarding the state and the international society is an organic integrity. The interaction between the state and the international society is not only the single process that states form and influencing the international structure and international system, but also the international structure and system has influencing the state behavior. The idea of constructivism theory is that the identity of the state cannot prove by itself, it is determined by the international community. The state can only show its identity in the process of interacting with other countries, and this identity is known by others through the interaction. Therefore, the national identity and interests are mutual-constructed by the international community and states¹². Wendt's constructivism theory uses another perspective which differ with realism and liberalism to explain the motivation and interaction of countries' behavior, it emphasized the importance influence of immaterial factors to the international system. Wendt's constructivism theory provides theoretical support for the reason why state need to care about it image in the international community and why China values the relationship with the United States and invested huge amount of money in public diplomacy towards Americans. Due to the dominant and leading role of the United States in the western world, it is very important to construct a positive image in the mind of Americans.

One of the important questions that author try to figure out in this thesis is what factors make the relations between China and the United States going worse in recent years. Due to both of the two countries are influential to the whole world and China actually payed more attentions to the United States than other countries. It is an abnormal phenomenon that when you try to make friends with others and invested a lot for it but finally received an opposite effect, even made an opponent to yourself. Although China's soft power construction and public diplomacy activity have problems in strategy and methods in practical, it is still cannot be fully explained by soft power theory and constructivism theory that why China and the United States failed to seek harmonious with each other. For this sub question, power transition theory provided some theoretical support for it.

Power Transition Theory have fundamental differences with other realism theory, first it emphasized the foundation of international order is hierarchy rather than anarchy; second,

¹² Yao Qinhu (2010). "The Influence of Constructivism on the Development of International Relations Theories." *Social Sciences*, Vol. 12, pp.67.

power transition theory holding the point that the governing rules of international society are similar with a country's domestic society; Third, the country's ultimate motivation in the international society is driven by getting net gains, not power itself¹³. The reason why author choose power transition theory is that first it can explain an important reason for why china's public diplomacy activity cannot receive expected feedback; second, power transition theory payed attention to the influence of a country's domestic development to international relations which is suitable for the case of China and the United States. Power transition theory explains the reason why there are conflicts between China and the United States. Due to the structural competition of power, it is very hard for China and the United States to reach extraordinary harmonious. That is an important hinder factor for the functional of China's public diplomacy towards the United States.

Approach to the Problem

The analysis process will base on the theoretical framework which formed by the three theories. Wendt's constructivism theory provides the motivation of China's public diplomacy towards the United States. For power transition theory mainly use for analyzing the opposite effects between China and the United States, due to the two countries have structural competition of power. For soft power theory, most people think public diplomacy is a kind of diplomatic activities that not involving domestic factors. Actually, according to Joseph Nye's soft power theory, on the one hand, for the national image promoting actions, public diplomacy can be functional as an instant mechanism. But if the goal is truly influencing the target state's public, it need long-term and sustainable communication in culture and value¹⁴. On the other hand, the domestic society also need to be constructed until the domestic society are as good as what the action state advertised. Otherwise the public diplomacy will turn out to be fake news, create problems of credibility and finally received completely reversed effect.

For the empirical data, one of the most important part is the comments and attitude changes of Americans to China's national publicity video. Most of those comments was published in 2011 after the display of the video, unfortunately some original report has been

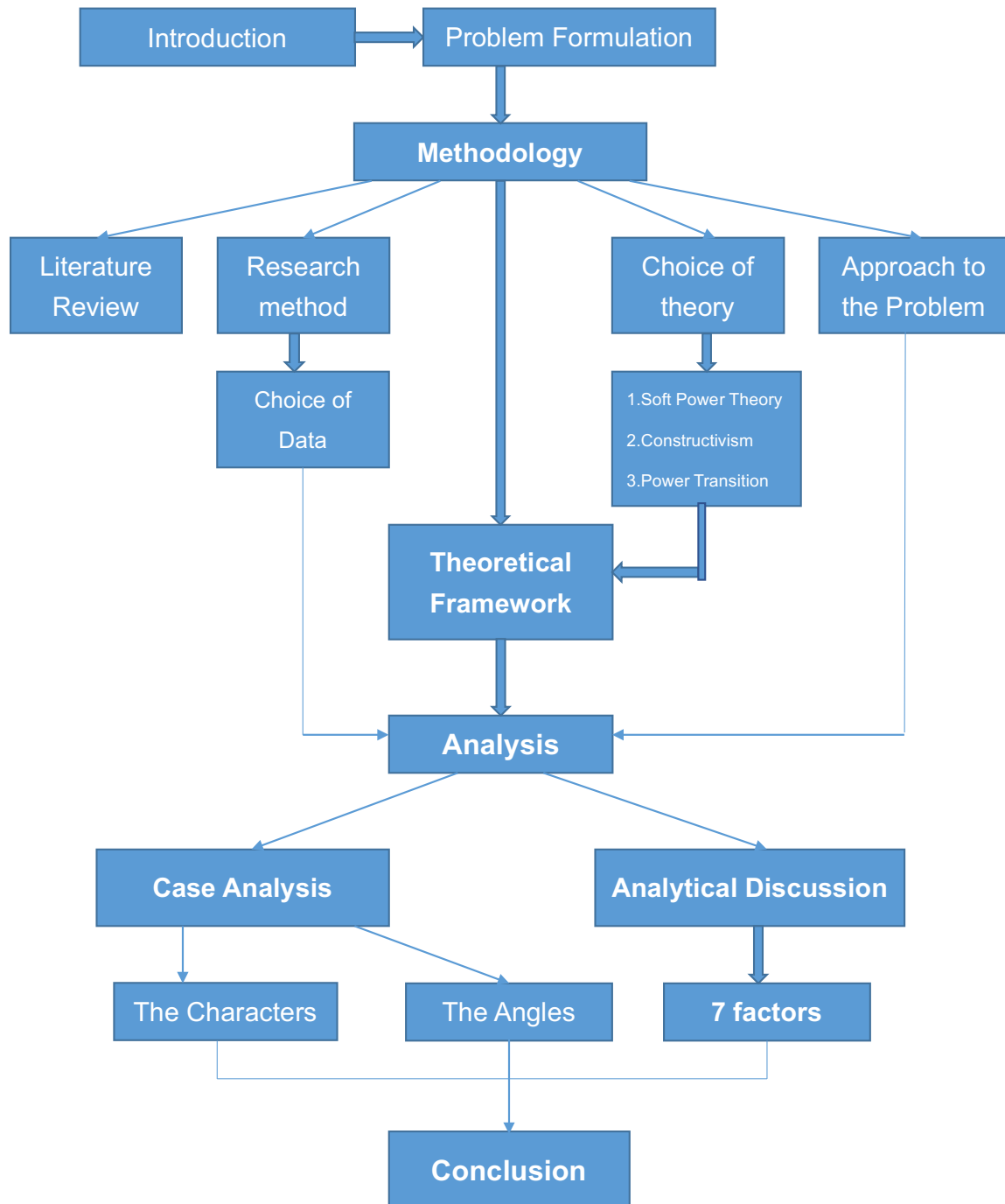
¹³ Kugler, Jacek J. and A. F. K. Organski. "CHAPTER 7 The Power Transition: A Retrospective and Prospective Evaluation." In *Handbook of War Studies*, 2011, pp172.

¹⁴ Joseph S. Nye. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, in New York, N.Y.: Public Affairs, 2004, pp8-12.

deleted from the official website, but author find some comments from other researchers' academic material which will properly cited and assists for the process of analysis.

Based on the theoretical framework, empirical data and author's knowledge, this project will analyze the question in 7 aspects: First, **Both the Channel and Target Need to be Accurate**, means that public diplomacy activity need to be specified in target and method; Second, **No Tendency of Propaganda**, once when public diplomacy action was recognized as propaganda activity, it means completely fail; Third, **Under the Value of Target Group**, same with the first factor, one culture product maybe positive to another state's public but very negative to other countries' public. The content value of public diplomacy activity is very important; Fourth, **No Core Interest Competition**, the ultimate goal of public diplomacy is to make foreign public to hold more positive attitude towards the action state, but when the two countries are being in serious competition or even fighting with each other, then the public diplomacy will be hard to work out; Fifth, **Systematical and Continuity**, as we mentioned above, if the public diplomacy wants to be effective, it need to have a long-term communication, otherwise the public diplomacy will be forgot quickly; Sixth, **Influential media ability**, globalization and internet changed world and how human being communicate with others. A very important part of public diplomacy is disseminating information to foreign publics. It has a high requirement of host country's media ability, especially for the international level; The last but not the least, **Real Information**, actually it is the precondition of all public diplomacy action. The worst situation of public diplomacy is that the advertised information turns out to be fake or the audience holding suspicion for host country.

What Are the Necessary Factors for the Functional of Public Diplomacy



Theory

In this chapter, the author will have critical discussion about soft power theory, Wendt's constructivism theory and power transition theory. To explain the basic contents of the three theory and which part will be useful for the analysis of the problem.

Soft power

In the field of international politics, the concept of soft power was first proposed by Joseph Nye, the professor of Harvard University. It refers to country's power that different with hard powers which can be qualitative but cannot be quantified, such as culture, ideology and foreign policy¹⁵. The exercise of a country's soft power is to attract and persuade other countries to safeguard and realize its own national interests by shaping its own good image. Different from national hard power, it is often more difficult to achieve a certain goal through the wielding of a country's soft power. And for the time period, the whole process of soft power construction activity often need a long time, sometimes even long as decade years.

In his article *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Nye contributed a lot of valuable points for soft power construction. He pointed out the importance of public attention rather than information in the information era, which can be the theoretical foundation of global media construction. Once when the information source of the public is occupied by a country, then the owner of information source has power to decide the importance of different information, finally influenced public opinions¹⁶.

Nye emphasized the important role of a country's credibility during soft power construction, and further explained the counter effects of propaganda. Nye's explanation provided theoretical support for why even the tendency of propaganda need to be avoided in the process of soft power construction¹⁷. It further proved the shortage of one-way communication model and the advantage of dialog and collaborations model, due to the latter two models have mechanism to provides instant feedbacks from audience.

Joseph Nye believes that there are three important levels of public diplomacy to achieve

¹⁵ Joseph S. Nye : *China and soft power*, South African Journal of International Affairs Vol. 19, No. 2, August 2012, p.153.

¹⁶ Nye (2004). Ibid., p.7.

¹⁷ Nye (2004). Ibid., p.8.

soft power. The first is daily communication, including the interpretation of domestic political environment and foreign policy. The second type is strategic communication, which means that in order to achieve a specific policy goal, a country or government focuses on mobilizing various resources and adopts various means to exert influence on the target group which is more specific both for the goal and means. The last one is to cultivate and maintain long-term friendly relations with key people through communication, meetings, seminars and academic activities. Those targets not only refer to national leaders and top class social elites, but also including the social opinion leaders who are influential in different levels of society¹⁸.

Nye also proposed the concept of culture filters¹⁹, which indicated the importance of culture differences in the activity of public diplomacy. An information element will be interpreted into different meaning by the audiences who come from different cultural background. Therefore, if the public diplomacy activity aims to have maximum effect, it need to be accurate both in target and method, and it is very important to follow the value and culture of the target country. He also pointed out the importance of coordinating domestic status and public diplomacy, and the influence of the host country's political system, which is very valuable for China's soft power construction.

Joseph Nye's soft power theory fills the gap in relevant areas, but it is not perfect, especially for explaining the relationship between soft power and hard power. Since the ancient times, the attractiveness of a country to other countries is often based on the hard power, for example the economic development level. It is unrealistic to analyze the soft power and its effect in isolation. Joseph Nye himself constantly revise his theory, after him there also has other scholars put forward the concept of smart power and sharp power. The emergence and spread of the concept of sharp power also indicates that the construction of soft power between countries also faces tough competition, which is not a friendly and harmonious field.

Nowadays, most countries in the world have developed into democracy countries, public opinions are becoming more and more important and influential. Public opinions can even influence government's decision. Therefore, public diplomacy to the public of other countries becomes an important way to build national soft power overseas.

¹⁸ Nye (2004). *Ibid.*, p.8-11.

¹⁹ Nye (2004). *Ibid.*, p.12.

Constructivism

Among the different schools of constructivism theory, the structural constructivism represented by Alexander Wendt has contributed a lot to the theory construction of international relations. Wendt's constructivism emphasized the role of international system structure to the state, especially the significance influence of identity and culture to the state in the international system. Material factors are important, but they can only affect the meaning of behavior through the common sense. The most critical point is that the social structure of international politics can construct the identity of actors, which is the precondition of defining national interests. Therefore, a country should first pay attention to the construction of national identity in the interaction of the international community²⁰.

The structure of Wendt's constructivism is a social structure, which contains identity, common knowledge, material factors and the existing normative structure, these factors are interrelated with each other. The state has the common understanding and expectation in the specific international social system, and the common knowledge constructs the identity and interests of the state then it determines the interaction mode of the state. The material factor of the state cannot be reduced to the conceptual factor, and it can only play its role through interaction. The formation and existing normative structure is the result of the interaction between states, and the interaction may cause the change of normative structure. In short, the interaction between states constructs the normative structure that constructs the identity of states, which defines the interests of states, and then enables states to choose the corresponding interactive mode²¹.

Wendt's constructivism emphasis on immaterial factors such as knowledge, value, and culture. The national identity and the interaction between states which consistent with the connotation of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is the act of state actors to transmit information, knowledge and value to the foreign public in order to create friendlier international environment. Public diplomacy tries to build a good national image, or improve the country's popularity and reputation, or try to eliminate the misunderstanding and prejudice in the international community, or try to change other countries attitude or even influence the

²⁰ Marilene Barros. "SOCIAL THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS ALEXANDER WENDT." in Revista Húmus, 2012, pp26-29.

²¹ Alexander Wendt. Social Theory of International Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1999, pp187.

world²². The country's related interests can be realized or maintained by public diplomacy and international advertisement. This process conforms to the basic logic of Wendt's constructivism.

By simply sorting out the relevant content of Wendt's constructivism theory and observing the process of public diplomacy, it can be preliminarily explain how public diplomacy play a role in the international relations: in the beginning the normative structure of the international system constructs the identity and interests of states; Based on the identity state conduct public diplomacy against the international public in order to improve common knowledge, realize or maintain corresponding identity and interests; when public diplomacy can achieve broad consensus and value advantage in the interaction with the target state, the international public will become an effective medium for the state to construct their identity. Finally make the state obtain new identity and corresponding benefits. It can be seen that as the interaction between states and the foreign public, public diplomacy can be regarded as the dynamic reaction of actors on the normative structure of the international system²³.

Power Transition Theory

In the 21st century, the super powers' ability to influence the world is declining, leading to the increasingly world power diffusion and transition. It not only appears in the rise of emerging powers like China and India²⁴, but also the other middle countries rapid growth in the global economy at recent years. The power gap between traditional power and emerging powers is shrinking, not only in hard power but also in the rapid growth of the national soft power and influences. Some western realism scholars think that power is the ability of a country to mobilize its human and material resources to maximum its power in international system²⁵. But Organski, professor of the Michigan university thinks that the strength or ability of a country to challenge existing international systems are related to the size, population, pace and timing of its domestic economic and political development. The emerging power will discontent with the existing international order which completely established and the

²² Tan Dongchen & Yang Xiaming. "Principles of Public Diplomacy: An Analysis of Alexander Wendt's Constructivism." in *Public Diplomacy Quarterly*, Beijing: Foreign Language Press, Spring 2018, pp123.

²³ Tan & Yang. *Ibid.*, p.124.

²⁴ Organski AFK. *World Politics*. Second Edition. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968, pp338–376.

²⁵ Jacek and Organski. *Ibid.*, p.172.

distribution of benefits was completed. Due to the emerging power has been accumulated enough strength, it is more likely to become a challenger to the current international system²⁶. The dominant countries will not release more interests to the emerging power, the emerging power will try to match the strength of the leading countries even catch up with its rapid growth, challenging the order of the existing world system principle, seeking more interest with the status of its strength in the system, in order to enjoy the privilege that the emerging power think it should deserves. Finally, if the emerging power replaced the current dominant country means the power transition process finished and the start of a new world order. This power transition process can be peaceful when the former dominate country satisfied the changes or it may lead to war²⁷.

Power transition theory holding the point that the international system is not static, but changing with the flow rates of state power and growth. The imbalance in growth rates is driven primarily by changes in population size, economic productivity, and the political ability of the state, and the ability to draw resources from society and use them to promote the state interest. If the power of the emerging power grows to at least 80% of the current dominant power, then the emerging power will be seen as a challenger to the dominant power²⁸.

According to Organski, the emerging powers are often dissatisfied with the existing international order, while the dominant power wants to maintain the existing order because they are gaining interests from the existing international order and they are satisfied countries. This contradiction lead to competition and conflict between satisfied countries and dissatisfied countries around the dominant position of the international order. When dissatisfied countries found the chance to win world order through war, they might fight for change and the original dominant power will feel threatened by the changes of international order²⁹.

Power transition theory is the theoretical summary of power conflicts historical experience in international relations. From a part of international relations phenomenon evolve into an explanation system with causal association, it distinguished the result of normal changes of power and the special power transition between the dominant power and the emerging power. The theory located power transition center in the power shift between

²⁶ Organski. *Ibid.*, p.364–365.

²⁷ Woosang Kim and Scott Gates. "Power transition theory and the rise of China." in *International Area Studies Review* 2015, Vol. 18(3), pp220.

²⁸ Keith Dowding. "Power Transition Theory." in *Encyclopedia of Power*, SAGE Publications, Inc. May 6, 2019, pp2.

²⁹ Dowding. *Ibid.*, p.2.

the dominant power and the challenger, it provides theoretical support to analyze the reason why China's public diplomacy activities towards the United States were difficult to be functional.

Analysis

The analysis chapter will be divided into two main parts, the first main part is the content analysis of China's national publicity video, both the Characters and the Angles. The author tries to analyze what information that the video maker wants to convey to the audience. The second main part is the core analysis of the thesis, based on the theoretical frame work and the reaction of Americans to the China's national publicity video, the author will discuss what are the necessary factors for the functional of public diplomacy from seven aspects.

Content Analysis of China's National Publicity Video

After a series international public relations crises in 2008, such as the Tibet incident in March 14th, the disruption of the Olympic torch delivery, and the incident of contaminate milk powder in China. The State Council Information Office launched the national public relations strategy in February 2009 and commissioned the professional companies to produce publicity videos to promote China's positive national image³⁰.

In January 17, 2011, the former Chinese President Hu Jintao was invited to have a state visit to the United States. In order to coordinating with the President's visit, the first part of China's national publicity video Characters was displayed on the big screen in times square at New York. Six screens simultaneously broadcast the 59-second publicity video until February 14, 2011. Corresponding to the Characters, the second part which named Angles was released on the Internet on January 23, and it has taken more than 800 pictures to show China's image from different angles. The Angles is much longer than the first part which have 18 minutes that use English as the narration and Chinese as subtitle³¹. The main purpose of the Angles was comprehensively shows China's political, economic,

³⁰ Guo Rui. "The Release of China National Image Film." in *PR View*, ed. by Guo Huimin, Hu Baijing, Wang Fengbin and Wang Xiaohui. Beijing, Jan. 2014, pp35.

³¹ Guo. *Ibid.*, p.36.

social, cultural, environmental, ethnic, scientific and technological fields to the foreign publics who watched it. By this way to make foreign publics know more about China and Chinese life in different angles.

Content Analysis of The Characters

The Characters have 59 seconds, featuring celebrities from different aspect of China. It uses red as the main visual tone, the red background of the Chinese character China as the opening picture, the color sense of the red background and white characters is visually attractive; Then the elite representatives from different aspect of China, who made up the broadcast picture together with the pictures of their professional field. The characters in the video shows smiles with confident and harmonious, and interpret the spiritual outlook of Chinese people in their own way. In the end, many smiles of ordinary Chinese people come together on the red background to form the character the word China and the video ends with Chinese friendship³². The overall visual effect is gorgeous and energetic, it intends to show pure Chinese passion and Chinese image. There are 27 stop-motion scenes in the video and 13 groups Chinese people representing different meanings with their own experiences and spiritual styles³³.

The Characters have 15 themes: Stunning Chinese Beauty; Leading-Edge Chinese Agriculture; Influential Chinese Wealth; Extraordinary Chinese People; Aesthetic Chinese Design; Trend-setting Chinese Supermodel; Thrilling Chinese Athletic; Thought-Provoking Chinese Scholarship; Enchanting Chinese Art; Extraordinary Chinese People; Captivating Chinese Dialogue; Inspiring Chinese Bravery; Award-Winning Chinese Talent; Chinese Space Travel; Chinese Friendship.

As we can see from the above description, there are representatives from various fields of China. The main theme are wisdom, beauty, wealth, science and technology. The hidden theme is confidence, harmony and calmness. The people in the Characters covered various fields, among which the largest proportion is literature and art, followed by academic and scientific fields. Except Chinese elites in various fields, there are also some

³² Gong Zheng. "Research on the Image Building of China from the Perspective of Public Diplomacy: A Case Study on the Spread of '2011 China's National Image Publicity Film' in the US". Master's thesis, CHINA YOUTH UNIVERSITY OF POLITICAL STUDIES, 2015. p8.

³³ "China National Publicity Film: The Character" in *Beautiful China Official Channel* < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbTzRpjt_4g > [25 June 2013]

Chinese grassroots figures, who are indispensable to show the image of Chinese people and shine in their posts. In general, the Characters shows the image of Chinese people and tries to show Chinese virtue of beauty, generous, friendly, kind, intelligent and brave spirit with Chinese smiles.

Content Analysis of The Angles

The Angles is the second part of China's national publicity video which aims to present Chinese images in a more comprehensive way and to show both the various perspectives and levels of Chinese society.

The Angles have 18 minutes long and it was divided into three parts. The beginning of the video is around 2 minutes of introduction, and the core part have 8 units. The ending part is around 2 minutes. Different with the Characters, the Angles mainly focuses on the daily life of ordinary Chinese people and uses English narration to show the images of China. The whole video was edited from more than 800 fragments, showing China from four aspects of politics, society, culture and economy in an all-round way. The Angles was tried to demonstrate Chinese images in a three-dimensional way³⁴.

The Angles try to show full version of the contemporary China and Chinese society, with the way to divided the content of the video into details which is more conducive to the deepening of the interpretation. The 8 units content shows the image of China, strive to fully display China's political, social, economic and cultural image from Chinese life. The first shot of the Angles is a rising sun from the Chinese arch bridge. Then shows the Chinese elements of mountains and rivers in China, the quadrangle courtyard in Beijing, the skyscrapers in modern China, children of minorities ethnic, Tibetan lamas and the Forbidden City in Beijing. The picture stops in a red background with the English word China, then the narrator shows: "who are the Chinese? What make us who we are?"³⁵ Along with the presentation of thinking picture is the footsteps of pedestrians on the street, children's clear eyes, Taijiquan, Square Dance and Diabolos, etc. It is a reflective attitude, a constant reflection and examination of oneself and one's country. This kind of opening leads to thinking, and then the video uses 8 units to show the images of China. The themes and

³⁴ "China National Publicity Film: The Angles" < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3E22LbMHtM&t=58s> > [25 January 2011]

³⁵ China National Publicity Video: The Angles, 01:06.

content presented in each unit are striving to show Chinese society.

The first unit is “Opening the door with confidence³⁶”, the main events are the changes brought to China by the reform and opening up; the Chinese characteristics that China insisting, and the strong self-confidence of Chinese people. In 1978 China broke the situation of seclusion, China's economic reform and opening up injected vitality to the development of China and shocked the whole world; China shows a powerful ability of handling events. All these changes have made Chinese people more determined to open up and move forward with confidence. Showing that China is constantly cooperating with the world, at the same time, China is maintaining the distinctive Chinese characteristics and confident in the choice of their own way.

The second unit is “Growth with Sustainability³⁷”, the main events are the continuous development progress of Chinese society and the concept of sustainable development in China. Nowadays, the development of education in China is also admirable, what we can see is the growth of economy and the improvement of education. The ancient China already has the concept of sustainable development. Mencius, a Chinese philosopher advocated "No overfishing and logging the wood in season³⁸", which is similar to the idea of sustainable development coincides with the modern idea of circular economy. China's development will not be at the expense of the environment. This concept is in line with the proposal of green GDP, which shows that China pays more attention to sustainability development.

The third unit is “Development with Sharing³⁹”, the main events are China's development of internationalism, China is focusing on different social classes, etc. As China is becoming more international, more and more foreigners came and live in China. The International events conducted by China in recent years, such as Shanghai World Expo, Beijing Olympic Games, Guangzhou Asian Games. Those activities let more and more foreigners know about China through the method of participating those activities by themselves. At the same time, Chinese feel proud about those international communication activities. The different class in China has been taken as an important issue. Issues concerning people's livelihood and social equity have become a hot topic of social concern

³⁶ China National Publicity Video: The Angles, 01:54.

³⁷ China National Publicity Video: The Angles, 03:57.

³⁸ Mencius. “Liang Hui Wang I.” in Chinese Warring States Time (475 BC - 221 BC).

³⁹ China National Publicity Video: The Angles, 05:29.

in China.

The fourth unit is “Multiculturalism with Shared Prosperity⁴⁰”, the main events are multi-ethnic groups are integrated with China’s development, and China is in the process of ideological emancipation, cultural and artistic pluralism. The 55 ethnic minorities make up the great Chinese nation together with the Han ethnic. The fruits of China's economic development have made cultural and artistic exchanges among various ethnic groups more frequently, which is a perfect blend of ethnic cultures after the beautiful conflict. In contemporary China, we can see the integration of eastern and western cultures, as well as the continuous integration of traditional and modern cultures.

The fifth unit is “Freedom with Responsibility⁴¹”, the main events are showing Chinese society is becoming more informational. The popularity of mobile phone and Internet users in China is getting higher and it still shows a rising trend, which has changed the life mode of Chinese people. Almost every Chinese will communicate their feelings in these two advanced ways, more and more Chinese people express their opinions through the internet. Chinese government also adapting to this new model of public opinion guidance. New ways and ideas of governance, such as online governance and microblog governance are developing in Chinese society.

The sixth unit is “Expanding Democracy within Legal Framework⁴²”, the main events are China's democratic and legal systems have been constantly improved. The Chinese history, especially the modern history, has experienced a history of arduous struggle. China now offers more power to its people. The National People's Congress has enabled the Chinese people to truly become their own masters. The legal society and the concept of the rule of law continue to penetrate into every corner of China, contemporary Chinese citizens have received more legal education and began to use legal weapons to protect themselves.

The seventh unit is “Economic Difference with Mutual Respect⁴³”, the main events are the social gap between the rich and the poor has not changed people's respect and love for each other. It is true that there existing a certain gap between the rich and the poor in China today, but this gap has neither changed the mutual respect between Chinese people nor the feelings of mutual care between Chinese people, every Chinese can be respected in

⁴⁰ China National Publicity Video: The Angles, 07:45.

⁴¹ China National Publicity Video: The Angles, 10:01.

⁴² China National Publicity Video: The Angles, 11:10.

⁴³ China National Publicity Video: The Angles, 13:00.

China. Public welfare and love have become the powerful force in Chinese society. The hope primary school and public welfare fund play a significant role in Chinese society. These kind of public welfare and love has become a huge positive energy in Chinese society.

The eighth unit is “Prosperity with Prudence⁴⁴”, the main events are the consumption structure of Chinese people is changing, and the spirit of frugality runs through the country's large-scale activities. The development of China's economy has greatly improved the material standard of living among Chinese people, and the consumption of spiritual life has drawn more and more attention. However, those development does not mean that Chinese society has developed the habit of extravagance and waste. China has made frugality as a model and promoted it in the large national events. General secretary Xi Jinping's idea of opposing extravagance and waste has been deeply rooted in Chinese people's mind.

The content of the Angles involves politics, society, culture and economy. It shows the image of China through the description of different examples. The four parts reflect each other, the playing time of the film in all parts were almost equal. From this arrangement, it can be seen that there was no obvious emphasis on a specific image of China, except for a slight tendency in the cultural aspect. The playing time in other parts were relatively even. There were 258 seconds for cultural aspect; 208 seconds for social aspect; 175 seconds for political aspect; 173 seconds for the economic aspect⁴⁵. These time arrangement shows that the Angles try to keep balance in the performance of different parts. The Angles describes China's national image in a comprehensive and three-dimensional way. First, the political image of freedom, equality, democracy and the rule of law; Second, social image of inclusiveness, sharing, equality and mutual assistance; Third, the economic image of the coexistence of rapid economic development and sustainable consciousness; Fourth, the cultural image of inclusiveness and sharing, diversity and richness, and the collision between traditional and modern beauty.

The Necessary Functional Factors for Public Diplomacy

In this part, author will analysis what are the necessary factors for the functional of public diplomacy based on the theoretical framework and empirical data. The author set 7 factors

⁴⁴ China National Publicity Video: The Angles, 14:15.

⁴⁵ Gong. Ibid., p.16.

that related to the content, target, channel, feedbacks and opposite effects of China's national publicity video in the United States. The 7 factors covered the whole process of a public diplomacy action.

Both the Channel and Target Need to be Accurate

Different social groups will choose different media due to their different lifestyles and cultural backgrounds. If the audience of China's national publicity video is the mass of Americans, then the most basic goal is to spread the advertising information to as many Americans as possible. But, Chinese national publicity video was only broadcast on the outdoor screens of Times Square in New York and the American Cable TV⁴⁶. The Characters shows on the outdoor screen is limited by geographical area, it cannot reach the millions of Americans like electronic media. Therefore, the outdoor screen is an offline media that can only influence a very limited number of information audiences, it plays a secondary and auxiliary role in publicity actions. TV is a better choice to send advertising information into thousands of households instantly. But the problem is that the Angles only demonstrated on the channel of American cable TV, it was seriously insufficient to fulfill the goal of transmitting advertising information to most Americans.

China's national publicity video was shown in the Times Square and American cable TV station, apparently it aimed at Americans as the target. The Characters displayed a series of Chinese celebrities to express the prosperity of new China to American people. But the question is how attentions those Chinese celebrities can catch in the United States? Even though some of them are already well-known in China. Does Americans know the values that those Chinese celebrities represent and carry? A passer-by on Times Square said in an interview: "this video is good, but if I were the maker of this video, I will tell a little bit about who are those people, by this way the audience can get some education and also know something about Chinese culture and industry⁴⁷."

The New York Times also said in a report on January 18, 2011: "Mr. Li and the founders of two other technology companies, Netease founder Ding Lei and Alibaba founder Jack Ma appeared on the screen and with the title of 'China Fortune'. This title may be more

⁴⁶ Xu Hui. "The Communication Effects of China National Film in The U.S." in *PR View*, ed. by Guo Huimin, Hu Baijing, Wang Fengbin and Wang Xiaohui. Beijing: Jan. 2014, pp.40.

⁴⁷ Xu. *Ibid.*, p.43.

meaningful and attractive for Chinese audiences than millions of Americans who pass through Times Square every day." In the same report, the New York Times continued to report that "The appearance of Wang Jianzhou, the president of China Mobile, is a vague message for the Americans who walk through Time Square, but the Chinese audience can understand this message very clearly. Some critics have pointed out that the video is out of touch with the American audience." Some netizens also commented that this video was not made for Americans: "It seems that the video maker doesn't know who is the audience, or the target of this video is not the real American, but the Chinese⁴⁸."

The limited dissemination effects and the confuse from the audiences shows the problem of China's national publicity video in the aspect of accuracy. The video maker seems not familiar with the intend audience and the information dissemination was also not very effective.

No Tendency of Propaganda

A lot of people will be confused about the concept of propaganda and public diplomacy, the author adopted the definition of propaganda as "a technique or a tool to disseminate ideas and information in order to influence opinions and attitudes in a way that serves the propagandist"⁴⁹. According to this definition, propaganda can be neutral as a kind of tool, but in fact most people connected propaganda with information manipulation and cheating innocent people. One of the main character of propaganda is that it only provides one-way communication and exclude dialog or mutual communication⁵⁰. Compare with propaganda, public diplomacy encourages two-way communication and very care about the feedback from the audience.

According to soft power theory, propaganda will seriously damage host country's credibility which the public is very alert and sensitive to the propaganda⁵¹. China's national publicity video are mainly relied on the repeat displaying of the video in the United States, which is basically a one-way dissemination mode in communication. The shortcoming of this communication mode has led to the distort image interpretation of China in the United States.

⁴⁸ Xu. *Ibid.*, p.43.

⁴⁹ Philip M. Taylor. "Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda." in Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, third edition 2003, pp 7.

⁵⁰ Jacques Ellul. "Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes." in New York, NY: Vintage, 1973, pp 11.

⁵¹ Hooghe. *Ibid.*, p.27.

The video did not overcome the two shortcomings of one-way communication model and not emphasize the interactivity of the two side. Although the video had uses new media method for dissemination, but its role in image building still have not break through the old path of publicity. It simply shows the status in China and does not really capture the core image of the new China. Such kind of cramming style has caused panic among American audiences. Dr. Kong Qingqin from the Communication college of Hong Kong Baptist University did a related investigation and tried to study the dissemination effects of the Characters in the United States. The survey results showed that the video's communication effect is not ideal. In the survey question of "Do you know about the Chinese faces that appear in t the Characters?" The choice of "all know" only accounts for 9.09% of the total number of the subject, and the "mostly recognized" is only accounts for 39.39%. The sum of the two is less than 50%. Many people say that this advertisement gives more feeling of tension and oppression. Their first thought is: Chinese are coming, and there are so many⁵²."

A report of Wall Street Journal in January 18, 2011 commented: Just like other things in China, this soft power promoting action was also led by the government, and it is difficult to measure how much it will help to cater the Americans. Pew research center conducted a survey of 1,503 Americans in the United States and found that 58% of them wants to establish a stronger relationship with China, but 65% of them regard China as an "opponent" or "a serious problem"⁵³."

The construction of the national image is not a simple external publicity. It revealed us that public diplomacy activity need to pay more attention to the interaction between the host country and the audience.

Under the Value of Target Group

Every advertisement has a theme, which is what the information that the video maker wants to convey to the audience, such as let the audience know about a new concept or let them change an existing cognition. The good advertising theme is the advertiser tells what the consumer wants to hear, not what information source wants to express.

The purpose of China's national publicity video is to introduce a "prosperous, developing,

⁵² Gong. Ibid., p.19.

⁵³ Xu. Ibid., p.46.

democratic and progressive China” to American public⁵⁴. The subtitles in the video conveys these themes, such as Chinese Wealth, Chinese Athletes, Chinese Fashion and so on. The question is the more important part of the video, which is the Characters. Have they shown their advertising function by themselves in the video? Almost every character who appears is standing or sitting straightly, not only no language, but also no expression, some of them have a stiffness smile on their face, and even some character crossing their arms in front of their chest to the audience. The body language of arms crossed on the chest means rejecting others and self-protection. That explains why after watching the video a passerby passing through Times Square said: "They look unfriendly and faceless." Other Americans who have seen the video also said that the people appears in video seems to be scary and weird. They are coming to make friends, but they look more like enemies. Mr. David Wolff, the head of Marketing Strategy at WOLF Asia Group said: "With this advertisement, China may want to welcome Americans with open arms, but they don't realize that they are actually abusing Americans⁵⁵." The culture differences created problems for the effects of the video and the functional of image building.

China has always advocated the independent foreign policy and the principle of not interfering other countries' domestic issues. Those policies of China have won the trust of many countries in the world. Due to there are many fundamental differences between Chinese culture and American culture, there are many contradictions which are difficult to reconcile between the two countries people in the values and perspectives. For improving China's image in the United States, it is also very important to support China by local social elites and opinion leaders who are under the value of target state. If China wants to change its image in the mind of Americans, they need to rely more on those who are familiar with American culture and value and can communicate with American media and Americans in English. Also rely on the opinion leaders who are considered to be objective and credible by American people. More importantly, China's public diplomacy activity should be able to pass through the American's cultural filter, that means in the eyes of the American public, China's public diplomacy is a kind of transparent and rational behavior⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Xu. Ibid., p.44.

⁵⁵ Loretta Chao. "Pro-China Ad Makes Broadway Debut." In *The Wall Street Journal* <<https://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2011/01/18/pro-china-ad-makes-broadway-debut/>> [January 18, 2011]

⁵⁶ Juliet Ye. "Chinese Web Users Frown on Image Ad." In *The Wall Street Journal* <<https://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2011/01/19/chinese-web-users-frown-on-china-image-ad/>> [January 19, 2011]

No Core Interest Competition

For international advertising, in order to allow the audience in different regions to accept advertising information more smoothly, the maker need to understand the political and economic status of the target state or region. For example, when a state or region is experiencing an economic crisis or the local people are suffering from natural disasters, an exotic tourism advertisement will be weird and cannot play any positive function. Since the financial crisis in 2008, the United States has been at a low economic tide, the number of unemployed people has risen steadily, many enterprises have been closed down, and people's livelihood problems have become more and more serious. Many Americans had lost their jobs and even residence. Most American people are worrying their life and do not know when the economy will rise again⁵⁷.

The development of China in recent years is obvious to the whole world, in China's national publicity video there are materials, supermodels, technology elites, world-renowned movie stars. Those contents are all realities, that is not the problems. The problem is that when Americans are experiencing an economic downturn, the unemployment rate remains high, their life was deeply affected. Many Americans have been unilaterally reported by their media that the economic crisis is related to China's occupation of American's labor market. When Chinese government showing off its wealth in front of the door of the Americans' home. It can only stimulate the Americans and make them feel worried and unhappy. So, when the China's national publicity video kindly said: "We are your friends," the Americans can only hear: "Hey, be careful Americans⁵⁸."

China's national publicity video wants to show the economic enrichment to Americans. This is a bit like a man being full of delicious food in stomach talking dinner with a starving man. There is no other positive effect, except being disgusted by the audience. On the other hand, in recent years, due to the rise of China's economy, the China threat theory has become popular in the world. From American politicians to ordinary people, the United States already treat China as the potential threat to them. China's national publicity video talks about China's material richness, it further "focuses Americans on the aspects that make them feel nervous⁵⁹." According to Wendt's constructivism theory, the final purpose of public diplomacy

⁵⁷ Xu. Ibid., p.44.

⁵⁸ Xu. Ibid., p.43.

⁵⁹ Juliet Ye. "Chinese Web Users Frown on Image Ad." In *The Wall Street Journal*

is to construct common knowledge and identity, but the content of the Characters actually made opposite effects which helping to construct the opponent identity of China to the United States.

China and the United States have unavoidable conflicts in the area of ideology and national interests. Therefore, China will inevitably be misunderstood more or less. The ancient part of China has become an unchangeable stereotype in the eyes of the Americans, traditional China is still a Communist China in the mind of Americans. The influence of the Cold War has not yet been eliminated. However, China's aphasia in the Sino-US relationship has not changed. The guise of some American media has even shaped China's image of dictatorship, opposes religious freedom, and a state that suppresses dissidents. In the eyes of the Americans, China poses a threat to the American capitalist system, so the China threat theory and China arrogance theory can be popular in the world⁶⁰. Under such circumstances, it is very difficult to be functional for China's public diplomacy activities towards the American public.

Systematical and Continuity

Richard Berger is a public relations consultant with a primary focus on the Chinese media. He said that China is not have persistence in advertising campaigns towards the United States. "China should be regarded as a superpower. However, their policies and the information they disseminated were contradicting with each other. The message they convey is that China is kind and friendly state to other countries. But they do have human rights problems, so people will forget the advertising message very quickly but notice and remember more dramatic Chinese human rights record." He also said that the advertisements like China's national publicity video would not have much effect in changing American public's attitude towards China. "I don't believe that such advertisements will have an effect because Americans tend to be cynical. They always hold critical attitude towards the content they saw in the media. I think that American audience will have more curious about this video rather than anything else⁶¹."

Can the American people really accept the information conveyed by China's national

<<https://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2011/01/19/chinese-web-users-frown-on-china-image-ad/>> [January 19, 2011]

⁶⁰ Gong. Ibid., p.24.

⁶¹ Xu. Ibid., p.47.

publicity video? Americans generally tend to be politicized, it means that in their daily lives, they will discuss political issues and often criticize the government, criticize labor unions, and criticize officials. At the same time, the US media's prejudice against China may be beyond our imagination. They often selectively report the information related to China, most of this kind of report is biased to a negative attitude. Most of the American people have never been to China, their knowledge and information about China comes from media reports. It results in the American people's understanding of China naturally existing many prejudices. Due to Americans have interest in politics, when they talk about China, they always think about human rights issues and Tibet issues in their minds. When China's national publicity video talks about Chinese wealth and technology, the inner problems which the Americans care about has never been answered. That made Americans cannot be easily convinced by such kind of advertisement. On January 20, 2011, the Reuters quoted the comments of Cromwell, the president of Washington-based East West Communications: "this advertisement did not tell the world of the real worrying about China, not even a bit of fur⁶²."

National image building requires sustained and long-term publicity and communication with target states, and the national image is a product of long-term accumulation process. According to Joseph Nye's soft power theory, public diplomacy has three levels, both the second and third levels emphasize sustainability. Therefore, public diplomacy that focused on improving the image of the state should be a long-term process, not an instant action that is only launched when confronting special situations like the country's leaders going to visit somewhere. The cost of advertising in Times Square is high but it can only be used as a short-term assistant tool. For the long-term, large-scale publicity and communication activities need to be carried out through China's own media, such as international radio, television and new media platforms.

Influential Media Ability

Nowadays, most people receive information from the internet and mass media. In other words, most of the information that people accept has been processed. There is a concept of communication school named "agenda setting", it means that mass media can influence the mind of the public by arranging the broadcast sequence of information⁶³. This concept is also

⁶² Xu. *Ibid.*, p.43.

⁶³ Guo Qingguang. *Journalism & Communication*. China Renmin University Press, 2011, pp194-196.

valuable in the international level, information actually became a new kind of power in this world. This sentence has two meanings, on the one hand, the country or institution which can collect and edit information is a kind of power to become the information source; on the other hand, the country or institution which have channel and ability to disseminate edited information have power to influence the public, for the influencing public quantity is positively correlated with the ability of information dissemination. In the era of public diplomacy 2.0, the internet and social media have democratized information, it means that the public can break the social information mechanism in a certain degree⁶⁴. But social information is still not transparency and objective, it is still being processed everyday even on the internet platform.

Under such kind of situation, the essence of media competition turns to power competition between countries. Enhancing international information disseminating ability became one of the important functional factor of public diplomacy. If we look at the dialogue pattern between China and the United States in general, it is not difficult to find that in most cases China is at a disadvantage position, especially for the discourse right. In the era of globalization, the United States use the advantage of material and ideology has almost monopolized the dominance in politics, economy, military, science and technology, culture and foreign relations in the world. Under the Western-led national discourse system, China's national discourse system has been positioned for a long time, and China Threat Theory are popular in the Western world. The whole world lacks a clear and accurate position for China. The dissemination of China's national publicity video cannot change the status of China's diplomatic aphasia. Instead, it brought the opportunity for the United States to use this incident to spread the distortion of China's image. The United States also did not abandon strategic thinking and used a distorted voice to report China's national publicity video as a kind of demonstration, and said that China is exerting pressure and tension on the American public⁶⁵. The tendency of the report is catering to the argument of China threat theory.

The public diplomacy action like the dissemination of China's national publicity video in the United States cannot only rely on the effort of Chinese side, the spreading of information need the broadcast of local media to rebroadcast and finally resulted a wider dissemination of the original information, otherwise the influence of the action will be very limited. If the display of China's national publicity video can cause a certain sensation in American society,

⁶⁴ Matt Armstrong. "New Media and Persuasion, Mobilization and Facilitation." Mountain runner, blog (5 August 2008), <http://mountainrunner.us/2008/08/new_media_and_persuasion_mobil.html> [May 2010].

⁶⁵ Juliet Ye. "Chinese Web Users Frown on Image Ad." In *The Wall Street Journal* <<https://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2011/01/19/chinese-web-users-frown-on-china-image-ad/>> [January 19, 2011]

the Americans who do not often go to the Times Square or not watch the American cable TV station frequently can also know about China's national publicity video was broad casting in the Time Square and the American cable TV. However, among the 15 most widely distributed newspaper companies of the United States, there were only two newspapers reported the information about China's national publicity video, they are Wall Street Journal and New York Times, the rest 13 big newspaper companies did not mention the matter at all. For the radio media area, only the Voice of America has broadcasted the news of China's national publicity video shows in the United States. There was no American magazine reported this issue at all⁶⁶. Lacking influential international media ability in the United States was another weakness of China's public diplomacy.

Real Information

It is easy to understand that why the advertised information must be real. As mentioned in the section of *Systematical and Continuity*, the functional of public diplomacy is a long-term accumulating process, and this process is very easy to be interrupted. If the advertised information was confirmed to be fake, not only the positive image accumulating process will be stopped, but also the previous effort will be ruined automatically. And there is a Chinese famous saying goes: "Good news never goes Beyond the gate, while Bad news spreads far and wide⁶⁷", the audience always have more interest in scandal and prefer helping to spread scandal. Therefore, the real information is the basic foundation of public diplomacy.

Besides information itself, according to soft power theory, another important aspect is the trust of audience to the information of the host country. In other word, the credibility of host country. For the host country's credibility are mainly influenced by two aspects: first, host country's political system, for China is the authoritarian system and state-centered approach of public diplomacy; second, the match degree of the host country's information and actual situation. This part including both international broadcast advertisement and domestic news and status.

There are lots of critical comments towards China in western world, the cause of those negative comments can be divided into three kinds: first kind is based on China's authoritarian system and socialism; second kind is the cultural misunderstanding between

⁶⁶ Xu. Ibid., p.40-43.

⁶⁷ Sun Guangxian. *Suo Yan*. (C.E. 901-968)

China and the western world; the third kind is defects of Chinese governance and management.

Different countries will choose different political model based on culture, history, traditions and social development. Each type of political system has its own advantages and weaknesses, the superiority of political system depends on the country's status and governance. There is a misconception that democracy and capitalism are the best or top level of human politics that suitable for all the countries. China has 2000 years political history of feudal monarchy, and have a short period of time adopted constitutional monarchy and democracy system before the found of People's Republic of China. But the fact is those political experiments failed to bring welfare and stabilized society for Chinese. The Communist Party of China representing the fundamental interests of the majority of Chinese since it was born in 1921. After the found of People's Republic of China, the Communist Party of China being the only ruling party for 70 years and led Chinese finished the transformation from a country full of poverty and backwardness to the world second largest economy.

China's political system has its own advantage than democracy, the concentration of power and resource lead to quickly response and high efficiency in governance. Due to the highly concentrated political system. China also have a strict control of information and public opinion, especially for the issues related to foreign affairs. Most of China's public diplomacy activity are state-centered approach. Those actual status bring credibility problem for China in the western countries, the western world often blames China's one party ruling system and the control of social information. For China's public diplomacy, in this case, the state-centered approach and one-way communication of China's national publicity video even make the problem worse. Finally cause the Americans' audience holding suspicion about the content of video, although the information that content tries to convey is real.

Another influencing factor in credibility is the match degree of the host country's information and actual situation. Although the information conveyed by public diplomacy activity is real, the final effects will be influenced by domestic social status. If the host country's domestic actions have contradiction with the content of public diplomacy, is will also create problems of credibility. In the case of this project, China's national publicity video try to promote the images of a genuine, civilized and wealthy China to Americans. But the domestic governance problems will seriously damage the effects of public diplomacy activity and make the audience holding suspicion towards the content of China's international advertisement.



Source: <http://dy.163.com/v2/article/detail/DUDKANND0529UPPG.html>⁶⁸

The above two pictures show a kind of wall in China which named Cultural Wall by local government, but the common Chinese people call it Embarrassment Covering Wall. Most of this kind of wall located besides the main road. The function of those wall is to cover the scene of poverty and backwardness. The reason why Embarrassment Covering Wall appears in China is that some local officials wants to cope with the inspection of superior leaders and make the leader have a good impression of his governance, then he will have more possibility to get promotion then the privilege of high ranking. And normally the superior leaders will go through those area by car, therefore the Embarrassment Covering Wall can fulfill local officials' requirement for cope with inspection with the lowest price. The right-side picture is more interesting, the wall uses red color as background and traditional Chinese architecture structure as roof. This style is very Chinese and it is same with the wall of forbidden city. The sentence on the wall is: "Corruption like a needle that stabbing people's heart".



Source: <http://news.sohu.com/20070214/n248231202.shtml>⁶⁹

⁶⁸ "A wall in a village, divided one places into two worlds, local residents call it 'Embarrassment Covering Wall'" in Wang Yi, < <http://dy.163.com/v2/article/detail/DUDKANND0529UPPG.html> > [18 October 2018]

⁶⁹ "Barren Mountain Brushed Green Paint, Cheating Who?" in Sohu News <<http://news.sohu.com/20070214/n248231202.shtml>> [14 February 2007]

The above pictures show another absurdity phenomenon in China. In some poor mountainous area, the local government painted the rock mountain with green oil paint. The reason for the appearance of these phenomenon is almost same with the Embarrassment Covering Wall. Due to the superior government have requirement for the governance of lower level government, including poverty alleviation and the ratio of green coverage. When the local government not have enough time and resource to fulfill the requirement, the local officials will find method to solve the problem in a creative way. But these creative methods may not correspond with the interest of local residents.

Those absurdity phenomena are neither the normal situation of China's local government nor the single incident in China's remote area. Those absurdity phenomena are domestic problems of China which violated the will of central government. But those domestic problems combine with China's authoritarian system and state-centered approach will finally create problem of credibility of China's information dissemination in the international society, actually became strong opposite effects for the functional of China's public diplomacy in the world, including the United States.

Conclusion

The dissemination of China's national publicity video in the United States was the milestone of China's public diplomacy, it was a symbol that China started to promote soft power actively. The Americans think it was a good start for China's public diplomacy that the Chinese government can start to use video advertising as a way of communication with the American audience. However, most of the American media reports China's national publicity video were relatively negative. There were several reasons for this situation: First, the video shows off materialism and make Americans feel nervous rather than friendly, especially when Americans were still in the economic depression; Second, the video wants to express a friendly attitude, but in fact Americans feel the video information were not friendly; third, some of the video content was out of touch with the American audience, they feel that the advertisement was not talking to them; finally, the advertisement video did not contain any explanation content of China which the Americans really worrying about.

If public diplomacy activities want to make efforts to promote national image among foreign public, it need to satisfy seven necessary factors: first, Both the Channel and Target Need to be Accurate, due do different target group will focus on different media in their daily

life, it is important to choose the media channel based on the target and expected purpose. Second, a country's public diplomacy action need to have a long-term strategy, which means it need to be systematical and sustainable. Generally speaking, the short-term activities will hard to be functional for national image promoting, the instant effect will be interrupt by interference information quickly. And it not only requires the continuity of the public diplomacy actions but also keep the construction of domestic society. Because once when the domestic status was not coordinating with what the country advertised, the public diplomacy will be marked as fake news or propaganda and means completely fail. Third, the content of public diplomacy activity need to Under the value of Target Group, people from different culture background will have completely different explanation towards a same information, the role of cultural lens is vital, public diplomacy cannot be the talk show of host country but should be an exhibition for the target states. Fourth, an important precondition of public diplomacy to be functional is that the two sides cannot existing war or structural competition which cannot compromise instantly, if the target country's public think the host country is their enemy or opponent then the image promoting activity will be impossible to work out. In the information era, media became the information source of everyone, but the media will only serve for their own country's interest, public diplomacy actions need to convey by the media, therefore to have the influential media ability is also a necessary condition for the functional of public diplomacy. The analysis of this project finally concludes that the functional of public diplomacy need to combine instantly communication and long-term image construction; combine both domestic society construction and international information dissemination to other countries' public.

Although the constructivism theory explained why public diplomacy play a role in the international relations. But the implement of public diplomacy is very complicated in practical, it related to different academic subjects. The liberalism school of international relations cannot explain some important influencing factors of public diplomacy like power transition conflicts, international disseminate competitions and the invisible attractive of hard power. The research and theoretical construction of public diplomacy is still on going, although China already became the second largest economy in the world and started to pay attention on national image building, there is still a long way to go to make the western countries genuinely like her.

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