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PANDA DIPLOMACY: CHINA'S SOFTEST POWER?

HOW DOES CHINA UTILIZE THE GIANT PANDA IN ITS PUBLIC
DIPLOMACY?

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ABSTRACT

EMMA HYLAND, *"PANDA DIPLOMACY: HOW DOES CHINA UTILIZE THE GIANT PANDA IN ITS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY?"*, MSC CHINA AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, MAY 2020, UNIVERSITY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & AALBORG UNIVERSITY, BEIJING & AALBORG.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse how China utilizes the giant panda in its public diplomacy through the public diplomacy tool known as "panda diplomacy". The thesis analysed panda diplomacy's role in Chinese public diplomacy through a qualitative multiple-case study based on theories of soft power and public diplomacy, and used data sources such as: news articles, academic journals and official statements from Chinese officials where available. The cases chosen for analysis were Denmark, the United States and Japan, due to their ability to provide insights into different aspects of how panda diplomacy is conducted. Public diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and a comparison of China's alternative public diplomacy tools were also analysed in order to interpret how panda diplomacy functions in the Chinese system. Gilboa's Framework of Analysis was applied to panda diplomacy to further increase understanding of panda diplomacy's role as a public diplomacy tool. In conclusion, this thesis found that panda diplomacy is a unique public diplomacy tool of China's that has the ability to communicate Chinese culture to foreign audiences and incentivize positive bilateral behaviour from countries it practices panda diplomacy in. In comparison to China's other public diplomacy tools, it increases foreign publics' positive associations with China in a way that is more accessible than other Chinese public diplomacy tools such as Confucius institutes or student exchanges. China's government is closely linked with panda diplomacy and carefully plans the process before, during and after panda agreements are made. China's choices of countries to enter into panda agreements with are based on good relations or trade prospects, and during times of tense bilateral relations with countries China refrains from loaning more pandas to said countries. Significantly, panda diplomacy can be compared to China's four main public diplomacy goals to reveal that it has the ability to aid China to reach all of these goals, which highlights panda diplomacy as a strong public diplomacy tool. Although it can be difficult to say with certainty the direct impact of one singular public diplomacy tool on policy outcomes, this thesis was able to uncover strong links between panda diplomacy and political relations, that can increase the understanding of how panda diplomacy functions within China's public diplomacy and building of soft power.

KEY WORDS: CHINA, PANDA DIPLOMACY, PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOLS, SOFT POWER, GIANT PANDA, ANIMAL DIPLOMACY, DENMARK, U.S, JAPAN

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 1978, former Chinese premier Deng Xiaoping introduced economic reforms that caused a momentous shift in China's growth (Denmark, 2018). Over the next few decades, China would come to grow faster than any other world economy, opening up to foreign investment, multinational companies, and putting China on the map as a global superpower (Hu & Khan, 1997). As China opened up to the rest of the world in the years following the reforms it would have to deal with appealing to the outside world in ways it never had considered before. Suddenly concepts such as soft power and public diplomacy were more important than ever, as China began to play a greater role on the international stage (Jinwei & Zhou, 2012).

As China grows more powerful in the 20th century, it is imperative for China to capitalize upon its soft power resources (Jinwei & Zhou, 2012). Due to differences in politics, fear of the unknown and a resistance to change in the world order, China has faced significant negative bias in the Western world, particularly from the United States (Cheah, 2016). Through building soft power China has the ability to increase its attractiveness to other nations and foreign publics, build trustful relationships with other countries, and can utilize an increase in soft power to incentivise other nations to listen to what it has to say.

Public diplomacy is one of soft power's key instruments and an important means of generating soft power through utilizing soft power resources in tools that can effectively communicate with other nations. It is vital for China to utilize public diplomacy tools to promote its significant soft power resources that are rooted in tradition, culture, ideology and Chinese characteristics (Gill & Huang, 2006). For many years these Chinese public diplomacy tools have

been discussed, with many coming to the conclusion that Confucius Institutes, language and cultural exchanges, education and Chinese celebrities abroad were the foundation upon which Chinese soft power could grow internationally, but many failed to notice the uniquely powerful soft power resource China has had at its disposal for centuries; the giant panda (Wei, 2019).

The giant panda is one of the most universally beloved animals on the planet, with a set of characteristics that makes it truly unique (Deamer, 2016). This has not gone unnoticed by China; the loaning of pandas to other nations has been utilized since 1957, coining the term ‘panda diplomacy’ (China Daily, 2013). This loaning of pandas is a Chinese public diplomacy tool, a method of converting their soft power resource into public diplomacy outcomes. While panda diplomacy is spoken of from time to time within the media, there remains very little academic discussion on the topic, specifically regarding the inner workings of panda diplomacy and how it is used in current day. The lack of academic discussion would lead one to believe that there is little substance to the matter, but to the contrary, there are many layers of insight that could link panda diplomacy to China’s public diplomacy that must be examined.

This thesis will aim to answer questions relating to how panda diplomacy serves as a public diplomacy tool. The topic is increasingly relevant in recent years, as it is vital to understand the influence China has and how it can continue to assert its role and grow its bilateral relations on the global stage. This thesis will aim to maintain a structured approach to analysing the giant panda’s role in Chinese public diplomacy, beginning with a literature review to uncover the existing academic discussions on the topic that will enable this thesis to uncover gaps in the literature and pinpoint the major focus areas of the topic. The literature review will provide academic background and inform the author on how to design the problem formulation for this thesis, following which the methodological and theoretical considerations will be explained as the basis for the analysis chapter. Through this process, the thesis will analyse panda diplomacy in China in a systematic way that will

conclude in a discussion of the major findings from the analysis and an overall conclusion that addresses the research question.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review on panda diplomacy is necessary to identify the existing literature and debates on the topic. Panda diplomacy is a topic that is seldom discussed in relation to China's public diplomacy and, as a result, there are few academic sources to choose from in the English language. However, four main sources have been found to be the following: Wen-Chen Ling's paper *"China's Panda Diplomacy"* published in 2009, Buckingham, Neil, David and Jepson's *"Diplomats and Refugees: Panda Diplomacy, Soft 'Cuddly' Power, and the New Trajectory in Panda Conservation"* published in 2013, Yi Xing's *"China's Panda Diplomacy: The Power of Being Cute"* published in 2010, and Falk Hartig's *"Panda Diplomacy: The cutest part of China's public diplomacy"* published in 2013.

2.2 PANDA DIPLOMACY

The connection between China and giant pandas is a profound and long-lasting one, with all of the world's panda population belonging to China (Zhou, 2018); it is a unique and exclusive bond. China has a great understanding of the significance of its giant pandas, and has integrated the giant panda into its foreign policy undertakings for a long time (Pacher, 2017). The Chinese government has been gifting pandas to other countries for centuries, the earliest documented instance of which was when the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) gifted the Japanese emperor a pair of pandas in 685 AD (Xing, 2010). Through sending pandas as a goodwill gesture, China aims to strengthen its ties with other countries through a strong ideological commitment and a gesture of friendship, which can have significant effects in both the appeal of China to the population of the country that receives the pandas, and can raise China's standing in the country's political and diplomatic agenda (Xing, 2010). By sparking a foreign public's interest in China through panda diplomacy, Xing argues that

China can gain leverage in getting the target audience open to listening to what China has to say, making it a much easier task for China to accomplish its diplomatic goals. As a public diplomacy instrument Xing argues its effectiveness in providing an approachable image of China in the eyes of its target audiences, whose opinion of China will increase accordingly.

The question many scholars are interested in is why the giant panda is such a strong candidate for animal diplomacy. Hartig applies the characteristics of animal diplomacy to China's use of panda diplomacy to assert that there are two reasons for this: its strong universal appeal and the panda's exclusiveness to China (Hartig, 2013)

Mullan and Marvin sum up the panda's impact by asserting "*the giant panda is a unique animal in the sense of its almost universal appeal*" (Mullan & Marvin, 1999). This universal appeal stems from the panda's visual identity which can be described as cute, friendly, innocent, unaggressive, naïve and playful. In a popular survey, Ramona and Desmond Morris claim that the panda have a cuddly, friendly and sexless exterior key to its beloved visual identity (Morris & Morris, 1982). The panda is a prime example of the neoteny or kindschenschema attributed as a key factor in universal appeal within animal diplomacy, as it possesses childlike characteristics that are an important stimulus in evoking a care and protective instinct along with the feeling of cuteness (Hartig 2013). The defining features of Kindchenschema are applicable in the case of the panda, as the 'round, rather flat face, large black eye patches and a cuddly and clumsy appearance give the panda an innocent, childlike quality that evokes universal sympathy, a desire to hug and protect' (Schaller, 1993). This universal appeal attracts attention both in the foreign publics of the country that receives it, but media attention too, as editors tend to gravitate towards stories or pictures that possess the ability to entertain or amuse an audience, with one journalistic rule of thumb stating that babies and animals always work (Hartig, 2013).

The second factor for why panda diplomacy is such a strong candidate for animal diplomacy, as discussed by academics, is their exclusiveness to China (Xing, 2010). They cannot be natively found in any part of the world apart from China's western mountainous area which means that all pandas currently existing on the planet belong to China. Xing states that 'its uniqueness has made China the only country that could associate its national icon with the panda and render the latter a symbolic representation of China's nationhood (Xing, 2010). Successful animal diplomacy rests upon the link between the animal and its native country, and has increased success if the animal is solely and widely associated with its country of origin, as is the case with China and the giant panda (Cushing & Markwell, 2009). While the panda's visual identity is the key to its universal appeal, it is its exclusiveness to China that makes it an impactful tool of China's foreign policy. According to Chellaney, the panda is 'China's key cultural icon and a symbol of friendship and peace. It's cute and cuddly, and sends all the right messages of goodwill' (Chellaney, 2011). Hartig argues that the message that the panda sends out on behalf of China is undeniable. As China is so synonymous with the giant panda, it allows the characteristics of the giant panda to represent China abroad in a friendly, traditional and peaceful manner. (Hartig, 2013)

A bonus factor in panda diplomacy's effectiveness as a public diplomacy tool is how the panda is situated in zoos, in contrast to China's other forms of diplomacy that represent Chinese culture through classrooms, museums or exchanges. Xing argues that zoos are a universal place of fun, where positive associations can easily be built, and people can laugh and speak about the amazement that they experience. This is in contrast to the often negative or arduous associations that people have with classrooms, museums and learning (Xing, 2010). Xing further states that as a zoo is not limited by social status, the giant panda reaches a broader audience than the other public diplomacy tools China has at its disposal. Through reaching the broad mainstream audience that a zoo possesses, panda diplomacy helps China to overcome the language and cultural gap that challenges its other public diplomacy tools.

In summary, academics believe that the giant panda's universal appeal, exclusiveness to china, media attention, and the zoos capacity to reach broader audiences regardless of social hierarchy and to provide a positive learning environment makes panda diplomacy a unique and powerful, albeit often disregarded tool of soft power.

2.3 PANDA DIPLOMACY AS A PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOL

The academics who contribute to research on panda diplomacy make strong cases for asserting panda diplomacy's role as a Chinese public diplomacy tool. Xing asserts that panda diplomacy is *"a long-overlooked power resource"* and argues that *"the universal appeal of pandas serves as an important alternative soft power asset that enables China to approach a much broader audience in foreign countries"*. Although panda diplomacy is not a traditional soft power research or public diplomacy tool, Xing argues that this is because China does not fit the typical soft power mould that Joseph Nye, the academic that coined soft power who will be spoken about in the theory section, adheres to. Xing says *"China's soft power arsenal, according to most scholars, is beyond Nye's categorization and thus owns weapons other countries might not possess"*. This re-defining of Chinese soft power assets, and by proxy, its public diplomacy tools, is important for the concept of panda diplomacy to be understood, and also can indicate why the concept is so largely overlooked. Xing further argues that pandas *"make the overseas public intrigued by their motherland and thus gives Chinese public diplomacy practitioners leverage to get the target audience willing to listen to what China wants to say, which makes it easier for China to accomplish other diplomatic objectives"*. Xing believes that panda diplomacy *"by sending pandas as a gesture of goodwill and symbol of friendship, serves to give China a high profile in targeted countries, gets its overseas audiences interested in China,"* Xing believes that China's short, medium and long-term public diplomacy goals are all met by panda diplomacy, through enhancing China's publicity in foreign countries and attracting attention, making it easier for China to achieve

its diplomatic objectives. He believes that panda diplomacy projects a friendly and approachable image of China in the eyes of the foreign public whose opinion of China will reflect the image projected. Importantly, Xing believes that China's medium and long-term public diplomacy goals are met through panda diplomacy, this is because panda diplomacy facilitates a close relationship with the target country and keeps China high on their diplomatic and political agendas, it also serves to defuse tension between China and its former adversaries and creates more cooperative bilateral relations for China (Xing, 2010).

Hartig (2013) similarly argues the case for panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy instrument, saying *"although China officially very much emphasizes the scientific dimension of panda diplomacy, its public diplomacy dimension should be beyond any dispute."* It is obvious that one of China's main priorities with panda diplomacy is to bolster conservation efforts, which can be seen in the fees that must be paid by zoos hosting pandas to Chinese conservation institutes, but the public diplomacy element of panda diplomacy is also a very important aspect. Hartig goes on to state that *"taking into account the media ecstasy and mostly favourable media coverage, it is no exaggeration to label giant pandas as a 'veritable public diplomacy goldmine'."* Hartig argues that public diplomacy is partly measured by the amount of people who are reached by the public diplomacy tool, and with this in mind China's panda diplomacy is a very successful tool due to it being *"without any doubt a major crowd puller"* and the *"enormous media attention that these animals generate"*, similarly he states that media coverage of panda diplomacy are usually very positive towards China (Hartig, 2013).

Buckingham et al (2013) argue that pandas are more than just a scientific exchange, saying *"panda conservation operates in a complex, dynamic interplay between politics, markets and conservations strategy"*, highlighting the importance of panda diplomacy as a tool that addresses more than is apparent at first glance. Lin reflects the same sentiments as other academics, stating the panda's power as a soft power resource *"the panda has become an integral part of China's soft*

power, as these adorable creatures can easily conquer the hearts of people in foreign countries... and win favour for China.”

Through analysis of research it can be seen that the overarching opinion is that panda diplomacy is more than just a scientific conservation effort, and serves as a very effective Chinese public diplomacy tool and soft power resource. This revelation is hugely important to research as China has many ambitious public diplomacy goals that it will work towards in future years, and panda diplomacy could be a uniquely powerful public diplomacy tool to help it achieve its goals (Lin, 2009).

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS

Through the course of this literature review panda diplomacy was illustrated and argued for as one of China's public diplomacy tools through academic research. Although the academic literature was enough to provide a clear understanding of panda diplomacy, with academics like Hartig, Xing and Lin aiding with their detailed analysis of the topic, it has been made clear in the literature that panda diplomacy remains an often overlooked topic. Xing, in his analysis, stressed the importance of Panda Diplomacy as an *“important but long-overlooked power asset”* that can ignite hope in China's quest to address its public diplomacy goals.

The literature review not only highlights how overlooked panda diplomacy has been in academic research, but how lacking the area is in current research. This is particularly important when one takes into account how impactful panda diplomacy can be on China's public diplomacy. Out of all of the sources found and reviewed for this paper, the most recently published paper was seven years ago, in 2013 (Hartig, 2013). There were no recent sources available in the English language, which is interesting when one considers the increased interaction of China in the global environment. China has continued its panda diplomacy strategies in recent years, taking new and

interesting approaches to how panda agreements are made, and yet the academic coverage on the topic has stalled since 2013. While the papers found were beneficial to understand China's soft power potential, much has changed since then that requires current insights and information. As China is a fast moving and constantly evolving world power, it is fair to say that analysing how panda diplomacy works in the current context could more shed valuable insights into China's current public diplomacy strategies and indicate where panda diplomacy is effective in the current global climate.

Another significant literature gap can be found in how deeply panda diplomacy is linked to China's public diplomacy. Although the effectiveness of the panda as a unique soft power asset has been established, the basis upon which China chooses the recipients of pandas and how this fits into China's public diplomacy strategies remains overlooked. The literature is abundant in discussion of how panda diplomacy can appeal to a foreign audience and be recognized as a gesture of goodwill, but it lacks in an understanding of how these agreements come to be. More research needs to be done on what China seeks in a candidate for panda diplomacy. Is there a specific criterion for how China chooses which countries to engage in panda diplomacy with? Does receiving a panda impact the political or economic relationship these countries have with China? The research shows that panda diplomacy is a unique public diplomacy tool, but lacks in depth research into how it functions as a public diplomacy tool in modern day China. These insights must be known in order to explain how panda diplomacy is utilized by China.

This paper will address the literature gap of analysis of panda diplomacy in recent years and will analyse how China enters into panda agreements with countries, whether there is an underlying political context to its choices or if it is at random. Through this the aim is to provide an insight into how panda diplomacy fits with China's current public diplomacy goals in the year 2020 in order to provide insights into how panda diplomacy works in the context of the country's public diplomacy.

CHAPTER 3: PROBLEM FORMULATION

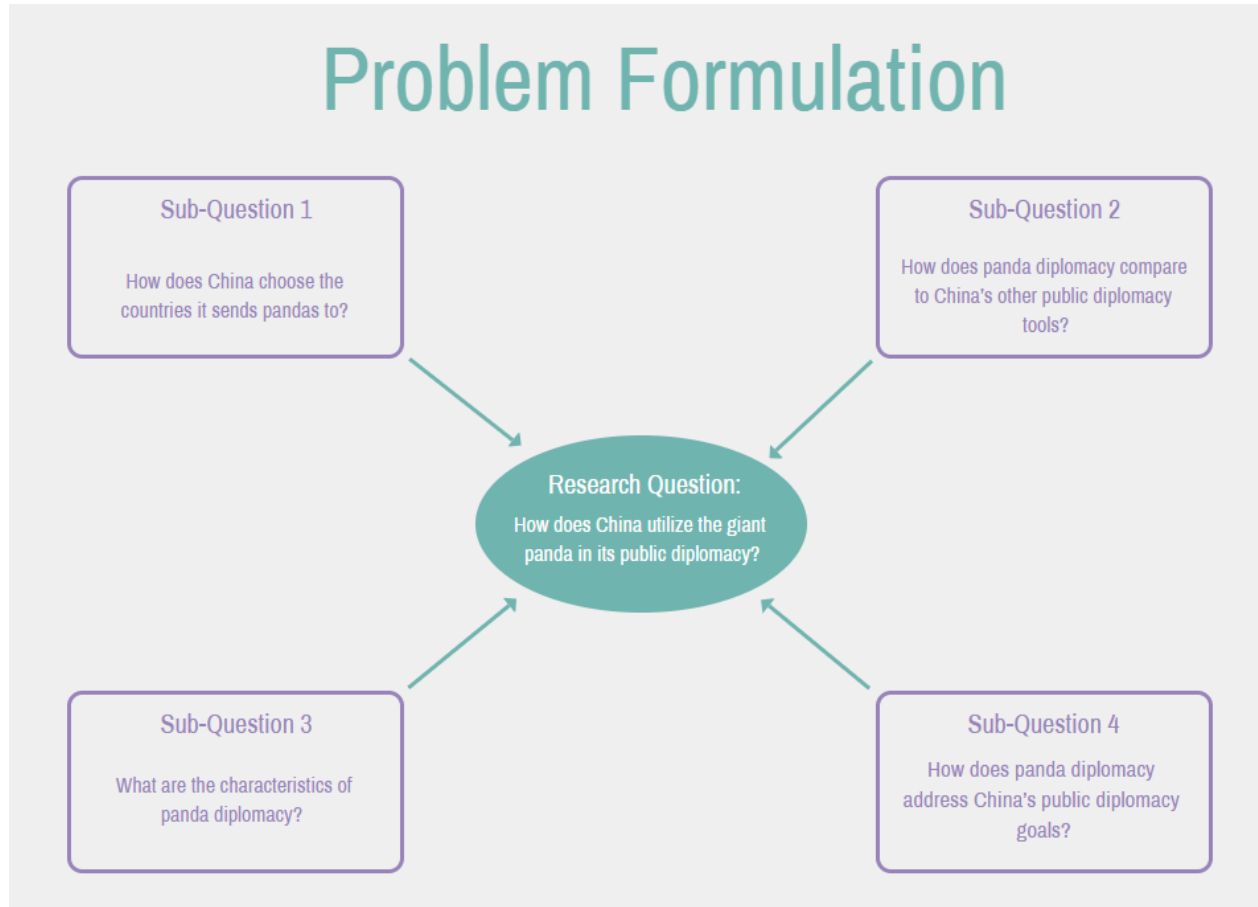
Through the literature review many insights have been gained but there are still problems that need to be investigated. China's public diplomacy tools are of increased importance in a time where it is integral for China to appeal to foreign publics and utilize its soft power resources. Panda diplomacy is an interesting topic to explore as it is a unique and overlooked concept that has strong links to public diplomacy and soft power growth for China. However, the concept of panda diplomacy is largely unspoken of in academic literature; this could be for a plethora of reasons: possibly due to the differences between panda diplomacy and "traditional" globally understood public diplomacy tools such as language, cultural and educational exchanges, museums, institutes and celebrity ambassadors. Due to sparse discussion on the topic of panda diplomacy, there are many questions that remain about what panda diplomacy is, how it works, and the role it plays in China's public diplomacy.

3.1 HOW DOES CHINA UTILIZE THE GIANT PANDA IN ITS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY?

This thesis will answer the fundamental question of *"How does China utilize the giant panda in its public diplomacy?"* in order to gain insight into the inner-workings of the panda within the context of China's public diplomacy. As with every public diplomacy tool, it is important to understand the inner-workings behind the tool, but particularly when the tool is so unique and present in 21 different countries globally. There are multitudes of possible implications that could be associated with panda diplomacy, which this thesis will deconstruct through a literature review and subsequent analysis of cases of panda diplomacy. Through looking at the different scenarios of panda diplomacy implementation we can gain a valuable insight into how it works and its effectiveness as a public diplomacy tool.

In order to break down the insights needed to answer the research question, this thesis will seek to provide findings into key sub-questions of this topic, which are the following: How does China choose the countries it sends pandas to? How does panda diplomacy compare to China's other public diplomacy tools? What are the characteristics of panda diplomacy? And lastly, how does panda diplomacy address China's public diplomacy goals?

These sub-questions have been chosen through questions on the topic that have arisen from the literature review, and they will help to provide insight into topics where there is a gap in existing literature. Each sub-question serves to increase insight into the overall research question.



CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The aim of this paper, as can be read in the problem formulation chapter, is to analyse how China utilizes the giant panda in public diplomacy through its overall panda diplomacy strategy. This chapter will introduce the basis for the procedures that will be used to collect, analyse and interpret the data in this thesis and will explain the considerations made when designing the methodological approach.

The first consideration that was taken was the choice between qualitative and quantitative methods, although both could serve to answer the research question in different ways, the aims of the research and the available data rely on qualitative methods. Qualitative methods will be employed to allow the researcher to discover and understand events, develop themes and motives, and seek patterns and generalizations through data. In order to strengthen the validity of the study, small amounts of quantitative data will be used through a process of triangulation; this quantitative data will come in the form of numeric and statistical data, which will back up patterns identified by the qualitative methods. Case studies are a common technique employed by qualitative researchers. This thesis will employ case studies on a macro level in order to answer the research question, and will also rely on analysis of texts and documents, such as government reports, media articles and websites.

4.2 CASE STUDY CONSIDERATIONS

When choosing to conduct case study research in research it is important to clarify certain aspects of the research design that inform the use of case studies (Klotz, 2008). A case study has been chosen as the qualitative method of analysis as it allows the researcher to explore the phenomenon of panda

diplomacy in context using a number of data sources. By choosing a case study approach, the research narrows a general concept into a more specific one, in which patterns and meaning can be more clearly identified. In this thesis the general concept is how China utilizes panda diplomacy, but in order to understand the inner workings of the process it is important to analyse the phenomenon on a more specific level. At a fundamental level panda diplomacy involves China's public diplomacy strategies and how they are implemented with other countries in a bilateral context. As a result of this, any case in which China conducts panda diplomacy with another country could be analysed, but it is important that cases are chosen that can show insights into variables that we do not yet understand about panda diplomacy. It is important for generalization purposes that all cases be different but that they ideally have sufficient data to form a valid analysis.

Three cases have been chosen, which makes this case study a multiple-case study. Including just one case-study would provide ample findings on the bilateral relations between China and the case chosen in a panda diplomacy context, but would be difficult to generalize to a broader level that provides insights on panda diplomacy as a Chinese public diplomacy tool. A higher number of cases, such as 8 or 9, would be easier to generalize but would pose a risk as there could be differences in data available and it would be difficult to go as in depth as the analysis requires without exceeding the 70 page limitation of this thesis. Three cases provides enough cases that the findings can be taken from the specific to the general, patterns can be identified across all cases, and in depth analysis can be conducted.

The cases chosen to shed light on the phenomenon are panda diplomacy in the U.S, Denmark and Japan. These cases have been chosen to further insights on how panda diplomacy is utilized by China within three very different contexts, where the cases' size, power and bilateral relations with China vary considerably. Through this the aim is to achieve an overview of the impact that panda diplomacy has, to identify patterns within China's approach to panda diplomacy and the potential role it plays in China's public diplomacy. The case study will enable an exploration of the relationships between China and the observed countries, allowing the researcher to interpret the findings in a way that increases an

understanding of the phenomenon at hand. Three different contexts have been chosen to ensure that the issue is not just explored through one lens, but through a variety of lenses that allows for multiple aspects of panda diplomacy to be revealed and interpreted. Within case study methodology the guiding theory is that the topic of interest is explored in detail, and that the essence of the phenomenon can then be clearly seen. It would be impossible to gain an overview of how China utilizes panda diplomacy to achieve its public diplomacy goals without considering the relevant contextual conditions and the relationships between specific cases and China. The U.S has been chosen as a case due to its long history of bilateral relations with China and its position of power on the global stage, Japan has been chosen as it is a regional neighbour of China and currently hosts the most pandas in the world, Denmark has been chosen as it is comparatively small both economically and demographically to the other cases, and it recently received a panda which can provide insights into the current strategies of panda diplomacy.

There are different forms of case studies that can be used in qualitative research; this case study is an exploratory multiple-case study. Exploratory as it aims to explore a relatively unknown field and to gain new insights, multiple-case study as there are three different cases that will be analysed, as previously stated. As the context is different with each case, a multiple case study allows the researcher to analyse within each context; it will furthermore improve reliability and allow for more in depth findings. The goal is to explore the phenomenon while noting the differences and similarities between cases, finding patterns and interpreting the findings.

The study will observe the cases both in a historical context to identify how patterns have developed, with specific attention to the current context of China's panda diplomacy agreements in order to provide meaningful and interesting findings on how China is utilizing panda diplomacy and how it relates to China's public diplomacy goals. Although it would be insightful to examine all contexts of panda diplomacy incurring in the world today, to examine China's relationship with all the countries who have received giant pandas would be too broad and in many cases there is insufficient data present to facilitate exploration of the phenomenon.

4.3 THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis is based upon inductive research; as it began with a topic, China's panda diplomacy, which was developed into the research question "*How does China utilize the giant panda in its public diplomacy?*" after examining the existing literature on the topic and identifying a literature gap. In order to answer this research question, sub-questions were also identified in the problem formulation that will aid the researcher in focusing on the important variables and sub-topics that can provide insight into the overall research question. In order to answer this research question, a theoretical framework will be provided to explain the underlying theories of soft power and public diplomacy related to China's panda diplomacy. Following the theoretical framework, the analysis chapter will include background analysis from the Chinese perspective of the theoretical concepts of public diplomacy and soft power from a Chinese perspective, as well as an analysis of the development of panda diplomacy from its conception to current day, a case study that will provide insights into how panda diplomacy operates both within and outside of China, and an analysis of China's other public diplomacy tools that can be compared to panda diplomacy. Following the analysis, a discussion chapter will be included that can group all of the patterns from the findings into theories to answer the sub-questions and overall research question.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION

This thesis as a qualitative case-study will be based on theory and empirical secondary data. The reason for choosing secondary data over primary data is that, within the scope of the research it is much more beneficial to use secondary data that is readily available and insightful, rather than collecting primary data through interviews, surveys and direct observations. Secondary research provides certain advantages that are important in the writing of this thesis, it is inexpensive, not time-consuming, easily accessible, provides a large scope of data that the researcher would not have the means to obtain first hand, and the data is collected from professional and academic sources.

The analysis will be conducted on second hand sources that are readily available. These sources include government sources, news articles, datasets and official documents that are publicly available, as well as academic journals that shed light on the phenomenon. Academic journals are an important data source for the literature review section as they increase the understanding of the phenomenon and can aid in identifying areas that are in need of further research. News articles will be particularly important in the case analysis to show how bilateral relations between China and the case countries chosen are linked, specifically when looking at announcements of panda agreements, policy announcements that can indicate the impact of panda diplomacy, and details of the relations between the countries. As a result many sources in the analysis will be news articles such as; South China Morning Post, BBC News, The Diplomat, The Washington Post, The New York Times and other credible publications from the countries of the cases analysed. News reporting is an important data source as, due to the literature gap on this aspect of panda diplomacy there is no clear timeline of how it has been conducted within the cases chosen. Through analysis of news articles it will be possible to describe the timeline of bilateral relations between China and the cases, and how they evolved both before and after panda diplomacy. Where possible official statements and quotes from Chinese officials will be used to enhance insight into the Chinese perspective as events are analysed, these could be quotes from high level Chinese officials and representatives. Analysis of this secondary research will be conducted to interpret and review the research in the context of the cases and the research question.

4.5 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There are some practical limitations that could impact the collection of data. One of these limitations is that the topic is how panda diplomacy is utilized by China, but the researcher does not have the ability to read Chinese sources. However, in the literature review there are two academic sources included that were written in English by Chinese researchers Xing (2010) and Lin (2009) to provide an insight into the Chinese perspective. The thesis also includes theories of soft power and public diplomacy

that were discussed in Chinese public diplomacy lectures, and includes one public diplomacy lecture taught by UIR professor Cao Wai as a source used in the analysis. When choosing news articles the researcher will also be critical of sources that appear to have an anti-China agenda, and will pick news articles based on the credibility of the publications. It still remains a limitation due to the inability to access Chinese language data that could provide a greater insight into panda diplomacy from a domestic Chinese perspective.

Another limitation that must be stated is that, without official statements available from the Chinese government to back up claims, it is impossible to state the policy outcomes that panda diplomacy can have. Policy outcomes in bilateral relations are one of the variables looked at when discussing a country's public diplomacy. Although it would be irresponsible to claim direct policy outcomes from China's use of panda diplomacy, it is possible to examine the cases and to include correlations between panda diplomacy and political behaviour in the findings. Without the availability of official statements, the thesis will use qualitative methods to infer meaning from quotes or actions by the Chinese government and will compare them to the processes of panda diplomacy in the cases. As a result this thesis aims to explore how China utilizes panda diplomacy, including how panda diplomacy correlates with China's public diplomacy goals and bilateral relationships, without concluding outright how panda diplomacy directly impacts China's policy outcomes.

CHAPTER 5: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Through the literature review it was revealed that panda diplomacy has links to soft power and public diplomacy in China. It is therefore highly important that this thesis establishes a theoretical framework that explains soft power, public diplomacy, a framework for analysing public diplomacy and the concept of animal diplomacy in order to efficiently analyse the relationship between panda diplomacy and public diplomacy. This theoretical framework will be applied in order to adequately answer the research question of “*How does China utilize the giant panda in its public diplomacy?*” The topic of soft power will provide an understanding of the giant panda’s role as a soft power resource, and the explanation of public diplomacy and will provide the theoretical background for analysing the giant panda’s role in Chinese public diplomacy, Gilboa’s framework for analysing public diplomacy will be presented to provide a theoretical background for analysing panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool and the theories behind animal diplomacy will further contribute to understanding panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool.

5.1 SOFT POWER

The concept of soft power traces back to the American political scientist Joseph Nye, who coined the term in the year 1990. In the backdrop of the cessation of the Cold War, the United States was attempting to recalibrate its place in the world without the looming threat of war. It could no longer place all its eggs in the basket of its strength in war, and had to look to other means of influencing nations (Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, 1990). In order to explain the shift in power dynamics and the necessity to switch to other resources, Joseph Nye produced a book entitled “*Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power*”. In contrast to the traditional means of exercising power, such as through military and economic resources, in “Bound to Leap” Nye stressed the importance of new

power tools in an increasingly new political environment. Nye claimed that *“these trends suggest a second, more attractive way of exercising power than traditional means. A state may achieve the outcomes it prefers in world politics because other states want to follow it or have agreed to a situation that produces such effects”*, this second, *“more attractive”* means of power was assigned the name soft power, to contrast with *“the hard power of ordering others to do what a state wants”* (Nye, Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power, 1990). Soft power was introduced by Joseph Nye as a means of getting other countries to want what it wants, through was Nye deems the three pillars of soft power resources: the *culture* of a country where it is deemed attractive by others, the *political values* of a country and how consistent they are with living up to them both at home and abroad, and the legitimacy and moral authority of its *foreign policy* (Nye, Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power, 1990).

In contrast to hard power, which Nye defined as *“the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will”* (Nye, 2013) Nye views soft power as a more sophisticated approach that relies on attraction and co-option. He argues that *“When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction. Seduction is always more effective than coercion.”* (Nye, 2013) Through the soft power resources of culture, political values, and foreign policy, a nation can build its attractiveness and legitimacy to other nations and can achieve its diplomatic missions in a more effective manner than through hard power methods. (Nye, 2013)

While soft power as a concept has been widely accepted amongst academics in the field of International Relations since its introduction in 1990, it has also received its share of criticism. One of the main arguments posed against soft power from its critics is that soft power is difficult to measure. A clear description of this argument can be found in the book *“The Dragon’s Hidden Wings: How China Rises with Its Soft Power”* written by Chinese scholar Sheng Ding, Ding argues that Nye fails to *“provide a clear or persuasive model to explain how state actors convert their potential soft power resources to realized power-its desired policy outcomes.”* This criticism is based on Nye’s failure to provide a

framework for how a country's soft power resources can be converted into tangible policy outcomes. They question whether such an instrument to facilitate this conversion exists (Ding, 2008). The answer from Nye to this criticism is that public diplomacy is the method through which soft power resources can be converted into actual policy outcomes.

5.2 PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

In the 2009 book *“Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics”*, Nye refutes the criticism of soft powers lack of conversion instruments by linking the concept of public diplomacy and soft power together. Through stressing the importance of public diplomacy, Nye makes the argument that public diplomacy should be used as a means to convert soft power resources into desired policy outcomes (Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics*, 2009). This is further backed up by other scholars, with Gilboa arguing that *“public diplomacy means yielding soft power”* and can be viewed as the instrument to translate soft power resources into action (Gilboa, 2008). Public diplomacy is a means of promoting a country's soft power. These arguments stress the importance that public diplomacy has on helping states to realize the tangible effects that their soft power resources can have, making it a key aspect of any soft power discussion.

The term public *diplomacy* was first used in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, he defined the term public *diplomacy* as the following *"by public diplomacy we understand the means by which governments, private groups and individuals influence the attitudes and opinions of other peoples and governments in such a way as to exercise an influence on their foreign policy decisions"* (Gullion, 1965). Gullion further elaborated that public diplomacy involves the *“cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another, the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of inter-cultural*

communications.” (Cull, "Public Diplomacy" Before Gullion: The Evolution of a phrase, 2006) Through these definitions it can be seen that Gullion viewed communication between the different countries involved in public diplomacy as the key process.

In the years since Gullion coined the term in 1965, the definition of public diplomacy has progressed to be defined as “*a state-centered process of communication with foreign audiences. It mainly includes information activities, cultural and educational exchange activities.*” (Wei, 2019) Hans Tuch views public diplomacy as a means through which a nation can achieve its goals and politics by influencing foreign publics and enhancing an understanding for a nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture (Tuch, 1990). Where soft power relies on its ability to attract other nations through its culture, political values and policies, public diplomacy seeks to enhance the other nations’ understanding of said culture, political values and public diplomacy through two-way communication (Melissen, 2005). Melissen further states that “*public diplomacy is one of soft power’s key instruments*” Through communication, public diplomacy facilitates information exchange, participation and understanding that allows soft power assets to be utilized by states.

Public diplomacy is the public engagement tool that enables countries to strategize how it wishes to approach and communicate its national image with other nations, through public diplomacy tools such as cultural and educational exchanges, a country can cultivate its interaction with public audiences. When combined with the soft power resources of a country, public diplomacy policies can convert intangible soft power assets into national foreign policy achievements. Public diplomacy, at its essence, is the means of promoting a country’s soft power.

5.3 GILBOA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY FRAMEWORK

The definition assigned to public diplomacy by the man coined the term, Edmund Guillion, was the following *"by public diplomacy we understand the means by which governments, private groups and individuals influence the attitudes and opinions of other peoples and governments in such a way as to exercise an influence on their foreign policy decisions"* (Gullion, 1965). With Joseph Nye's definition of soft power as a means of getting other countries to want what it wants, the two concepts of soft power and public diplomacy are closely linked. Nye further stated that public diplomacy is how soft power resources are converted into desired policy outcomes (Nye, *Propaganda Isn't the Way: Soft Power*, 2013), with Gilboa also arguing that *"public diplomacy means yielding soft power"* (Gilboa, 2008). The theories of soft power and public diplomacy are integral to the research of this thesis, as it is designed to understand how China utilizes the giant panda in its public diplomacy. The process through which China does this is through its panda diplomacy, but in order to understand how effective panda diplomacy's role is as a legitimate public diplomacy tool, it must be analysed under a public diplomacy framework.

While China's relationship with public diplomacy discussed in the analysis chapter, understanding the concepts alone is not enough to analyse panda diplomacy. Models are useful in an analysis such as this as they develop knowledge through focusing on the most significant variables and the relations between them (Gilboa 2008). It is important that a framework be provided to conceptualize and theorize public diplomacy within this thesis. Gilboa in his book *"Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy"* (Gilboa, 2008) provides this theoretical model for analysis required.

Gilboa claims that case studies can provide interesting insights into various aspects of public diplomacy, and through a comparative analysis of case studies both similarities and differences can be found amongst actors (Gilboa, 2008). As this thesis will conduct a multiple case study and comparative analysis of three cases within China's panda diplomacy strategies, Gilboa's framework and advice for conducting such an analysis will be employed. He advises that effective comparative analysis is only

useful if scholars use the same variables, and that comparative research on public diplomacy should follow “*structured focused comparisons*”, structure can be defined in terms of time range and focus within public diplomacy instruments (Gilboa, 2008). In his framework Gilboa takes both of these measures into account through integrating the significant variables into a model for analysing public diplomacy.

TABLE 1

TABLE 2
A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Range	Immediate	Intermediate	Long
Time	Hours/days	Weeks/months	Years
Purpose	Reactive	Proactive	Relationship
Media/public opinion	News management	Strategic communication	Building favorable conditions
Government	Closely linked	Partially linked	Remotely linked
Public diplomacy (PD) instrument	Advocacy; international broadcasting; cyber PD	International public relations; corporate diplomacy; Diaspora PD	Cultural diplomacy; exchanges; branding

(Taken from page 73 “*Searching for a theory of public diplomacy*”, Gilboa 2008)

This model gathers the significant variables for analysing public diplomacy as time, purpose, media/public opinion, government and public diplomacy instrument to ascertain whether a public diplomacy tool is immediate, intermediate or long, and to focus on the important variables of analysis to provide insight on different purposes and means, different attitudes to the media and public opinion, a different degree of desirable association or ties with the government, and matching public diplomacy instruments (Gilboa, 2008). He further explains the insights that can be gained from placing a public diplomacy strategy into one of the three ranges: at the immediate level public diplomacy strategies are built usually to minimize damage or exploit an opportunity through quick reaction times, at the

intermediate level a there is more time for planning ahead and implementation of policies and involves premeditated strategies by a government or NGO, the long-term range is designed to produce supportive attitudes among publics around the world and involves years of efforts to build mutual trust and favourable conditions for friendly relations with state and non-state actors (Gilboa, 2008). Through theorizing the analysis of panda diplomacy with Gilboa's framework it will allow this thesis to promote systematic theoretical research on the topic.

5.4 ANIMAL DIPLOMACY

The concept of animal diplomacy can provide a theoretical background through which panda diplomacy can be analysed. Animal diplomacy is an area which lacks a substantial background of research; however, there are two main sources that provide a theoretical basis for the topic. These sources are Nancy Cushing and Kevin Markwell's *"Platypus Diplomacy: Animal Gifts in International Relations (2009)"* and Falk Hartig's *"Panda Diplomacy: The Cutest Part of China's Public Diplomacy (2013)"*. Cushing and Markwell assert that animal diplomacy is defined as *"the use of live native fauna for diplomatic purposes"* (Cushing & Markwell, 2009). Through this we can ascertain that animal diplomacy is a tool states can use to achieve their public diplomacy goals, such as improving their attractiveness to foreign publics, presenting an image of the state that they wish to portray, and increasing their ability to negotiate agreements with other states. Animal diplomacy is a method that states can use to incorporate their native animals in their public diplomacy strategies.

Animal diplomacy can be presented, according to Hartig, in three different forms. One of the forms most common throughout history has been gifting. The gifting of animals is a strategy that has been used by states for hundreds of years to improve their international relationships. The second form is exchange, where states could trade their animals in a reciprocal fashion. The third form is through loaning, which is currently the most common practice within animal diplomacy (Hartig, 2013).

In order for animal diplomacy to be successful, two basic requirements must be fulfilled. These requirements involve the visual identity of the animal and its natural distribution (Cushing & Markwell, 2009). There are, furthermore, two guiding principles that facilitate the success or failure of animal diplomacy, how they are presented towards the public and the method of distributing them.

The first and most important requirement is the visual identity of the animal. Hartig states that *“the more appealing the animal, the more successful the animal diplomacy”* (Hartig, 2013). The visual identity, or appearance, of the animal to be used for diplomatic purposes is a key factor in how it will achieve the public diplomacy goals of its native country. Scholars have discussed the factors that make an animal appealing to people and one of the key factors is neoteny - the retention of juvenile features in an adult animal (Hartig, 2013). This concept of childlike characteristics in an adult animal is also known as Kindchenschema, and was coined by Konrad Lorenz in 1943. According to Lorenz, an animal with characteristics similar to those of a small child will evoke a natural response in humans to care and protect, as well as convey the feeling of cuteness (Lorenz, 1943). There are certain characteristics that Lorenz specifies that are particularly strong in evoking feelings of cuteness and tenderness, these being; a high and slightly bulging forehead, a large brain case in proportion to the face, saucer eyes, rounded cheeks, and short stubby limbs (Lorenz, 1943). These cute characteristics are possessed by animals such as kittens, puppies and pandas, making them appear childlike and cute to most people. The cuteness of uniqueness of an animal can be a source of amazement and wonder for the general public, which encourages news media coverage of the animals. This serves as an added benefit for animal diplomacy.

The second requirement of animal diplomacy is that *“the animals involved are distinctive and naturally occurring only in the donor country, such that they are associated with it exclusively”* (Cushing & Markwell, 2009). The animal must be associated only with the donor country, such as the panda in China, which means that the country of origin is part of the animal’s identity and springs to mind upon observing the animal. This allows the animal to represent its donor country exclusively and encourages an interest in that country from the public.

Cushing and Markwell lay out two guiding principles for countries attempting to engage in animal diplomacy. The first principle is that as many people as possible should have the ability to see them, which is the case with zoos. The second guiding principle is the methods and conditions of distributing the animal must be observed.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS

6.1 SOFT POWER AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

The two theories of soft power and public diplomacy have been increasingly researched and applied in a Chinese context over recent years. China's hard power is undisputed, with its rise from a poor country to an economic superpower, its well-organized society, and its modernized and vast armed forces. However, its soft power is more ambiguous (Los, 2018). The need for Chinese soft power is increased by their hard power strength, as other nations can become intimidated by the hard power a country possesses.

Following Nye's creation of the concept of soft power in 1990, his writings were introduced to China by Wang Huning, a top leader of the Communist Party of China and current member of the Politburo Standing Committee, in 1993 (Xiao, 2017). In Nye's definition of soft power, he explained the three pillars of soft power as: culture, political values and foreign policy, with Nye himself emphasizing that *"cultural diplomacy is an important soft power tool"* (Nye, Public Diplomacy and Soft Power, 2008). Wang Huning pays particular attention to the role that culture plays in soft power, specifically within the Chinese context (Huning, 1993). It was Huning's belief that soft power is the culture that represents a country's power, and that China's admirable culture and ideology are the main resources of its soft power (Huning, 1993). This is backed up by fellow Chinese scholar Guozuo Zhang, who argues that there are no political values or foreign policy without culture, and that within the context of Chinese soft power and public diplomacy, culture plays the most pivotal role (Zhang, 2016). Cultural diplomacy is an important aspect of public diplomacy, and within the Chinese context it is vastly different from the rest of the world (Zhang 2017) China relies heavily on cultural exchanges as a public diplomacy tool to build its soft power. Cultural soft power is a term widely used in China, with president Xi Jinping himself often emphasizing it: *"In order to build a solid foundation for the nation's cultural soft power, China needs to*

deepen the reform in its cultural system, promote socialist core values and push forward the cultural industry." Nye, in his definitions of public diplomacy and soft power, highlights that culture as a source of soft power but many academics believe that Nye does not elaborate enough on the importance of culture for soft power building.

For Chinese academics and policy makers, culture is the key basis of soft power (Kong, 2015), and acts as a key resource for foreign policy. Breslin (Breslin, 2011) further promotes the importance of China's history and traditions in building its soft power, as it helps to explain to other nations how China has evolved to where it is today. Culture similarly plays a large role in official party approaches to Chinese soft power, the phrase "*Enhance [Chinese] cultural soft power*" (文化软实力) was used by Hu Jintao, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of China in his speech at the 17th National Congress, the phrase then began to symbolize China's approach to soft power (Jintao, 2007). He announced at the time that "*The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will definitely be accompanied by the thriving of Chinese culture... We must enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country... We will further publicize the fine traditions of Chinese culture and strengthen international cultural exchanges to enhance the influence of Chinese culture worldwide.*" This speech effectively sums up China's approach to soft power with a particular focus on using the great and plentiful Chinese culture and traditions to strengthen cultural exchanges and spread appreciation of Chinese culture internationally. In the Xi Jinping era, this approach has been further developed, with the current General Secretary saying at the 18th National Congress of the Community Party of China in 2014 that "*We should increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's messages to the world*". These guidelines are the basis upon which Chinese soft power and public diplomacy is currently situated in.

Culture plays a huge role in Chinese soft power resources and China makes use of its considerable culture based soft power resources through designing public diplomacy tools around them. These public

diplomacy tools include; Confucius Institutes that teach Mandarin and Chinese culture to students, cultural and educational exchanges between China and other nations, the Chinese film industry, Chinese museums abroad that can inform about ancient Chinese culture and history, cultural attractions within China such as the Forbidden City and the Great Wall, and importantly, panda diplomacy. These are China's main public diplomacy tools, which are all based within China's greatest soft power resource, its vast and unique culture.

China's soft power struggles are debated by academics; certain scholars view Chinese political power and credibility as China's main assets (Yan, 2007). This is widely refuted by other scholars, who view China's political power as a hindrance that China must overcome to grow its relations and soft power with other countries. This is correctly explained by Gill and Huang, who argue that due to China's "*confident foreign policy*" and "*rigid political system*", it is harder for China to implement soft power as it can intimidate other publics they are attempting to build relations with (Gill & Huang, 2006). In terms of soft power, China's political system can pose as an obstacle towards building understanding in Western cultures where the level of political control and system structure that China has is difficult to relate to. The concern of China's rise can be seen in the United States, where the "China Threat" is a widely debated issue, in Asian countries there is concern over China's economic and military strength transitioning to Chinese dominance over the Asian region, there is further concern of China's economic threat in Europe as well as in Africa, where an increased Chinese presence in the country as caused worry over China's intentions behind its presence (Wei, 2019). For Chinese public diplomacy, the task at hand is to introduce China to the world and to help overcome this Western stigma by enabling foreigners to understand the real China (Zhao, 2007).

China's public diplomacy goals are accurately summed up by d'Hooghe as the following: "*China's public diplomacy pursues four goals: first, China seeks understanding for its political system and policies; second, it wants to be seen as a stable, reliable and responsible economic partner; third, it wants to be seen as trustworthy and responsible member of the international political community; and*

fourth, it wants to be acknowledged and respected as an ancient, but vibrant, culture” (d’Hooghe, 2007).

With this in mind, it can be ascertained that through public diplomacy China wants to improve its image, increase understanding of its system and policies, and through this process, influence foreign governments’ policies. For a nation to achieve its public diplomacy goals it must design public diplomacy tools that yield its soft power resources.

6.2 PANDA DIPLOMACY IN PRACTICE

Modern day panda gifting has been prominent since Chiang Kaischeck offered a pair of giant pandas to the United State as a gesture of thanks in 1941 (Lin, 2009). Since then, three distinct phases of panda diplomacy have materialized. While all scholars who have discussed the phases of panda diplomacy agree on the fact that there are three distinct phases, there is some dissent over the timeline. The main area of dissent is within the current phase, Phase 3, where Buckingham, Neil, David & Jepson believe that the phase began following the changes to panda distribution following the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake (Buckingham, Neil, David, & Jepson, 2013). However, most literature on the topic accepts the timeline of phases presented below.

6.2.1 PHASE ONE: 1957-1982

The first phase of panda diplomacy spanned from 1957 to 1982, when China practiced the public diplomacy tool by offering pandas as gifts to other countries (Hartig, 2013). This phase began after the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance (1950) between China and the Soviet Union was signed. China gained an ally in the Soviet Union, who would provide national security assistance and provide technology and foreign aid. As a sign of friendship and goodwill, China sent it first panda to the Soviet Union in 1957, and a second in 1959 to make a pair (Hartig, 2013). China began with an objective of strengthening its ties with its surrounding communist countries in this phase, with Japan and North Korea receiving pandas, with North Korea receiving five pandas. Following China’s induction

into the United Nations in 1971, China also began to send pandas to the West as gifts. The most prominent and spoken about case within the time period of phase one was when China offered two giant pandas to the United States during Richard Nixon's famous visit to China in 1972 (MacMillan, 2008). This was the first instance of a panda being sent to a Western country and a significant gesture from China's Premier at the time, Chou Enlai. China followed this by sending sixteen pandas to seven countries in the West from 1972 to 1982. These countries were, as said, the United States, as well as Japan, France, the United Kingdom West Germany, Mexico, and Spain. In total, China sent 23 giant pandas to different countries by 1982. (Hartig, 2013)

6.2.2 PHASE TWO: 1982-1994

By 1982 China had discovered the economic power of giant pandas; it coincided with the beginning of China's economic reforms and an increased focus on growing China's economy (Schaller, 1993). By 1982, it also became clear to China that gifting pandas as a free gift would violate the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, an international treaty and international organization (CITES, 1982). Following both of these developments, China began to lend pandas as a commercial good. With a more business approach, China recognized how significant the display value of the pandas was, and began to loan pandas to other countries in the short-term for exhibition where they would remain overseas for 100 to 200 days. Examples of this exchange were how pandas were lent to Los Angeles during the Olympic Games in 1984, where they were subsequently sent to San Francisco, another pair of pandas were exhibited in Australia in 1988 and then sent to New Zealand (Hartig, 2013). Zoos paid USD 300,000 to USD 500,000 for each pair of pandas they rented, and China collected a percentage of souvenir sales from the zoos in many instances (Hartig, 2013). The zoos benefited from the 'panda-monium' that surrounded the pandas, a unique and rare animal that had rarely been seen in many zoos globally. The pandas provided publicity, revenue and elevated status for the zoos that managed to rent one.

6.2.3 PHASE THREE: 1994 – PRESENT

The third, and present, phase of China's panda diplomacy began in 1994 after China's recognition of the importance of panda conservation efforts. In 1996, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora issued a regulation that stated that the export of pandas will only be authorized if both China and the donor country are satisfied that the transaction will generate positive conservation benefits to the species (CITES, 1996). In keeping with this statement, China made considerable efforts to change its panda diplomacy policies to reflect its conservation efforts. With this phase, China introduced a series of regulations that must be fulfilled for a panda agreement to be actualized. These regulations are the following: zoos rent a pair of pandas for a period of ten years, the timing of which can be extended only through negotiation with China. A payment of USD 1,000,000 must be annually donated to conservation projects in China (Xing, 2010). Some zoos were struggling to keep up with the annual payment, which China attempted to aid with by negotiating deals with San Diego Zoo, Zoo Atlanta, and the National Zoo in Washington DC to retain their pandas for an additional five years following the end of their ten year loan, and just half of the original cost (Hartig, 2013). Depending on the zoo, there are further contractually regulated fees. All zoos must have sufficient funding to provide adequate nourishment for the pandas, with one estimate confirmed by zoos of the costs of bamboo reaching around USD 200,000 per year (Fekete, 2012). The exhibition area where the pandas are kept must be to China's standards or be upgraded, and each zoo that receives a panda must have specialist panda zookeeper (Xing, 2010). Each zoo on the receiving end of a pair of pandas must balance the increased publicity and revenue with the costs involved. Due to the panda's status on the IUCN Red List, and the efforts being taken to encourage panda reproduction, the zoos have a responsibility to ensure their pandas are treated well.

As of 2019, pandas are present in 27 zoos in 19 countries outside of China (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the

Netherlands, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Russia, Thailand, Scotland and the United States) and two Chinese territories (Hong Kong and Taiwan).

TABLE 2

China's top 15 trading partners and presence of pandas

Position	Trading partner	Pandas present
1	United States	Yes
2	Hong Kong	Yes
3	Japan	Yes
4	South Korea	Yes
5	Vietnam	No
6	Germany	Yes
7	India	No
8	Netherlands	Yes
9	United Kingdom	Yes
10	Taiwan	Yes
11	Singapore	Yes
12	Malaysia	Yes
13	Russia	Yes
14	Australia	Yes
15	Mexico	Yes

(Table made by thesis author from data available at worldstopexports.com, 2020)

Interestingly, of China's top 15 trading partners, all but two trading partners have pandas currently present in zoos within their territory. Compared with data available online of China's main trading partners, it is apparent that 13 out of the 19 territories where panda diplomacy are present outside mainland China are major trading partners of China. This highlights that China largely focuses its panda diplomacy where it has trade prospects, possibly due to the importance of maintaining positive relations with trading partners.

6.3 CASE ANALYSIS

China's ability to yield soft power through public diplomacy has an increased urgency on the Chinese agenda due to China's position as one of the world's most influential countries (US News, 2020). China's fast rise to economic power has introduced a number of negative attitudes towards China, both in the West and in Asia, due to stigma, anti-china sentiments and fear of change (Kozłowska, 2020). It is therefore highly important that the right public diplomacy instruments be focused on to take advantage of China's most impactful soft power assets. China has a number of public diplomacy instruments at its disposal; Confucius institutes, language and cultural exchanges, museums and student exchanges amongst the most widely covered of these instruments within academia and media coverage (Wei, 2019). However, China's panda diplomacy seems to fly under the radar in discussions about public diplomacy in China. Panda diplomacy is a strategy of China's that has been used for many decades, but has yet to receive much attention amongst academic and media sources surrounding China's public diplomacy. This is possibly due to China's other, more conventional public diplomacy instruments that are similar to those of other countries. Panda diplomacy is very unique in comparison, and China is the one of the only countries consistently utilizing animal diplomacy, especially on such a large scale.

In the following analysis, three cases of China's panda diplomacy will be analysed, in order to find similarities and differences between the three cases that can aid in constructing a clear picture of panda diplomacy and the role it plays in China's public diplomacy. After analysing the cases, the findings will be analysed further through Gilboa's public diplomacy analysis framework, in order to focus the findings on the significant variables that Gilboa lays out. This will aid in increasing insights in the areas of panda diplomacy that are most significant as a public diplomacy tool.

The cases have been chosen as they differ vastly in circumstance, which can allow for a well-rounded discussion of panda diplomacy. The case of Denmark has been chosen as it is a recent and interesting example of panda diplomacy, as a smaller country within the Nordic area it allows us to

understand China's motivations behind their choice of Denmark. The U.S case, on the other hand, is a large and powerful country and has received a large number of pandas, enabling an analysis of the other end of the spectrum from the Nordic cases. The final case is Japan, which provides yet another angle to understand panda diplomacy, as a case that illustrates the use of panda diplomacy through periods of both good and tense bilateral relations. These three cases will provide us with a clear overview of how China operates panda diplomacy; to focus on just one would skew the findings due to the differences in circumstances between the cases.

6.3.1 CASE 1: PANDA DIPLOMACY IN DENMARK

The case of panda diplomacy in Denmark draws interest because of the small size of the country and the relationship between Denmark and China. Denmark is amongst the five Nordic countries, of which both Denmark and the similarly sized Finland received pandas in recent years. The Nordic countries are a geographical and cultural region in Northern Europe and the North Atlantic that is made up of five countries; Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The announcement that Denmark was to receive a pair of pandas to be sent to Copenhagen zoo was made in 2017 (Gu, 2017), shortly before it was announced that Finland would receive a pair of pandas. This drew attention within the media due to the fact that Sweden and Norway, both with a history of diplomatic issues with China, were not in talks for a panda agreement. The choice of Denmark over Norway and Sweden is the first indicator of how China chooses the countries it wishes to enter into panda diplomacy with, as relations between Denmark and China are positive and friendly in contrast to its neighbours.

Denmark established their first embassy in China in 1908, and is the only nation to have an unbroken diplomatic presence in China since then. Denmark was one of the first nations to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in the 1950s, soon after it was formed, and advocated on China's behalf for its right to a seat on the United Nations that it achieved in 1971 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark in China, 2020). Denmark has shown China support in times when it was

isolated from other countries in the world, and has proved its friendship and loyalty to China in the years since. China is Denmark's largest non-European trading partner and is Denmark's second-largest destination for investment overseas. Denmark is amongst the European countries with the largest trade volume and largest investment in China per capita (Whitehead, 2018). The two countries announced their "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" in 2008, aimed at strengthening the level of political dialogue between Denmark and China, increasing the frequency of high level visits between the countries and collaborating on key areas of climate, energy and environment, research and innovation, and education (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark in China, 2020). In 2012, former the Chinese Premier conducted a state visit to Denmark, which was returned in 2014 when Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II and His Royal Highness Prince Consort Henrik paid a state visit to China.

Cultural and educational exchanges were also introduced to deepen the China-Denmark comprehensive strategic partnership, with educational centers such as the Sino-Danish Center for Research and Education established in Beijing, as well as culture centers and Confucius institutes established in China and Denmark respectively (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark in China, 2020). In 2012 the Danish government launched a strategy for emerging markets, with a particularly specific strategy for China that prioritizes Danish business in China where Denmark has experience in dealing with issues such as: urbanization, water- and environment solutions, energy and climate, agriculture and sustainable food, pharmaceuticals, health and welfare technology, research, innovation and education, and shipping.

These developments brought the China-Denmark relationship to an all-time high, and the announcement that pandas would arrive in Denmark was announced in 2017. Following the panda diplomacy agreement, relations between China and Denmark have developed even further. Danish Prime minister at the time, Lars Lokke Rasmussen, visited Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 4th 2017, where President Xi called for even closer ties between China and Denmark. The China-Denmark Joint Work Programme was announced during that state visit to further

enhance mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation on both sides. China and Denmark's relationship has increased in political mutual trust, trade and two-way investment, and people-to-people exchanges since panda diplomacy was introduced between the two countries. Bilateral relations between the two countries are at an all-time high (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark in China, 2020).

The significant development in China and Denmark's relationship is of stark contrast to that of China's relations with Norway and Sweden, two countries who were not chosen to receive pandas. In the case of Norway, the relations between China and Norway were turbulent at the time of the announcement. Bilateral relations were damaged between the countries when Norway awarded a Nobel peace prize to a Chinese dissident in Norway in 2010, Norway's betrayal of trust caused China to take measures to decrease its imports from Norway, a former trading partner, including salmon (Bos, 2016). While relations have improved since, their relationship is still undergoing efforts to repair the trust that had been broken. In the case of Sweden, their relationship has similarly been damaged by the actions of the Swedish government. At one time Sweden and China enjoyed positive relations, as Sweden received the first European Confucius Institute at Stockholm University in 2005, however, that institute and many others within Sweden were closed beginning in 2015. As of 2020, Sweden has closed all of its Confucius Institutes. Sweden, similarly to Norway, betrayed China's trust by awarding Chinese critic Gui Minhai with its Tucholsky Prize, forcing China to impose trade restrictions on Sweden to show its dissatisfaction with the act (Taiwan News, 2020).

Through examining the relationship with China and Denmark, and that of China and Norway and Sweden, it can be seen that China pursues panda diplomacy with countries it has a positive and friendly relationship with. In terms of trade, investment and cooperation, China and Denmark have made significant ground in strengthening its bilateral relations, which has only increased post the announcement that Denmark would receive a pair of pandas. As a goodwill gesture the announcement of pandas served to underline the trust and friendship between the two nations, which increased after the fact with the announcement of the China-Denmark Joint Work Programme.

6.3.2 CASE 2: PANDA DIPLOMACY IN THE UNITED STATES

There is a long history of panda diplomacy within the United States, it began in 1972, when the Smithsonian National Zoo received their first pair of pandas, Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing, as a gift to the American people following President Nixon's famous visit to China (MacMillan, 2008). The United States is China's largest trading partner, with 16.8% of China's total exports going there (Worlds Top Exports, 2020). Trade is massively important for China's economic power, so its relationship with the United States is a key element of its foreign policy. Panda diplomacy is a good reflection of the importance of the China-U.S relationship, with 8 pandas currently residing in the country, the second largest panda presence in a country outside of China after Japan which currently has 10 pandas residing there. As of 2020 there are three zoos in the U.S that have pandas, Zoo Atlanta (Lun Lun, Yang Yang, Mei Lun and Mei Huan), Memphis Zoo (Ya Ya and Le Le) and the Smithsonian National Zoo (Mei Xiang and Tian Tian) (Pandas International, 2020). The case of the U.S differs vastly from that of Denmark, whereas Denmark maintains strong and consistent supportive relations with China, the goodwill between the U.S and China has decreased significantly over the past decade. Trade tensions have been rising between China and the U.S since 2012 and have reached new levels since the Trump administration escalated the U.S-China Trade War by imposing billions of dollars' worth of tariffs on Chinese goods (BBC News, 2020).

A pair of pandas has not been sent to the U.S in recent years, but there have been pandas born within U.S zoos that China has allowed the U.S to keep. Mei Lun and Mei Huan were born in Zoo Atlanta in 2013, Bao Bao was born at the Smithsonian National zoo in 2013, and Xiao Liwu was born at San Diego Zoo in 2012 (Pandas International, 2020). China allowing the U.S to keep pandas can be viewed in the same light as loaning pandas born in China, as all pandas born across the world belong to China and are an aspect of panda diplomacy. An example of this is Bao Bao, a panda cub born in the Smithsonian National Zoo in 2015, which was celebrated at a naming ceremony attended in the U.S by China's first lady Peng Liyuan and the former U.S first lady Michelle Obama (The White House, 2015). The popularity

of the pandas in the U.S cannot be overstated, when panda cub Bao Bao was born in the U.S the Chinese ambassador to the U.S Cui Tiankai, said *"Many people don't realize it, but there are actually two Chinese ambassadors in Washington: me and the panda cub at the National Zoo"*. This highlights the panda's role as a Chinese representative abroad. Pandas were so popular in the U.S that more than 123,000 people voted to pick Bao Bao's name (Cui, 2013). At the time, relations between the U.S and Chinese administration were positive. Chinese President Xi Jinping and former U.S President made considerable attempts to ease tension between the two countries and agreed to cooperate more on bilateral, regional and global issues. They vowed to establish a *"new model"* of relations between the countries at their Sunnylands Summit in 2013, when President Xi paid a visit to California. President Xi also stated his intentions to establish *"a new type of great power relations"* for the United States and China (Calmes & Meyers, 2013). In 2014 another bilateral policy was introduced, when Barack Obama visited Beijing and they issued a joint statement on climate change, pledging to reduce carbon emissions (The White House, 2015). At the same time as the panda name-giving ceremony in 2015, China and the U.S announced yet another positive bilateral policy between the countries, announcing their 1 Million Strong Project, aimed to increase American students studying Mandarin in China (1 Million Strong, 2020). As a result of former president Obama and Chinese President Xi's efforts, the relations between China and the U.S were growing and repairing from the fragmentation of their previous trade issues. This was symbolized by their panda-naming ceremony and China allowing the U.S to keep the pandas born in U.S zoos during that time, putting a spotlight on the goodwill and trust between the two nations.

In contrast to this, the tensions that have arisen under the Trump administration can also be visible with China's panda diplomacy strategy with the U.S in recent years. Following President Donald Trump's actions to escalate the trade war and increase tensions with China, all the giant pandas that were once located in San Diego Zoo have been recalled to China (Cao, 2019). This illustrates that panda diplomacy works both as a gesture of goodwill, and as an instrument to signal displeasure from China. Panda diplomacy signals a strong desire on behalf of China to increase bilateral co-operation and trade with the

U.S, but when the co-operation is not positive or effective, China has the power to act accordingly and withdraw its pandas. As previously mentioned, there are still pandas in three U.S zoos, which could be due to the importance of the U.S as a trading partner of China's. Two pandas at the Smithsonian National Zoo, Mei Xiang and Tian Tian, arrived from China on loan in 2000 (Pandas International, 2020). Their loan will expire in December 2020, the question is whether China will extend the symbol of friendship after the loan expires. An indicator of how China will act with regards to panda diplomacy in the U.S in future is with how it requested the return of Bao Bao, the panda who was named by Michelle Obama and First Lady Peng Liyuan in 2015. In other situations, with better bilateral relations, China has extended the loans of its panda cubs. However, following tensions increasing between the two countries with the change of U.S president from Obama to Trump, Bao Bao was returned to China. With China-U.S relations reaching new lows in light of the escalating trade war and negative behaviour from the U.S during the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains to be seen whether China will continue to operate its panda diplomacy in the U.S for much longer.

6.3.3 CASE 3: PANDA DIPLOMACY IN JAPAN

The first known instance of China gifting pandas traces back to when the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) gifted the Japanese emperor a pair of pandas in 685 AD (Hartig, 2013). The relationship between China and Japan is one of historic tension; the proximity of the two countries has led to many significant wars, invasions and conflict in their history (Brown, 2016). Bilateral relations between the two countries have become complicated in recent years following Japan's decision to seize ownership of the Diaoyu Islands in 2012 (SCMP, 2019). However, due to the proximity of the countries within the Asian region and the standings of China and Japan as the second and third largest world economies respectively (Silver, 2020), it is a crucial relationship that both parties have made attempts to improve. Japan currently is tied with the U.S with the most pandas on loan outside of China. It also has 9 pandas, in Adventure World, Ueno Zoo and Kobe Oji Zoo (Uematsu, 2019). The last pair of pandas that were sent by China to Japan

was Shin Shin and Ri Ri in February 2011. After China entered the third phase of panda diplomacy in the 90s, Japan received several pandas from China when their bilateral relations were strong and mostly positive. However, following the rise in tensions after 2011, China made the move to cease sending pandas to Japan despite the many requests from Japanese zoos to receive more. Both Oji Zoo and Yagiyama Zoological Park have petitioned for pandas from China. Oji Zoo only has one female panda and no male panda required for breeding, and Yagiyama Zoological Park has requested pandas to cheer up the public following the 2011 Great East Japan earthquake, (The Yomiuri Shimbun/Asia News Network, 2018). Although China had originally stated intentions to lease more pandas to Japan in 2011, the increased tensions between the countries halted that (The Japan Times, 2019). There was even a panda loan arranged for Yagiyama Zoological Park, however, after relations soured that loan did not materialize (PON Staff, 2020). The territory disputes over the Diaoyu Islands could be a contributing factor as to why China has refused to send pandas to Japan since 2011, these territory disputes caused great unrest in China, with Chinese people taking a stand against Japan and targeting Japanese owned businesses (Brown, 2016). Despite documentation that proves that the Diaoyu Islands were Chinese territory prior to the First Sino-Japanese war and that the territory should be subsequently returned to China, Japan seized the control of the islands in 2012. Some regard the situation as *"the most serious for Sino-Japanese relations in the post-war period in terms of the risk of militarised conflict."* (Hughes, 2013)

Relations have improved since then, with tensions dissipating due to commitment and cooperation on both parts. The China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Agreement has made progress since the territory disputes hampered their discussions in 2012. In 2019, during the fifteenth round of talks held in Tokyo, a consensus was reached that the negotiations for the free trade agreement must be sped up and all parties agreed to further increase the level of trade and investment liberalization between their countries (Wang O. , 2019). Speculations surrounding the decision were that that the intensified discussions could be due to the escalating Trade-War between China and the U.S. Japan has also suffered from the impact of the traded war, due to the increased US duties on steel and aluminium imports. Japan and China are united in

their opposition to the U.S escalation of the trade war, and have both advocated for promoting multilateral international trade systems (Wang O. , 2019). With Japan as one of China's most critical sources of investment and technology, the progress of their relationship is more important than ever (Soderberg, 2002). When Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing in October 2018, the first visit of a Japanese prime minister to Beijing in seven years, President Xi Jinping said that the bilateral relations between China and Japan *"have returned to normal"* and that the two share *"common interests and concerns"* in the global environment (Boden & Wang, 2018). During this meeting between the two heads of state a broad agreement for a panda loan was reached (The Japan Times, 2019). This agreement is a signal of improved relations between the countries and that trust has been rebuilt enough for China to resume panda diplomacy in Japan. With pandas so popular in Japan and the lack of panda diplomacy in Japan over the past 9 years, many Japanese zoos are vying for the right to host the pandas.

Pandas are very popular in Japan and a symbol of Chinese friendship. In December 2017 the Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said that the giant panda is *"the ambassador of friendship"* between the countries and that *"We (China) hope that it plays a positive role in strengthening the bonds between the Chinese and Japanese people"* (Mitsuru, 2017) China's pandas in Japan were said to have caused a *"China fever"* when they first arrived in 1972, and the Japanese love of pandas has only continued to grow since then. With panda imagery and toys available all across Japan, the growth in visitors to zoos increase steadily once a new panda is born or arrives from China, and many members of Japanese society are members of panda conservation societies (Xinhua, 2019).

China has shown that it is willing to restart panda diplomacy in Japan, not only through the preliminary agreement in October 2018, but also when it extended the stay of the giant panda cub Xiang Xiang, born at Ueno Zoo in 2017 (The Japan Times, 2019). The cub was originally supposed to return to China in 2019, but China agreed to extend the loan of the cub until the end of 2020. It seems that following the improved relations between China and Japan, and the preliminary agreement for more

pandas to be sent to Japan by President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, it is only a matter of time before Japanese Zoos receive pandas again. Ueno Zoo in Tokyo has already begun construction a new enclosure 1.7 times larger than their current panda enclosure in anticipation of an extension to the term of the pair of pandas they currently have, Ri Ri and Shin Shin (The Mainichi, 2019). They anticipate that Ri Ri and Shin Shin will reproduce if the extension is approved by the Chinese government.

6.4 SUMMARY OF CASES

6.4.1 DENMARK

Within the case of Denmark it was apparent that the panda agreements were made on the basis of continued loyalty, support, co-operation and goodwill between the two countries. There are additional elements of trade, exchange, education, and culture-exchange that were introduced before the panda-agreements and have continued post-panda agreements. Exchange of visits from high level officials at the time of the panda announcement supports the legitimacy of it as a public diplomacy tool. After the panda swap the relationship between the two has only continued to grow and become more effective, the China-Denmark Joint Work Programme is an example of this.

The China-Denmark case also showed how other countries in the Nordic Region did not receive pandas as Denmark did. Sweden and Norway, despite their similarities to Denmark and their resources and trade opportunities, did not receive pandas. This highlights that China will choose countries it has strong relationships with over countries it has tension with.

6.4.2 U.S.A

The U.S is the largest economy in the world and China's biggest trading partner. It is incredibly influential on the world stage. The U.S currently has 9 pandas, the second most outside of China in the world. The U.S is a country that China must constantly be aware of its policies with, due to the power of the U.S and its position as China's main trading partner. However, China's policies of panda diplomacy

within the U.S show us how the relationship has changed over the years. Tension has existed between the two countries for many year, but after President Obama and President Xi attempted to bridge the gap between the countries and improve relations; panda diplomacy was utilized in the U.S. After this relations between the U.S improved, and more policies that focus on the growth of bilateral relations between the two countries were introduced. Panda diplomacy in this instance marks a clear milestone for exhibiting the goodwill and trust between the two nations, after which the relations developed positively. However, after Trump came into power and introduced huge tariffs on Chinese goods, thus escalating the trade war between the two countries, tensions reached a high and pandas were completely withdrawn from, San Diego Zoo. Although there are still pandas in the U.S, a new pair of pandas has not been sent for many years and it is likely that, unless relations improve, China will not make the gesture of sending more pandas to the U.S.

This case shows us how China uses panda diplomacy as a strategy to express its dissatisfaction with the actions of other countries. In this aspect it is a unique public diplomacy tool, as it provides incentives for other countries to behave better in their interactions with China. China clearly shows that, unless countries are open and loyal to China, it will not provide them with pandas. China smartly uses the power associated with pandas to send a clear message, if you do not behave, you will lose your right to pandas.

6.4.3 JAPAN

Japan currently has the most pandas outside of China in the world. As the third biggest economy in the world, it is a valuable trade partner for China that could become even more useful if the trade-war continues to escalate. Japan is also a clear cut example of panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool. When relations between China and Japan were positive, Japan received several pandas. However, when tensions rose and relations began to sour, Japan did not receive pandas despite many requests for pandas from Japanese zoos. Following the reparation of the relationship between China and Japan and the visit of

the Japanese prime minister to Beijing, an agreement was announced between Xi and Abe that panda talks would continue. In light of the positive relations, China also agreed to extend the stay of a panda cub that was due to be returned to China in 2019. Ueno zoo has begun constructing work on their panda enclosure as they believe China will allow them to keep their pandas that are due to be sent back to China in 2021.

This case shows us that when relationships are positive, China engages positively in panda diplomacy with a country and when relationships are negative, China withholds pandas. Withholding pandas can be an incentive for countries to pursue better relations with China, as can be seen in Japan. Many zoos were desperately requesting pandas, and when the Japanese made the effort to come to Beijing for the first time in 8 years, one of the items on the agenda was the discussion of pandas. This was following Japan's support of China in the trade war, and the China-Japan-Korea Free Trade Agreement progress. Clearly there is a correlation between panda diplomacy and policy decisions between countries.

6.4.4 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CASES

Through this multi-case analysis it has been found that there is a clear correlation between panda diplomacy and bilateral relations between China and the countries it chooses to engage in panda diplomacy with. Although panda diplomacy may appear to be a simple and friendly gesture of goodwill, it carries much more political weight than that. Across all cases, it is visible that China chooses to send pandas to countries it has good relations, trade and exchange prospects, and plans to continue or enhance cooperation with.

It is also clearly visible across all cases that when relations are positive, countries are on the receiving end of panda-loans or extensions of current panda loans, however, when relations are negative between the countries, China will not choose them as candidates for panda diplomacy or will withdraw pandas that are currently residing in zoos within the country. As is the case with Denmark receiving pandas instead of Sweden or Norway, two countries that have had tense relationships with China, and is

also visible in the withdrawal of pandas from San Diego Zoo after Trump imposed tariffs on Chinese goods and escalated the trade war, and finally can be seen in China withholding pandas previously agreed upon from Japan following the Diayou Islands territory dispute and only entering into another panda agreement when relations had improved many years later. Panda diplomacy serves as a powerful public diplomacy tool to encourage better bilateral relations, but it can also serve as a tool of China's to express dissatisfaction and incentivise other countries to change negative behaviour towards China.

6.5 GILBOA'S FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

TABLE 3

TABLE 2
A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Range	Immediate	Intermediate	Long
Time	Hours/days	Weeks/months	Years
Purpose	Reactive	Proactive	Relationship
Media/public opinion	News management	Strategic communication	Building favorable conditions
Government	Closely linked	Partially linked	Remotely linked
Public diplomacy (PD) instrument	Advocacy; international broadcasting; cyber PD	International public relations; corporate diplomacy; Diaspora PD	Cultural diplomacy; exchanges; branding

(Gilboa, 2008)

This section will analyse the significant variables Gilboa has listed, in order to assess panda diplomacy within the public diplomacy framework. These variables are the following: time, purpose, media/public opinion/government and public diplomacy instrument. These variables are important indicators both of what type of strategy a public diplomacy tool is founded on (immediate, intermediate, or long) and the variables themselves are insightful in analysing the public diplomacy tool.

The first variable Gilboa mentions is time, and by that he means how long the public diplomacy tool is intended to last. Panda diplomacy is often planned years in advance, with the announcement of pandas coming long before the pandas actually arrive, to facilitate preparations that zoos must undergo in order to provide sufficient care for the pandas. When pandas arrive, the loan is agreed to be 10 years, with options to increase that timespan if agreed upon between China and the other country. The time-span of panda diplomacy shows that it is a serious and important agreement, one that requires planning and bilateral cooperation. This variable fits in with Gilboa's long-term public diplomacy strategies.

The purpose of panda diplomacy is building a relationship between China and the country it sends pandas to. Through yielding their soft power resource, the giant panda, as a unique public diplomacy tool China aims to communicate its culture, friendship and goodwill to other countries and to foreign publics. This is in line with Gilboa's framework for long-term public diplomacy tools.

Media/Public Opinion is another variable of public diplomacy that Gilboa chooses to focus on, one that can shed a light on the effectiveness of the public diplomacy tool. Within the options for media/public opinion there are three categories: news management, strategic communication, and building favourable connections. In this aspect, panda diplomacy resides firmly in the third, building favourable connections. Media plays a huge additional role in panda diplomacy, increasing its effectiveness and reach as a public diplomacy tool. Through the panda's visual identity and uniqueness, pandas have become a huge talking point in the media throughout the world. With the panda's universal appeal, it is popular for newspapers and online media sources to comment on the events surrounding panda-loans and the lives of the pandas once they reach their temporary homes outside of China. This is particularly important because, due to the panda's uniqueness to China, the panda represents China in these media articles. It is clear that the panda is synonymous with China, and therefore by reading about or looking at images of a panda, readers are reminded of China and the panda's links to it. This encourages an interest in Chinese culture, tradition and ideology and is further supported by the fact that every panda, both in China and outside of China, is given a Chinese name to remind readers further of their strong connection to their

motherland. Through media-attention, China receives an added bonus from panda diplomacy in that it reaches audiences far broader than simply zoo-goers. People can read about pandas from their computers and smartphones, and can watch panda-cams that live stream the day-to-day lives of pandas from the comfort of their own homes. This is a unique aspect of panda diplomacy that many other public diplomacy tools cannot boast; it is able to appeal to a much broader audience, regardless of age/gender/ethnicity or social status. In this aspect, the media is utilized in panda diplomacy to build favourable connections and does so through positive media coverage that is widely produced and available online. Again, this variable is indicative of a long-term public diplomacy strategy.

The next variable is the Government's role in the public diplomacy tool. In this aspect, panda diplomacy differs from the framework in how the government controls the process. Panda diplomacy is so closely linked with the government that panda agreements are, more often than not, announced during high-level official meetings between the heads of state of China and the country it is to send pandas to. Similarly, the actions of other governments can deter China from entering into panda diplomacy with countries. Although this differs from other public diplomacy tools, such as Confucius institutes, cultural exchanges and celebrities, it is possibly due to the importance of panda diplomacy that it is not organized remotely by institutions not closely linked to policy building. In this variable, panda diplomacy deviates from a "long-term" strategy, as within a long-term strategy the government is only remotely linked with the process and other institutions control the strategies and decisions made. However, with panda diplomacy it is so highly linked with policy and bilateral relations, it makes sense for both the Chinese government and the government of the country receiving the pandas to have important roles in the process.

The final variable Gilboa highlights is the type of public diplomacy instrument. Panda diplomacy is a form of cultural diplomacy, which China heavily focuses on in building its soft power. Cultural diplomacy is indicated by Gilboa as one of the public diplomacy instruments utilized in long-term public diplomacy strategies

Panda diplomacy fits the variables listed in Gilboa's framework for long-term public diplomacy almost perfectly, with the exception of the government's role in the process. Although, the closely linked government involvement serves to inform us that panda diplomacy is a serious commitment on behalf of the Chinese government and has important implications for China's public diplomacy and building of soft power. Long-term strategies are designed to produce supportive attitudes among public around the world, they span over multiple years of effort to build trust and favourable conditions for friendly relations with other countries. The design of long-term strategies are apparent with how China has designed panda diplomacy, spanning over three phases and multiple decades, and aimed to improve relations with the countries it enters into panda agreements with (Gilboa, 2008).

6.6 PANDA DIPLOMACY AS A PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOL

Although it is difficult to quantify exactly how effective panda diplomacy is at filling the role of a public diplomacy tool, this analysis section will rely on theories of public diplomacy and animal diplomacy to interpret how panda diplomacy meets their requirements.

As a form of animal diplomacy, panda diplomacy greatly fits the requirements and guiding principles laid out by Cushing and Markwell. The two main requirements of panda diplomacy are that its visual identity is appealing, and that it is native to its donor country. In terms of visual identity, pandas are extremely appealing due to their childlike characteristics, also known as Kindschenschema or neoteny. It is understood that the more appealing an animal is to its audience, the more successful animal diplomacy can be. Lorenz described certain characteristics that are particularly cute to humans, which are: a high and bulging forehead, a large brain case in proportion to the face, saucer eyes, rounded cheeks, and short stubby limbs (Lorenz, 1943). The giant panda possesses all of these characteristics, and is furthermore soft and cuddly, and therefore is a strong choice of animal for animal diplomacy. The second requirement of animal diplomacy is that 'the animals involved are distinctive and naturally occurring in the donor

country, such that they are associated with it exclusively' (Cushing & Markwell, 2009). Panda diplomacy also fills this requirement, as the panda is only found in its native habitat in the Western mountainous region of China. Panda diplomacy further excels in this requirement due to its rarity around the world, with the latest panda census stating that there are only 1,864 giant pandas alive in the wild (WWF, 2020). The panda was only moved from "endangered" to "vulnerable" by the IUCN in 2016, panda conservation is still a topic that is very much on the minds of the global public (Swaigood, Wang, & Wei, 2016).

Animal diplomacy is also based on two guiding principles, which panda diplomacy is also successful at fulfilling. The first guiding principle is that as many people as possible should have the ability to see them, as pandas are exhibited at zoos that can receive thousands of visitors per day and can be accessed remotely through webcams and media articles, the panda is broadly viewed by publics all around the world. The second guiding principle is that the methods and conditions of distributing must be observed, this is another aspect of animal diplomacy that China has excelled at incorporating into its panda diplomacy through annual fees, high standards of panda enclosures and nutrition, and requirements regarding specialized giant panda zookeepers. Panda diplomacy is an extremely effective form of animal diplomacy, through looking at theory it can be interpreted that due to panda diplomacy's high standards in all requirements and guiding principles, it has enormous power as an effective animal diplomacy tool. In comparison to other tools of animal diplomacy, panda diplomacy is a leading example of how animal diplomacy can be utilized effectively. Animal diplomacy is utilized by other countries, such as with Australia's koala diplomacy, Russia's dog diplomacy or Indonesia's Komodo dragon diplomacy; however, China pursues panda diplomacy to a much stronger effect than the other cases of animal diplomacy, largely due to the panda's universal appeal, cuteness, rarity and unbreakable connection to China.

Its effectiveness as a public diplomacy tool must also be discussed. As we have assessed in the theory section, public diplomacy means the yielding of soft power. Public diplomacy is how states communicate with foreign audiences and is a key instrument of information exchange and communication that allows soft power resources to take root. With this in mind, the giant panda is a soft power resource of

China's, and panda diplomacy is the public diplomacy tool that enables the soft power resource to be utilized by the Chinese government. China has a strong focus on building cultural soft power through public diplomacy tools involving culture, within the Chinese context culture is the pillar of soft power. While Nye himself has used examples such as film and literature as soft power resources, he fails to mention anything involving animal diplomacy or panda as cultural soft power. However, ancient Chinese traditions and culture are an intrinsic element of Chinese cultural power, and the giant panda easily fits into these elements. Through the panda's closely linked ties to China throughout history, it has become an icon of Chinese culture. As a national icon of China, the panda opens a window into understanding China's history and instils a curiosity of Chinese culture into the observer.

As a public diplomacy tool, panda diplomacy is effective in engaging the public and communicating the image it wishes to spread of friendliness, trust and goodwill to other nations. Panda diplomacy's ability to impact China's bilateral relations with other countries is clear from the case examples, states are highly responsive to panda agreements and are willing to grow in their relations with China after entering into panda diplomacy. The growth of relations following panda diplomacy can be seen in the case of Denmark, where relations between the two countries improved even further post-panda agreement and joint-programmes of cooperation were announced. States that have entered into tense relations with China are reprimanded by the withdrawal of pandas or China's refusal to send more, and must adjust their behaviour towards China in order to receive more. This can be seen in the case of Japan, where during times of tension no pandas were sent to Japan by China, but following the countries relationship returning to "normal", President Xi and Prime Minister Abe made an agreement for panda diplomacy to restart between the countries. It is very difficult to measure the exact impact of a public diplomacy tool without official statements claiming that changes in policies or attitudes of foreign governments are as a result of the public diplomacy tool, but through the case analysis it is evident that the timing of panda loans are closely correlated to policy agreements. The timelines of relations indicate that

panda diplomacy is an effective public diplomacy tool that can impact policy outcomes and China's bilateral relations with other countries.

Another measure of interpreting the effectiveness of panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool is analysing how panda diplomacy measures up to China's public diplomacy goals. China's public diplomacy goals are the following: first, China seeks understanding for its political system and policies; second, it wants to be seen as a stable, reliable and responsible economic partner; third, it wants to be seen as trustworthy and responsible member of the international political community; and fourth, it wants to be acknowledged and respected as an ancient, but vibrant, culture. Panda diplomacy addresses these goals first and foremost through expressing Chinese goodwill and desire for co-operation in political and economic matters. It encourages countries that respect and understand the Chinese political system and policies through entering into panda agreements with them, and encourages countries who do not respect Chinese policies to reconsider their stances. It similarly encourages countries to view China as a stable, reliable and responsible economic partner through entering into panda diplomacy with countries it maintains a strong trade and investment relationship with, with panda diplomacy showing China's commitment to a long-term partnership with these countries. It serves the third goal by gifting pandas as a symbol of trust and support, cementing positive relationships with a seal of Chinese goodwill. Lastly, pandas embody ancient Chinese tradition and culture, they serve to bridge the gap between cultures and encourage interest in China as an ancient cultural power. Although at first glance, panda diplomacy seems to have a simple purpose of extending goodwill to other countries, it is actually a very effective way of serving China's public diplomacy goals, making it an incredibly powerful public diplomacy tool. Through the case based findings of bilateral relations and cooperation with other countries reaching higher levels post-panda diplomacy agreements, it can be seen that the public diplomacy impacts of China's panda diplomacy are present.

In summary, panda diplomacy is an effective public diplomacy tool that fulfils the requirements and guiding principles of animal diplomacy to a high standard. Although it is difficult to say the exact

impact of any public diplomacy tool, it is clear that panda diplomacy has high correlations with China's public diplomacy goals.

6.7 CHINA'S ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOLS

Although this thesis is addressing the role giant pandas play in China's public diplomacy, it is important to examine China's other public diplomacy tools to gain insight into how panda diplomacy compares. It is, therefore, important to look at the resources China relies on to reach its public diplomacy goals. Many scholars have contributed to quantifying Chinese soft power resources. Within the Chinese context, most public diplomacy tools rely on the building of cultural soft power that is so often spoken about by Chinese officials. China's soft power resources and public diplomacy instruments are quantified by scholars are the following: the media, internet, events and projects, cultural and educational exchanges, and celebrities.

One of the most widely spoken about Chinese public diplomacy instruments is the presence of Confucius institutes worldwide. As of June 2019, there were 530 Confucius institutes in the world, with 126 in Asia, 184 in Europe, 141 in North and Latin America, 59 in Africa and 20 in Oceania (Jahar, 2019). Confucius institutes facilitate education and understanding of China's language and culture, with the aim of *"promoting friendly relationships with other countries and enhancing understanding of Chinese language and culture among the world"*. In order to facilitate this, Confucius institutes teach the Chinese language, culture and organize cultural and exchanges. However, there are many critics who view Confucius institutes as controversial. Despite Confucius Institutes' goals of facilitating mutual understanding and harmony between countries, there have been considerable discussions in countries where Confucius Institutes are present over China's motives behind the institutes (Wang & Adamson, 2015). Between 2013 and 2020 a total of 46 universities, 2 governments and 1 school board around the world have closed their Confucius Institutes. Student-to-student and language exchanges between China

and other countries are another example of educational diplomacy similar to Confucius Institutes. Chinese international students have become increasingly more prevalent in educational institutes outside of China, as have international students in Chinese educational institutes. This can be a beneficial method of increasing bilateral understanding of culture as students are both influenced by their surroundings and can represent their native culture abroad. However, there are flaws with this tool as not every student is willing or open to being a cultural ambassador, and there are significant limitations on the demographics they can reach, such as age, education and class.

Another public diplomacy instrument China relies upon is their internationally recognized celebrities, such as the hugely successful NBA star Yao Ming (Cull, 2008). Yao is considered “*the exact personification of China’s growing soft power- affable, strong, confident without being arrogant, and focusing on success.*” (Ding, 2008) Yao serves as an effective public diplomacy instrument for China, representing his country in a positive manner and attracting public attention to his homeland. However, despite Yao’s charm and effectiveness with engaging foreign publics, the long-term benefits of relying on the attractiveness of celebrities are few. Despite facilitating news and media coverage in the present, it is not a viable strategy to rely on the presence of these types of celebrities as a long-term strategy (Xing, 2010). The Chinese film industry is another example of China’s public diplomacy, with improvements being made to the Chinese film industry and increasing investments in Chinese film studios (Becard & Filho, 2019). However, without understanding Chinese a language barrier can prohibit non-Chinese film audiences from fully benefitting from Chinese film.

In contrast to China’s other public diplomacy tools, panda diplomacy embodies both the Chinese culture and harmony of Confucius Institutes, and the charm and public engagement of Chinese celebrities that is rarely spoken about in academic publications on the topic of Chinese public diplomacy instruments. As an animal only native to its natural habitat in China, and its universal appeal to foreign publics, the giant panda is a powerful public diplomacy tool. Panda diplomacy is a unique case amongst public diplomacy tools and possesses characteristics that the other tools do not have. It has the potential to attract

large audiences regardless of demographic and is unique to China as the most effective form of animal diplomacy that is difficult to replicate by other countries.

Panda diplomacy has advantages over other tools of Chinese public diplomacy in a number of areas. It is not limited by demographic factors such as age/ethnicity/occupation/religion or an interest in learning, culture exchange or sport. Panda diplomacy can appeal to huge numbers of people without requiring them to be of a certain age, education level or social class. Furthermore, panda diplomacy does not require a dedication to learning or culture, to visit a panda at a zoo or read about pandas in the media is a fun activity that can instil positive associations in the observer. Panda diplomacy has a large scope due to global media coverage and panda-cams that can be accessed from anywhere in the world, which is a huge advantage for it as a tool of public diplomacy.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

The goal of this thesis is to answer the question “*How does China utilize the giant panda in its public diplomacy*”, this research question was derived from a literature review that explored the current academic writings on the topic of panda diplomacy. From the available academic research it was evident that there is a large literature gap in the field, possibly due to panda diplomacy’s status as an unconventional public diplomacy tool. Due to a lack of sufficient literature on the topic, panda diplomacy remains an overlooked topic in which many important insights can still be found. For China as a global power it is crucial that it examines its tools of public diplomacy, in order to grow its soft power, increase understanding for China internationally and reach positive policy outcomes in its relations with other countries. It is therefore imperative that panda diplomacy and its inner workings be fully understood, to gain insight into how effective it is, how China has designed it and what impact it can have on the country’s public diplomacy.

In order to fill the literature gap and contribute to answering the unanswered questions on panda diplomacy, an analysis was conducted to assess China’s public diplomacy characteristics and goals, China’s public diplomacy tools and strategies, as well as phases of panda diplomacy, all leading up to the key analysis of cases of panda diplomacy within Denmark, the U.S and Japan. Once the cases of Denmark, the U.S.A and Japan were all described and analysed in detail, they were then analysed further under Gilboa’s Framework for Public Diplomacy Analysis, which provided a theoretical basis to the research. With the research question of “*How does China utilize the giant panda in its public diplomacy?*” it was additionally important to answer the sub-questions that could allow the research question to be addressed in a clear manner. The sub-questions identified in the problem formulation chapter were the following; *How does China choose the countries it sends pandas to? How does panda diplomacy compare to China’s other public diplomacy tools? What are the characteristics of panda diplomacy? And how does*

panda diplomacy address China's public diplomacy goals? These sub-questions were all addressed in different sections of the analysis chapter, and the findings for each question will now be discussed to serve the purpose of addressing the paper's overall research question. These sub-questions were chosen following the literature due to their ability to divide the overall research question into the categories that break down the overall research question. In order to understand how the giant panda is utilized in Chinese public diplomacy, these sub-questions provide insight into key areas of panda diplomacy in China. China's choice of countries to send pandas to provides understanding of the strategy and planning behind panda diplomacy, the characteristics of panda diplomacy show how it is designed within a Chinese context and the impact it can have, how panda diplomacy compares to other public diplomacy tools enables an understanding of China's overall public diplomacy strategies and how China fits in amongst other accepted public diplomacy tools, and how panda diplomacy serves China's public diplomacy goals adds legitimacy to panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy instrument.

The first sub-question of *"How does China choose the countries it sends pandas to?"* is answered through the findings of the multiple case-study analysis. Through analysing panda diplomacy in Denmark, the U.S and Japan, clear patterns have emerged to indicate how China chooses which countries to enter into panda agreements with. The findings from the case study indicate that there are three factors that are most significant when China is choosing a panda diplomacy candidate: firstly, China is more likely to send pandas to countries it maintains positive bilateral relations with. This can be seen across all the analysed cases, but is perhaps most evident in the case of Denmark. Denmark received a pair of giant pandas after years of unbroken support and goodwill with China. When compared to Norway and Sweden, similarly sized countries within the Nordic region, it was apparent that their tense relationships with China ruled them out of receiving pandas, while Denmark and Finland both entered into panda agreements. Similarly, during times of positive relations the U.S was presented with pandas, and even hosted a panda name giving ceremony with both the U.S and Chinese first ladies present. But as tensions rose with the trade war and Trump's behaviour towards China, China has decided not to send a panda to the U.S in

many years and made the decision to withdraw pandas from San Diego Zoo shortly after Trump imposed huge tariffs on Chinese goods. In Japan, there are clear correlations between good relations resulting in panda agreements and bad relations resulting in a panda-drought. In 2011, when relations between Japan and China were positive, China announced its intentions to send more pandas to the country and even made a provisional agreement to send pandas to Yagiyama Zoological Park, however after the Diaoyu Islands territory dispute soured relations between the two countries that panda agreement was cancelled and no pandas have been sent to Japan since. A clear indicator of good relations being an important factor for panda diplomacy decisions is that following the improvement of relations between Japan and China, Japan's support for China in the trade war, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's first visit to Beijing in seven years and President Xi Jinping's announcement that relations between the countries "*have returned to normal*", a panda agreement was made during a meeting between the two heads of state. Japan is now expected to receive more pandas in the coming years, and China even agreed to extend the loan of the cub Xiang Xiang in Ueno Zoo.

Another finding from the analysis is that China's choice of countries is largely affected by trade. Within the three cases, trade is an important factor in each relationship. The U.S has not always had good relations with China but is China's largest trading partner, with over 16.8% of China's exports going to the U.S. Panda diplomacy in the U.S began with the first modern instance of panda diplomacy following President Nixon's visit to China in 1972. China has placed emphasis on the growth of relations with the U.S and has kept panda diplomacy operations between the two consistent over the past few decades. However, now that the trade relationship has been threatened by the U.S-China trade war, panda diplomacy has halted within the U.S and pandas have been withdrawn from San Diego Zoo. Trade is also a very important aspect of Japan and China's relationship and the findings of this thesis show that it is a possible explanation for China's choice to send pandas to its neighbour. Japan is the third largest world economy and China's closest regional trading partner, Japan also hosts the most pandas outside of China in the world. It is an interesting finding that after Japan's support for China and opposition to the U.S in

the Trade War, as well as the progress of the China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Agreement, China has become more open to sending pandas to Japan once again. Finally, although not known for its strength as a trading partner, Denmark is amongst the European countries with the largest trade volume and investment in China per capita, and China is Denmark's largest non-European trading partner and second-largest destination for overseas investment, their joint work programme further highlights that there are economic interests between the two countries. All cases analysed show that trade is emphasized when China chooses countries to enter into panda diplomacy with.

The findings that China's choice of countries to enter into panda diplomacy with is based on good relations and trade are not unexpected. As panda diplomacy is often referred to as a symbol of goodwill, it makes sense that the choice of country would involve trust and friendship between the countries. It also is a smart move for China to invest public diplomacy tools in countries that are more likely to be open to cooperation and exchange with China, as can often be seen following panda diplomacy agreements. The findings that indicate trade as another basis for China's choice of who to engage in panda diplomacy with similarly makes sense, especially when considering that 13 of China's top 15 trading partners currently have pandas. Utilizing a strong public diplomacy tool in the countries China has important trade relationships with is a smart move to maintain bilateral relations that are positive for China.

In answering the sub-question *"How does panda diplomacy compare to China's other public diplomacy tools?"* it was found that panda diplomacy is a more effective method of reaching foreign publics regardless of demographics including age/education/interests/social class/income. Unlike Confucius Institutes or student exchanges, panda diplomacy does not require a dedication to learning or ability to access education. When compared to Chinese celebrities or film, panda diplomacy is more accessible due to the lack of a language or cultural barrier. It is a clear symbol of goodwill that is not interpreted controversially, as Confucius institutes have been resulting in their withdrawal from countries such as the U.S and Sweden. Panda diplomacy is more viable in the long-term and removes barriers such as language, culture, interests, income and other demographical aspects.

To answer the sub-question “*What are the characteristics of panda diplomacy?*”, an analysis was conducted on panda diplomacy in practice, panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool, as well as the multiple case-study. The analysis shows that in terms of its characteristics, panda diplomacy is a public diplomacy tool that has evolved through three phases of operation. The first phase was pandas as gifts, the second was pandas as commercial loans, and the third and current phase is loaning in the name of panda conservation in a way that prioritizes the pandas. Furthermore, panda diplomacy is a very effective form of animal diplomacy and fills requirements of animal diplomacy through the pandas appealing visual identity, with its childlike features and cuddly exterior, and through its exclusivity to China, as pandas cannot be found naturally anywhere in the world besides China and are therefore synonymous with their native land. Within China, cultural diplomacy is highly utilized to spread awareness of Chinese culture and ideology, panda diplomacy is an effective cultural diplomacy tool that engages foreign publics, other governments and the media. It serves to improve the image of China through representing the nation as a friendly and welcoming country, encourages interest in Chinese culture and history, incentivises governments to behave positively in their interactions with China, and can be a powerful tool for China to express dissatisfaction with the actions of the countries who express negative behaviour towards it (such as Sweden, Norway, the U.S and Japan as detailed in the analysis). Once panda diplomacy is implemented in a country it encourages mutual trust and co-operation, as can be seen in the case of Denmark where the China-Denmark Joint Work Programme was introduced the year after the panda agreement was announced, and in the U.S where co-operation on joint programmes increased between President Xi Jinping and Barack Obama after they held a panda name giving ceremony in the U.S. In short, panda diplomacy is a well-designed and carefully operated public diplomacy tool that presents a positive image of China abroad and can serve as a method of encouraging other states to be more open to China’s system. These findings help to fill the literature gap within panda diplomacy as they provide more insight into the impact panda diplomacy can have and its main characteristics.

The final sub-question specified to answer the overall research question is “*How does panda diplomacy address China’s public diplomacy goals?*”, the goals were summed up by d’Hooghe as the following: “: *first, China seeks understanding for its political system and policies; second, it wants to be seen as a stable, reliable and responsible economic partner; third, it wants to be seen as trustworthy and responsible member of the international political community; and fourth, it wants to be acknowledged and respected as an ancient, but vibrant, culture.*” In the analysis it was found that panda diplomacy, in theory, addresses each of these goals. It encourages foreign publics and governments to understand the Chinese political system and policies, and rewards those who show support and understanding for its system, such as the case of Denmark, the U.S (pre-trade war) and Japan in recent times, it similarly can pose as a powerful tool for incentivising those who don’t (such as was the case with Norway, Sweden, the U.S and Japan during tense times) to reconsider their stances towards China. China enters into panda agreements with countries it has stable trade relationships with, serving the second goal of being seen as a reliable economic partner through forging a long-term partnership with its trading partners. It uses the panda as a symbol of goodwill and trust, serving the third goal. And finally, it is most effective in encouraging acknowledgement and respect for China’s ancient, but vibrant, culture, through allowing the panda to serve as a representation of China’s vast and plentiful cultural history. The ability of panda diplomacy to address China’s public diplomacy goals is a finding that is reflected in the literature review, where Xing (2010) also made claims that panda diplomacy is highly effective in impacting China’s short, medium and long-term public diplomacy goals. It is highly significant that panda diplomacy has the ability to serve all four of China’s public diplomacy goals, as these findings assert panda diplomacy’s role as an effective public diplomacy tool.

The sub-questions were chosen in the problem formulation chapter as they each represent an important aspect of panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool, which must be understood in order to answer the overall research question. Through these sub-questions the research question of “*How does China utilize the giant panda in its public diplomacy?*” can be answered. Many aspects of the panda’s role

in China's public diplomacy have been analysed, and the following findings have been reached. China utilizes the giant panda through its unique panda diplomacy, a public diplomacy that is present in 21 countries worldwide as well as in the media and through webcams across the world. China loans pandas to zoos for 10 year periods, in exchange for USD 1,000,000 that is donated to Chinese panda conservation projects. The pandas present in zoos vastly increase footfall, popularity and revenue for the zoos, and furthermore, increase the co-operation between China and the country that receives it. China chooses countries to enter into panda agreements based on two main factors: good relations and trade, and in many cases bilateral relations between the countries strengthen in the period after receiving a panda. Panda diplomacy is China's method of converting its soft power resource, the giant panda, into a public diplomacy tool that can represent China to other countries and build Chinese soft power. With panda diplomacy China has designed a public diplomacy tool with has the ability to both appeal to foreign publics and to influence foreign governments. The impact of panda diplomacy can be seen through the cases with how countries respond with increased co-operation following the loan of a pair of giant pandas, through the popularity of pandas across the globe, and through the pandas status as a Chinese cultural icon.

Panda diplomacy is a powerful and unique public diplomacy tool that China smartly uses to serve its public diplomacy goals. It is an effective form of cultural diplomacy due to the panda's role as a cultural representative of China, which is very important due to the emphasis on cultural soft power by President Xi Jinping in the Chinese system. It also serves as a prime example of animal diplomacy, and functions on the basis of animal diplomacy requirements and guidelines, which it excels at. When compared to China's other public diplomacy tools it is highly efficient in reaching large audiences and eliminating language and cultural barriers. The importance of panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool cannot continue to be overlooked in academic research as through understanding how it works, China can continue to increase its soft power and public diplomacy in a time when other countries could feel threatened by China's fast rise to economic and global power and see China as a threat. Panda diplomacy

encourages these stigmas to be overturned through representing China as a friendly and trustworthy nation. Although literature does exist on the use of panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool, it is lacking in up-to-date analysis and discussion on the political impact of panda diplomacy on bilateral relations. Through this thesis the literature gap has been addressed to reveal it is a long-term political tool in which the government is very closely linked in making deliberate decisions on how to conduct panda diplomacy and who should receive a panda. Unlike the existing literature, this thesis directly addresses how panda diplomacy is utilized by China in the present day, and how panda diplomacy can address China's public diplomacy goals.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The overall conclusion to the research question “*How does China utilize the giant panda in its public diplomacy?*” is that China utilizes the giant panda, a Chinese soft power resource, through panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool. Through a basis in the theoretical foundation of soft power and public diplomacy, panda diplomacy’s role as a public diplomacy tool has been analysed and interpreted and the following findings were made:

How China utilizes the giant panda in its public diplomacy begins with how panda diplomacy was designed, China has organized its public diplomacy around the giant panda in a way that meets all the requirements of animal diplomacy. Through the panda’s appealing visual identity, rarity and exclusiveness to China, panda diplomacy is at a base level already an effective public diplomacy tool. The next step in utilizing panda diplomacy lies within the countries China chooses to send pandas to, this choice is made carefully as only 19 countries outside of China are currently hosts to pandas, the choice is made based on positive relations between China and the receiving country, and through countries where China has good trade prospects. When utilized as a public diplomacy tool, panda diplomacy has the ability appeal to foreign publics in a way that encourages an interest and understanding in China, its culture and its system, but also appeals to governments in a way that incentivizes bilateral cooperation on important policy issues. In times of positive relations, panda diplomacy is a gesture of goodwill and prosperous future policy cooperation between China and the receiving country. Within times of tension, China can choose to withdraw or withhold pandas from countries, which has been seen in the cases to encourage said countries in making efforts to ease their tense relations with China. Panda diplomacy is not China’s only strong public diplomacy tool, but in comparison to China’s alternative public diplomacy tools it has the ability to reach broader audiences in a more positive way, and is strong where other tools are comparatively weak. Significantly, panda diplomacy has the ability to serve all of China’s four main public diplomacy goals,

which asserts its importance as a public diplomacy tool. How panda diplomacy is utilized by China is important for understanding how China can grow its public diplomacy and soft power in the future, especially during a time when Western governments and world leaders like Donald Trump are increasing their aggression towards the country. While the loaning of giant pandas to other countries might appear to many as a simple gesture by China, it is a long-term strategy closely controlled by the Chinese government, that has the special power of increasing China's appeal to citizens of the world and influencing foreign governments.

Past research on the topic has failed to address many of these questions, instead taking the approach of focusing largely on panda diplomacy's role throughout history without considering the current implications of the tool for China's public diplomacy. This thesis has attempted to fill that literature gap through current analysis with historical background to provide context. The findings of this thesis are highly significant, as China attempts to increase its impact on the globe with important projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative, and is particularly important with anti-China rhetoric being put forward by the likes of the U.S during the Trade War and the COVID-19 pandemic. Through understanding the significance and potential impact of panda diplomacy, China can continue to grow its public diplomacy in positive ways, and encourage foreign publics and its bilateral partners to understand the Chinese system.

In future research it would be interesting to analyse panda diplomacy using mainly Chinese sources, as they could provide further insight into the understanding of panda diplomacy within China. It would also be insightful in future research to analyse how panda diplomacy develops within the cases analysed, such as within the U.S where China will have to closely monitor the tensions rising between the two countries as a result of the trade war. Based on the analysis in this paper it could be likely that China would make the decision to have the pandas currently residing in the U.S returned to China if tensions continue to escalate between the two countries. Within Japan it will be important to observe if panda diplomacy continues to increase in the country after the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations. Both of

these cases could provide valuable insight into how China forms its panda diplomacy strategies during times of tense relations and following improving bilateral relations.

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