



Master's Thesis

The Chinese diaspora in Brazil: How do Chinese immigrants and expats serve as a *soft power* mechanism for China?

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EXPATS SERVE AS A *SOFT POWER* MECHANISM FOR CHINA?**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	5
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	6
Introduction: The rise of China in Latin America.....	6
China's <i>soft power</i> over Brazil.....	10
Research Question.....	12
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY	14
Choice of Theory.....	14
Empirical Data.....	15
Analytical Approach.....	17
CHAPTER 3: THEORY	17
<i>Soft Power</i>	17
Theoretical Application.....	28
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS	30
Chinese state-based initiatives.....	32
Brazilian government initiatives.....	47
Chinese community-based initiatives.....	49
Discussion.....	64
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	72
BIBLIOGRAPHY	76
APPENDICES	86

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Countries which share greater trade with China	8
Figure 2. Brazil-China commerce 1991-2008.....	10
Figure 3. World's largest economies 1990 vs. 2011.....	20
Figure 4. Colégio São Bento.....	35
Figure 5. Signing of BJTU-UNICAMP Confucius Institute in Brazil	38
Figure 6. Chinese students abroad by country.....	41
Figure 7. Main destination of Brazilian exports by state in 2020.....	42
Figure 8. Main destinations of Brazil's exports - first semester of 2017.....	47
Figure 9. Colégio Intercultural Brasil-China.....	48
Figure 10. One-China Policy.....	51
Figure 11. Chinese Social Center of São Paulo.....	55
Figure 12. Dragon Dance for the Chinese New Year 2022 at a Brazilian NGO.....	60
Figure 13. A Brazilian-themed Chinese New Year	61
Figure 14. A Chinese-themed Brazilian Carnival	62
Figure 15. Chinese Catholic Church in São Paulo.....	64
Figure 16. Chinatown São Paulo - Artist's conception.....	67
Figure 17. Cycles of Chinese Migration to Brazil.....	68

Abstract

During the past two decades, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has seen a substantial increase in its *hard power* over the Brazilian economy, evidenced by the burgeoning trade between the two countries. Likewise, China's *soft power* over Brazilian culture and society has seen significant strides during the past few years, although it is still somewhat lagging.

While the Chinese government has taken an active role in trying to increase its *soft power* over the Brazilian people, primarily by building Confucius Institutes throughout the country, a lot of the diffusion of the Chinese language and culture in Brazil has occurred through the work of privately funded Chinese diaspora community organizations in Brazil's largest cities.

This paper will look at how joint efforts between the public and private sectors for the dissemination of the Chinese language and culture among Brazilians of Chinese descent, as well as non-Chinese Brazilians, have been central in raising interest on China throughout the Brazilian populace, transforming China into an attractive destination both for tourism as for business. Via understanding the nexus between state-based and community-based initiatives, we may gauge the importance of the Chinese diaspora community for the dissemination of China's *soft power* throughout Brazil.

The year 2001 witnessed the beginning of a sharp increase in trade relations between Brazil and China. Trade increased to the extent that, in the year 2008, the Brazil-China Financial Dialogue was created to streamline financial and trade cooperation between the two countries. This significant move to increase China's *hard power* over the Brazilian economy was accompanied that same year by the first significant effort by the Beijing government to increase its *soft power* on the global scale: The 2008 Summer Olympics, held in August. In November of that same year, China opened its first Confucius Institute in Brazil at the State University of São Paulo.

Therefore, having as a starting point the year 2008, this thesis will analyze – under the assumption that *hard power* and *soft power* are intimately related and non-dissociable concepts – the mechanisms through which China has increased, albeit timidly, its *soft power* over Brazilian culture and society. Via understanding the initiatives of the

government of the PRC for increasing its cultural presence in Brazil, tied with the efforts of private citizens of Chinese ancestry to disseminate the Chinese language and culture throughout Brazil, this paper will examine the role of the Chinese diaspora community in translating China's *hard power* into *soft power*.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction: The rise of China in Latin America

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is a country that has seen exponential economic growth over the past four decades. Ever since the economic reforms of President Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, China has definitively inserted itself as a major player in the global market. China currently boasts a total GDP of US\$ 14.28 trillion, in addition to a massive population of 1,408 billion inhabitants, low poverty rates, and an elevated GNI per capita of 10,310 (*World Bank*, 2019). To top all of these statistics, China's economy is considered the second-largest in total GDP and the largest in terms of *purchasing power parity* (*World Bank*, 2019).

The reverberations of the rise of this economic giant have been felt in all corners of the globe. Continents with lower levels of economic development (such as Africa and Latin America), and therefore most in need of foreign investments, technologies, and infrastructure projects, have been the most affected by China's rise. Countries whose economies are strongly dependent on the exports of commodities and other primary resources have found receptive markets in China's gargantuan population and vibrant economy. In fact, contrary to most recent global trends, China's economy has been doing remarkably well over the past few years.

"China's economy grew by 8.1% in 2021 as industrial production rose steadily through the end of the year and offset a drop off in retail sales, according to official data from China's National Bureau of Statistics released Monday." (CNBC, 2022)

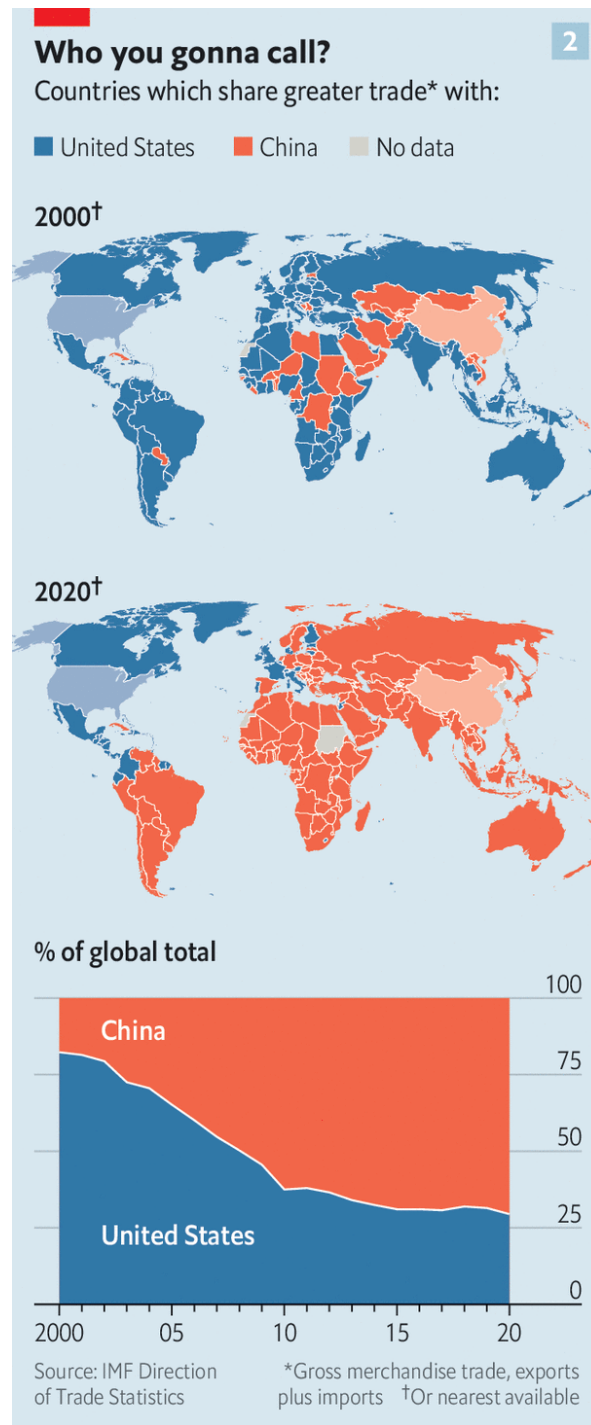
Moreover, China is the country with the largest foreign currency reserves, having reached the amount of US\$ 3.25 trillion in December 2021 (*Global Times*, 2022), in addition to now having firmly consolidated its position as the world's largest manufacturer.

"China remains as the world's largest manufacturing power, as its manufacturing sector value has ranked the first globally for 11 consecutive years since 2010." (Global Times, 2021)

As a result of China's economic rise, China is now displacing the United States as many countries' largest trading partner, especially (although not limited to) countries in the Global South (see Figure 1). The Federative Republic of Brazil, South America's largest economy, may be used as a perfect case study in terms of the ramifications the rise of China has had on the economies of Latin American countries. China consolidated itself as Brazil's largest trading partner in the year 2009, when Brazil's exports to China first exceeded its exports to the United States (*BBC*, 2009). Paradoxically, Brazil's exports to China then only accounted for a meager 1,3% of China's imports (*Ibid.*), marking the beginning of a somewhat unequal relationship.

Increased economic interactions between Brazil and China have likewise led to increased migration between the two countries, especially migration from China to Brazil. As explained in the paragraph above, China, which has now far overtaken Brazil in terms of economic importance on a global scale, is beginning to impose its economic and cultural capital over Brazilian society. This increase in Chinese migration to Brazil, if interpreted from *the world-systems perspective*, may be construed as the inevitable result of the growth of Chinese economic influence over Brazil:

"Building on Wallerstein (1974), a variety of sociological theorists has linked the origins of international migration (...) to the structure of the world market that has developed and expanded since the sixteenth century. In this scheme, the penetration of capitalistic economic relations into peripheral, noncapitalist societies creates a mobile population that is prone to migrate abroad." (Massey, 1993, p.444)



The Economist

Figure 1. Countries that share greater trade with China. (Source: *The Economist*, 17 July 2021)

China's overtaking of the United States as Brazil's largest trading partner came as no surprise, but rather, had been the result of a decade and a half of increased attempts at bilateral cooperation between the two countries. In this regard, during a seminar titled

– *Towards a ‘Multipartner World’?* – at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), on December 16, 2014, then-DIIS researcher Huiyun Feng stated:

1:43:15 *“I’ll first address the Brazil question. Brazil actually in 1993 was the first China strategic partner. And, unfortunately, that was after 1989 when there was the student movement and China was in isolation situation. So Brazil’s offer was very welcome. It might be a partnership of convenience. And that helped China for that time, but there is a lack of vision. Not until 2008 was that partnership further developed. (...) in China’s diplomatic and foreign policy practices, particularly since the 1990s, its mainly reactive, whatever happens, China will react to that situation.”* (Feng, 2014)

Thus, it is fair to state that Brazil’s policy toward China, and China’s policy toward Brazil, have been largely pragmatic and thus devoid of any significant ideological considerations (unlike China’s relationship with Venezuela, which has an important ideological component). As explained by Feng, the year 2008 was a significant turning point in Brazil-China relations, and the culmination of a surge in the Brazil-China trade, which began around the year 2001 (see Figure 2).

“Intensification of the relationship came about in 1993 with the establishment of the strategic partnership. However, the expectations created by the strategic partnership were not fulfilled during the 1990s; the levels of bilateral trade and foreign investment were low and the cooperation almost stagnated. (...) It was only from the beginning of the 2000s, that the relationship between Brazil and China received a new relevance. (Xu, 2017).

In addition to the significant increases in Chinese *hard power* over Brazil in the period leading up to the year 2008, that same year also witnessed one of China’s first major attempts to increase its international *soft power*: the 2008 Summer Olympics held in Beijing. With the mantra “One World, One Dream” (Reuters, 2008), Beijing showcased its global pretensions to mesmerized South American audiences dazzled by the televised images of the skyline of China’s modern and skyscraper laden capital city (Globo, 2008).

Moreover, China emerged victorious from the tournament, winning 48 gold medals, further stoking debate on China's future potential.

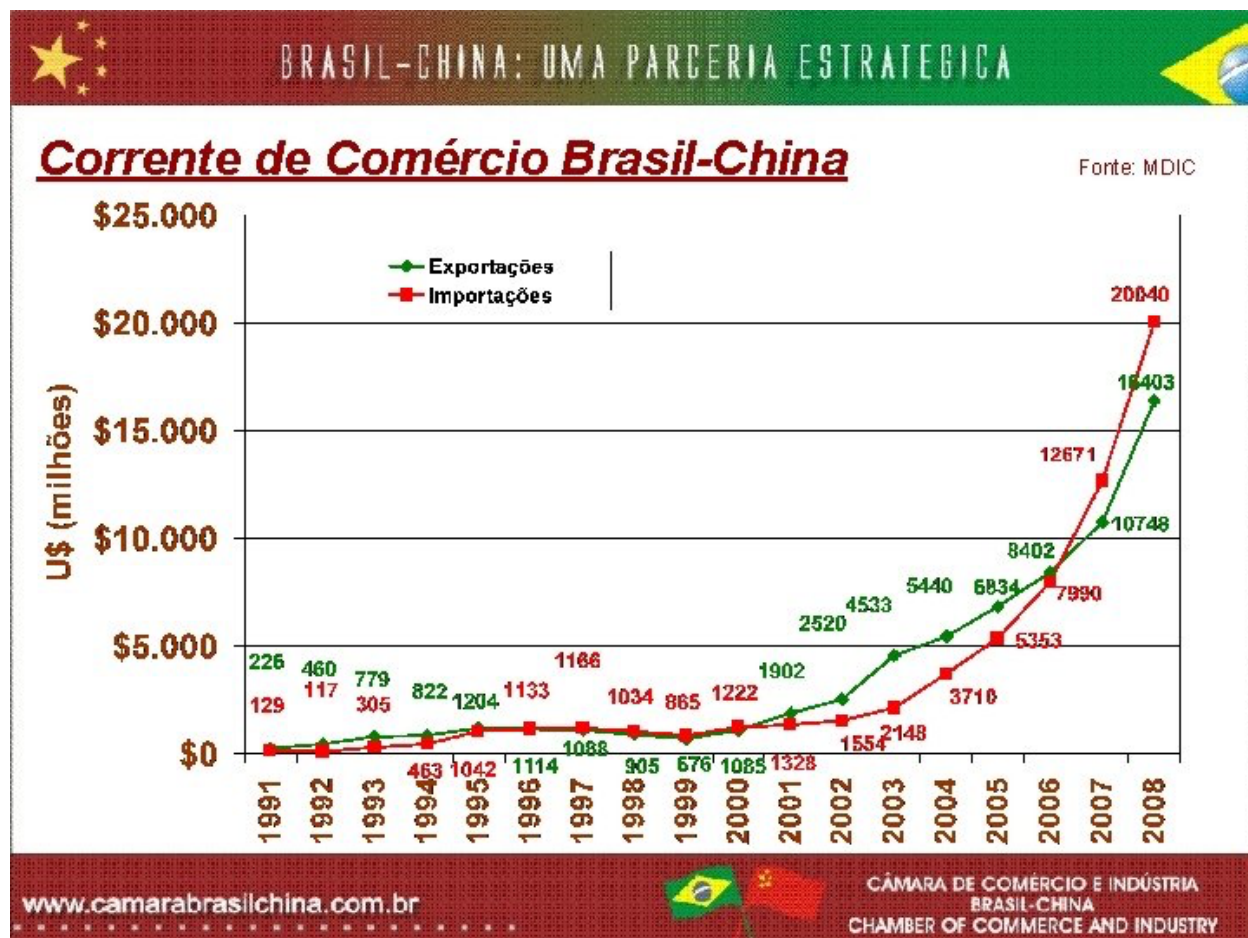


Figure 2. Brazil-China commerce 1991-2008. Green line represents exports, red line represents imports. (Source: Brazil-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

China's *soft power* over Brazil

The series of trade deals between Brazil and China in the year 2008, in addition to the wide visibility of the Beijing Summer Olympic Games in Brazil, resulted in a substantial increase in interest about China among Brazil's populace. In order to understand how China's surging economic strength over Brazil, which may be referred to as *hard power*, has been accompanied by a concomitant surge in persuasive *soft power*, it is necessary

to understand how the mechanisms of China's *soft power*, such as state-based initiatives (i.e., Confucius Institutes), in addition to initiatives organized by the Chinese diaspora community, have been combining to increase China's cultural influence over Brazil.

"Power is the ability to affect others to get the outcomes one prefers, and that can be accomplished by coercion, payment, or attraction and persuasion. Soft power is the ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction rather than coercion or payment." (Nye, 2017)

Starting in the year 2008, three Confucius Institutes (a state-based initiative), totaling eighteen teaching points, have been established in different cities across the State of São Paulo. In June 2021, a Chinese International School (a community-based initiative) aimed at educating Pre-School and Primary School children began its activities in Rio de Janeiro (*Gazeta do Povo*, 2021), the same year that the Brazil-China trade hit a record mark of US\$ 125 billion (*IPEA*, 2021). The International Chinese School of Rio de Janeiro, the first of its kind in Brazil, is a non-profit organization maintained by Rio de Janeiro's Chinese business community and is equipped exclusively with Huawei technology (*Escola Chinesa Internacional*, 2022). It is also important to note that the majority of the students at the school are not Chinese. Brazilian families are motivated to enroll their children in the school mainly due to China's high performance on international education rankings, with the former Governor of Rio de Janeiro, Anthony Garotinho, having enrolled his grandson at the school. Rio de Janeiro's Secretary of Financial Planning, Pedro Paulo Carvalho, has also enrolled his two sons at the school (*O Estado de S. Paulo*, 2021). Thus, it is noticeable that this increase in China's *soft power* in Brazil has been intimately connected to the increase in China's *hard power* in Brazil.

"The promotion of Chinese language teaching and learning in Brazil has also grown at the same pace as the development of Chinese national strength as well as the bilateral ties between China and Brazil (in the framework of BRICS)." (The Diplomat, 2020)

Nevertheless, it is important to note that economic and cultural exchange between the countries is not a recent phenomenon. As Brazil and the Macau Special

Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (MSAR) have a shared heritage due to their many centuries as dominions of the Portuguese Empire, interaction and economic interdependence between these two distant regions started well before the globalization process began to gain full steam following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Chinese migrants first came to Brazil in 1812 when the King of Portugal, proud of his Brazilian colony's vibrant coffee production, brought Chinese laborers from his Macau colony in an attempt to transform tea into an equally profitable commodity for export (Silva, 2018, p.230). Brazil nowadays counts approximately 250,000 citizens of Chinese ancestry (Ibid., p.224), having arrived from different regions of China (and Taiwan) and spanning different time periods.

As members of the BRIC countries, a term coined in the year 2001 – the same year that Brazil and China first began to witness a significant surge in their bilateral trade relations (see Figure 2) – the level of cultural exchange between Brazil and China remains somewhat limited. Unlike countries in the Global North, where the 'preexisting imaginaries of the West as a highly developed and paradisiacal place' (Bislev, 2017) catch the dreams and imagination of Chinese students planning to study abroad, the number of Chinese foreign students in South America is still terribly meager.

Research Question

This thesis will analyze how stronger economic interactions between Brazil and China are leading to an increase in cultural interactions between the two countries. Notably, the building of several Confucius Institutes throughout Brazil, especially in regions of Brazil with high Chinese diaspora populations, is leading to an increase in technical and educational cooperation between the countries.

As an example, Brazil's State of Pernambuco, the state in Brazil's Northeast Region (see Appendix A) with the largest Chinese diaspora population (*Diário de Pernambuco*, 2020), witnessed on November 26th, 2013, the opening of a Confucius Institute at the University of Pernambuco, the first Confucius Institute in Brazil's Northeast Region (*Instituto Confúcio na UPE*, 2014). Furthermore, the year 2016 witnessed the opening of a Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Recife,

Pernambuco's state capital, the first Chinese Consulate in Brazil's Northeast Region. Notably, this Consulate-General is the only Chinese Consulate-General in Brazil not located in a great megalopolis, such as those of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (*Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, 2022).

On November 5th, 2018, officials of the government of the State of Pernambuco and a committee of twenty-five delegates from the Province of Sichuan, met at the Pernambuco Office for Science, Technology and Innovation for the signing of an agreement on technical cooperation between the two regions (*Governo de Pernambuco*, 2018). Two years later, on August 17th, 2020, the Chinese Consulate-General in Recife launched a Portuguese-language magazine aimed at informing Brazilian readers about technical cooperation and student exchange programs between China and Brazil's Northeast Region (*Diario de Pernambuco*, 2020).

Notwithstanding, as will be explained in the Methodology section, this thesis will use as a case study not the State of Pernambuco, but the State of São Paulo, which is home to approximately 180,000 of the 250,000 members of the Chinese diaspora population in Brazil (Silva, 2018, p.224) and has, since the year 2008, seen the establishment of three Confucius Institutes totaling eighteen teaching points throughout different parts of the state. This ever-increasing amount of cultural exchange between Brazil and China has been the direct result of increased economic and technical cooperation between the two countries. São Paulo, which houses the majority of China's diaspora population, and in 2015 accounted for 32.12% of Brazil's GDP (*INVESTSP*, 2015), making the State of São Paulo the 21st largest economy in the world (*Casa Civil SP*, 2020), is the natural starting point for any study on Brazil-China economic and cultural relations.

"In 2009, China became Brazil's largest trading partner, largest export destination, and second largest source of imports. As China's large enterprises successively invest and build factories in Brazil, China-Brazil economic and trade cooperation has reached a new high. Exchanges and cooperation in the fields of science, technology, education, and culture have also been further deepened. The local media of Sao Paulo even coined a

word “Chinamania,” which means “crazy about China,” to describe the popularization of the Chinese language.” (The Diplomat, 2020)

While China’s advances as Brazil’s largest trading partner and export destination serve as evidence of China’s *hard power* over Brazil, exchanges and cooperation in the fields of science, technology, education, and culture serve as manifestations of China’s *soft power* over Brazilian society. The mechanisms of China’s *soft power* in Brazil, specifically how the Chinese diaspora community has played a key role in the strengthening of Confucius Institutes throughout Brazil, leads to the research question *How do Chinese immigrants and expats serve as a soft power mechanism for China?*

Chapter 2: Methodology

Choice of Theory

The specific manner in which China’s *soft power* operates in Brazil and the extent of these activities will be the main focus of the Analysis section of this thesis. The notable impact these activities have had throughout Brazil, in addition to the great speed at which they have spread, is what transforms such subject into a particularly intriguing topic for debate and analysis. The analysis of the importance of Confucius Institutes (CIs) – specifically the role of Chinese immigrants and expats for the establishment and maintenance of these institutions – for China’s foreign policy falls squarely under the liberal institutionalist theory of *soft power*, thus inevitably making it the most adequate theoretical perspective for the writing of this thesis.

“According to Jennifer Hubbert, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Asian Studies at Lewis & Clark College, CIs ‘are the most extensive and most future-oriented’ components of China’s ‘massive international soft power campaign’ and have “the greatest long-term potential impact’.” (Hubbert, 2019: In. MacDonald, 2022)

In order to gain an adequate understanding of the mechanisms of China's *soft power* over Brazil, we must begin by examining ontological considerations regarding the nexus between *hard power* and *soft power* and how these concepts are intimately related and intertwined. Understanding the origins of soft power theory and how such theory has changed and evolved over the past decades will allow us to appreciate its relevance for analyzing the cultural relations between such distant and disparate countries, i.e., Brazil and China.

"(...) contrary to Nye's emphasis on soft power's independent role (Nye, 2005), hard power and soft power are two sides of the same coin, i.e. they are mutually complimentary and cannot be separated." (Li, 2020, p.280)

Since the publishing of Joseph Nye's article titled 'Soft Power' in *Foreign Policy* magazine in the year 1990, many academics have commented on, criticized, or contributed to the notion of *soft power* and how the concept has evolved as a result of changes in the international arena since the end of the Cold War. The most noteworthy of these changes in the period following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 has, naturally, been the rise of China and the ever-increasing importance China has had in global economic and political matters.

Empirical Data

Via the collection of news articles on Chinese cultural activities occurring in Brazil since the year 2008, combined with visits to the institutions and interviews with the individuals in charge of organizing activities promoting cultural exchange between Brazil and China, this paper will rely mainly on *qualitative methods* for the shaping of our understanding of how China has been increasing its *soft power* over Brazilian society.

"In general terms, quantitative research methods involve measurements while qualitative methods address questions of how and why." (Anderson, 2010)

The Chinese diaspora, both in Brazil as worldwide, was initially comprised of poor immigrants escaping the poverty and harsh living conditions then existent in their country. However, as China gradually becomes richer and more powerful, the Chinese expatriate community has also grown wealthier and more influential in the communities wherein they reside. As an example, the year 2021 was to witness the opening of a Chinese elementary school in Rio de Janeiro (see page 11), the first of its kind in Brazil. This school, funded by the Chinese business community residing in Rio de Janeiro, with the support of the city's Chinese consulate (*Escola Chinesa Internacional*, 2022), has high tuition fees and serves as evidence of a rich and influential Chinese elite currently residing in Brazil's largest cities. According to Maurício Santoro, political scientist and International Relations professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro:

“The fact that Rio de Janeiro’s elite are putting their kids in the school is a soft power gain for China. In the past, they would have put their kids in American or British schools.” (The Brazilian Report, 2021)

Therefore, via the gathering of qualitative data (i.e., interviews and newspaper reports) on how the growth of Chinese-language education in Brazil and other forms of cultural exchange have been representing strides for China's *soft power* in the region, and to a lesser extent through the collection of quantitative data (i.e., the location of these institutions and the number of students enrolled in them), specifically with regards to how several of these institutions have been funded by community associations of Chinese expatriates rather than by the Chinese government. Furthermore, this paper will examine how and why state-based initiatives (i.e., Confucius Institutes) offering Mandarin-language instruction to Brazilians and Chinese expats alike have been the most effective in regions where there is a large and prosperous Chinese diaspora community. Understanding the nexus between state-based and community-based initiatives for the spreading of China's *soft power* in Brazil will be central in answering the aforementioned research question *How do Chinese immigrants and expats serve as a soft power mechanism for China?*

Analytical Approach

Given that China is currently the largest source of migrants on the planet, with now over 150 countries holding noteworthy Chinese diaspora communities (Wei, 2010, p.26), this thesis focuses on Brazil as a case study to understand how the phenomenon of Chinese migration to Brazil, in specific, may be used to understand the spread of Chinese *soft power* abroad via migrant communities, in general. Moreover, this case study limits itself to the State of São Paulo, which is home to 180,000 of Brazil's 250,000 Chinese Brazilians (Silva, 2018, p.224) and houses 3 Confucius Institutes totaling 18 teaching points. As put forward by Gerring:

"I propose to define the case study as *an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units.*" (Gerring, 2004, p.342)

Via a deductive research approach, this paper seeks to test *soft power* theory through the case study of the Chinese diaspora in Brazil rather than develop a new theory (inductive approach). Considering certain limitations to this project, such as my lack of knowledge of languages such as Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese, as well as not covering all facets of China's *soft power* over Brazil (including but not limited to foreign aid programs), and having as a time frame the period following the 2008 Summer Olympics held in Beijing until the present, we may examine how, through the collection of such empirical data, the following theoretical explanations may be verified. Having all that considered, we begin by analyzing the strengths and limitations of *soft power* theory and to what extent it may be applied to the case study of the cultural activities of the Chinese diaspora in Brazil.

Chapter 3: Theory

Soft power

The rise of China and the subsequent expansion of China's *hard power* on a global scale have inevitably led to the question as to whether an increase in Chinese *soft power* will accompany China's increase in *hard power*. In order to fully understand this matter, we must first begin by defining terms such as *hard power*, *soft power*, and *normative power*, in addition to identifying the political and historical contexts in which these terms first emerged and in what ways they were useful for explaining the predominant worldviews during the time period, especially in regard to superpower rivalry and the powerplay between global economic forces.

The end of the Cold War brought a major shift in paradigm in international relations. Although scholars tend to mark the end date of the Cold War either on 9 November 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, or on 26 December 1991, with the official dissolution of the Soviet Union, there is no real consensus on its starting date. Generally, the Cold War is considered to have started in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War; however, the intervention by the U.S., British, and French militaries in the Russian Civil War (1917-1921) came as an early demonstration of the West's concerns over the economic and geopolitical ramifications of a communist Russia. Thus, the end of the Soviet Union (1922-1991) resulted in such a momentous shift in paradigm in the field of international relations practice that it immediately merited an equally important explanation in terms of International Relations theory. As first put forward by Harvard University professor Joseph S. Nye Jr. in an article in *Foreign Policy* magazine titled 'Soft Power', published in the year 1990:

"The Cold War is over and Americans are trying to understand their place in a world without a Soviet threat". (Joseph Nye, 1990, p.153)

As is obvious by an analysis of the arguments put forward by the author, Joseph Nye's 1990 article was written during a time period wherein the debates on the global economy and global geopolitical power were significantly different from those going on now in the 2020s. Nye mentions how many analysts back then conjectured that Japan (not China) was the Asian superpower poised to overtake the US economically in the following century (Ibid., p.154). Nye himself, however, discarded such predictions and

argued that a 'multipolar' world was still a highly unlikely scenario in the foreseeable future, for

"(...) in terms of power resources, all the potential challengers except the United States are deficient in some respect. The Soviet Union lags economically, China remains a less-developed country, Europe lacks political unity, and Japan is deficient both in military power and in global ideological appeal." (Ibid., p.155)

Indeed, the Russian Federation has never been able to recover the pivotal economic importance that the Soviet Union held throughout most of the latter-half of the 20th century, especially in regard to its major international funding and aid projects aimed at drawing more and more countries towards the Soviet sphere. Furthermore, although the European Union has in the 21st century made major strides towards further integrating the European continent politically and economically, such as bringing ten Eastern European countries into the EU in the year 2004, it has also suffered important setbacks, such as *Brexit* in the year 2016. Moreover, Japan has to some extent increased its military capabilities given the growth of a more aggressive Russia and North Korea (CNN, 2021) over the past few years. Thus, we may state that the single most important change in the global geopolitical arena since the year 1990 has been China's exponential growth (see Figure 3). China's substantial economic growth over the past 30 years has forced analysts to reconsider several positions concerning China's increase in *hard power* in the global arena and examine whether it has resulted in a concomitant increase in China's *soft power*.

"It can be argued that the key foundations of China's soft power during the past three decades have been the country's politics of sustained economic growth and poverty reduction, the resilient capacity and adaptability of the Chinese party-state when encountering changing political and economic environments, and China's ability to sustain its hegemony through periods of crises and transformation." (Li, 2020, p.291)

Changing economies – top 10

(\$ trillion, GDP in current U.S.\$)

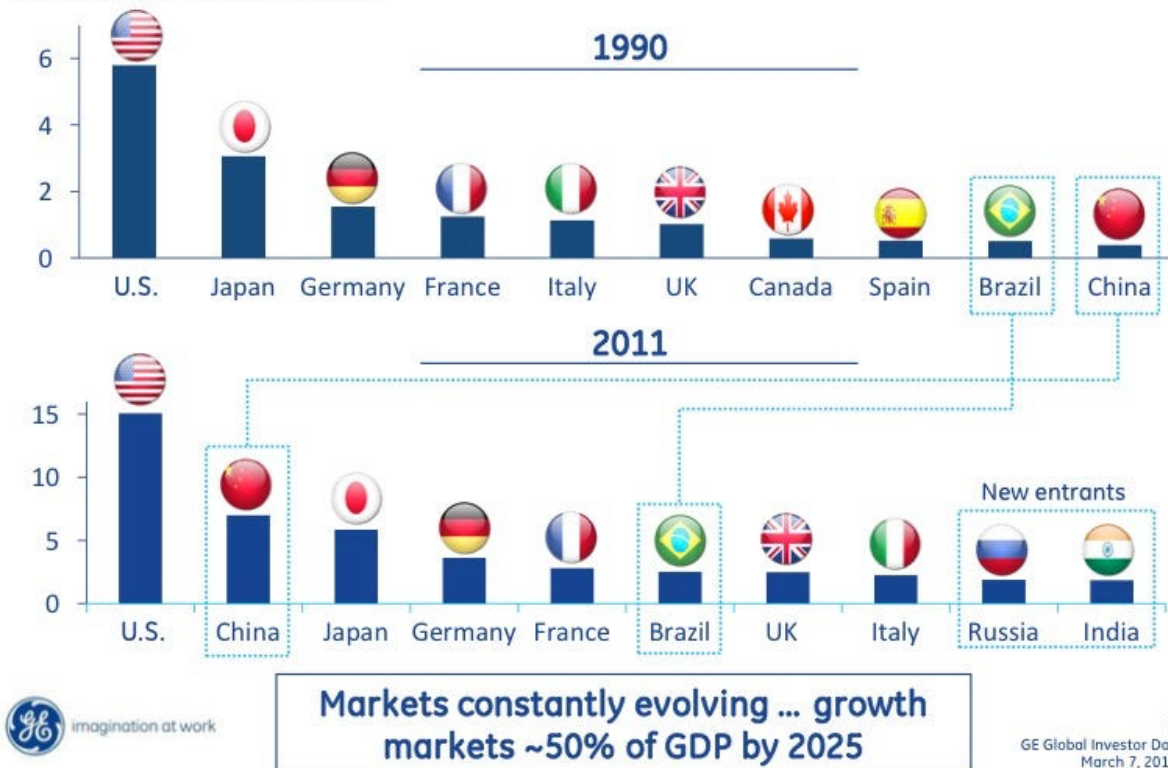


Figure 3. World's largest economies 1990 vs. 2011 (Source: *Business Insider*, 2012)

As may be observed from Figure 3, Nye could not yet have included the phenomenon of Chinese *hard power*, much less Chinese *soft power*, back when he wrote his article on *soft power* in 1990, when China's economy was smaller than that of Brazil's. Nye's 1990 article was written during a time period when the U.S. was indeed hegemonic. Nevertheless, in other aspects, Nye's text is truly visionary. In addition to correctly predicting that the former Soviet Union would have a very hard time recovering its military superpower status (Nye, 1990, p.155), Nye was also remarkably quick to note – despite the fact that the internet was still in its infancy – the importance of cyberattacks, the spread of misinformation, and the manipulation of means of communication as a new form of warfare (Nye, 1990, p.157-158), all of which have been crucial in Russia's policy towards the United States in the 21st century.

Sixteen years later, the same magazine published another article by the author titled 'Think Again: Soft Power', wherein Nye provided the reader with a clarification of his now famous, although somewhat (and often incorrectly) overused term 'Soft Power':

"A country's soft power can come from three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)."
(Joseph Nye, 2006)

Rather than add to the definition of *soft power*, however, Joseph Nye seemed far more focused on patching up the shortcomings of his 1990 article. Although having claimed in 1990 that growing interdependence, the decrease in 'fungibility' (i.e., the ability for transferal) between the different spheres of power, added to the rising costs of military intervention (Nye, 1990, p.159), would lead conventional warfare into obsolescence (Ibid., p.162), Nye had to explain the world now left behind by the US's costly and fumbling wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Today, however, the direct use of force for economic gain is generally too costly and dangerous for modern great powers. Even short of aggression, the translation of economic into military power resources may be very costly." (Nye, 1990, p.159)

Nye seemed then to be of the belief that military and economic *hard power* would slowly be superseded by intangible patterns of *soft power* (Ibid., p.164). Nye's prediction, however, although largely correct, would be shook by the events following 9/11. Naturally, the geopolitical situation of the year 2006 was indeed quite different from that of the year 1990. Although the failures of the U.S.'s war in Vietnam (1965-1973) and the Soviet War in Afghanistan (1979-1989) led Nye to the belief that foreign military occupations and other shows of *hard power* would eventually be relegated to the dustbin of History (Nye, 1990, p.162), during the Bush administration (2001-2009) *hard power* had seen a controversial resurgence.

Nye's 2006 article *Think Again: Soft Power* seemed to merely blame such changes to the ineptness of the Bush administration rather than lead to a full-fledged reconsideration of his concept of *soft power*. Nevertheless, despite the flaws that may be found in Nye's earlier text published in 1990, Nye did seem to very accurately predict the growing importance that different transnational groups, such as terrorist organizations (Ibid., p.157) were to play in the 21st century.

"The great powers of today are less able to use their traditional power resources to achieve their purposes than in the past. On many issues, private actors and small states have become more powerful. At least five trends have contributed to this diffusion of power: economic interdependence, transnational actors, nationalism in weak states, the spread of technology, and changing political issues." (Ibid., p.160)

In addition to much of the changes occurring on the international stage in the sixteen years following the publication of his first article on *soft power*, a great deal of the later confusion regarding Nye's definition of the concept of *soft power* may have arisen as a result of Nye's failure to provide an accurate distinction between his new concept of *soft power*, or *co-optive power*, and that of *hegemony* in a traditional Gramscian (or Neo-Gramscian) perspective. Nye initially described coercive power, or *hard power*, as the first and most eminent aspect of power and labeled *co-optive power*, or *soft power*, as the second facet of power.

"This second aspect of power – which occurs when one country gets other countries to want what it wants – might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants." (Nye, 1990, p.166)

In this respect, Nye conceded that the Soviet Union did exercise some measure of *co-optive power*, especially concerning its use of its communist ideology, specifically regarding the belief in the inevitability of global communism, which was subsequently diffused through international communist institutions (Ibid, p. 167). Although reluctant to deny that the USSR did indeed exercise some form of *soft power* throughout the better

part of the 20th century, Nye seems to simply discard that *soft power* was somehow a critical aspect of 20th-century international relations, but that the use *soft power* would gradually grow in importance throughout the 21st century, arguing that:

“Various trends today are making co-optive behavior and soft power resources relatively more important.” (Ibid.)

As has already been explained, the world of the year 2006 was far different from that of the year 1990. Naturally, changes of comparable magnitude were also to occur between the years 2006 and 2020, leading to further questioning of the concepts of *hard power* and *soft power* and how they may be applied to the current-day era. As the days of strict unipolarity of the early 1990s have since given way to the rise of the BRICS countries and have witnessed the stagnation of Japan’s once vibrant economy, which was overtaken by China as the world’s second-largest economy in the year 2011 (*The Guardian*, 2011), any new interpretation of world politics must include the role of China as an economic heavyweight.

In order to fill these holes left by Joseph Nye’s explanation regarding the nexus between the concepts of cultural, ideological, and institutional *soft power* and that of persuasive *co-optive power* (Nye, 1990, p.167), and why the concept of *soft power* must, according to Joseph Nye Jr., be seen as a wholly novel concept which may only come to gain relevance during the post-Cold War era, Aalborg University academic Li Xing elucidates that *hard power* and *soft power* are intimately related concepts which by no means may be disassociated from each other. Li argues that *soft power* comes as the inevitable result of an increase in a country’s *hard power*, as the global success of a country results in that country’s economic and political system being considered a model worthy for emulation by other countries who wish to achieve comparable degrees of success on the global scale. In such conception, the *hard power* + *soft power* nexus, particularly the normative diffusion effect generated by China’s growing global institutional role, would hold very few differences from earlier concepts of hegemony such as those first conceived by Italian political philosopher Antonio Gramsci.

“(...) in the discussion of China’s soft power, the neo-Gramscian IR theory offers an insightful approach to identifying hegemony (hard power + soft power) as the outward power expansion of its internal pattern of hegemony in shaping the world order. (...) Such a nexus explains how internal hegemony, driven by the dominant class and social forces occupying a leading position within a nation-state, is then extended and projected outward on a world scale, leading to the shaping of the international order.” (Li, 2020, p.288)

Central to such approach is the question of why China seems to be increasingly displacing the United States not only in *hard power*, which has been widely discussed by analysts across the globe (refer back to Figure 1), but most importantly, why China is slowly (but surely) beginning to challenge the United States dominance in terms of *soft power*. Although the Cold War had barely ended back when Joseph Nye was writing his conceptions on *soft power* in 1990, Nye already began to predict the ramifications of a decrease in U.S. aid to countries in the Global South. Such neglect would gradually lead to a decrease in U.S. hegemony in the region, which in the three decades since Nye first published his text, has come to seem increasingly correct.

“The current U.S. neglect of weak Third World countries may reduce its ability to affect their policies on the new transnational issues. The United States will have to devote more attention to the paradoxical power that grows out of political and economic chaos and weakness in poor countries.” (Nye, 1990, p.166)

In line with such argumentation, a country’s ability to set norms on the global stage inevitably stems from how much material *hard power* that country has and to what extent the country is willing to invest in long-term projects aimed at increasing the bilateral flows of people, products, and wealth between itself and developing countries across the globe. Unlike throughout the better part of the 20th century, wherein the U.S. State Department was overwhelmingly occupied by a lurking fear of ‘global communism’, wherein the Soviet Union would slowly draw the most impoverished countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America into its economic and ideological sphere of influence, the 21st century has seen a decrease in interest by the U.S. in investing in strategies for long-term improvements in

the developing world. On the other hand, China has exerted great efforts to turn its material *hard power* into *co-optive* or *soft power*, via a strategy wherein its vast financial resources are transferred abroad via new international financial institutions or existing international financial institutions (Li, 2020, p.279), transforming China's *hard power* and *soft power* resources into what may be referred to as *normative power*.

"Seen from today's perspective, the Chinese strategy is to "win a favorable position" through becoming an indispensable rule-maker with norm-setting and norm-shaping power in international financial institutions. Consequently, China is arguably in the process of becoming an emerging normative power that is able to influence the policy behavior and attitudes of other states through its hard power attraction (trade, investment, commodity prices, tourist market, etc), especially in the developing world." (Ibid., p.281)

Whereas back in 1990 the unipolar world order led the United States to a somewhat misleading sense of overconfidence, China is now seeing an increase in *soft power* over South American economic affairs parallel to its increase in *hard power*. While back in 1990 Joseph Nye seemed of the certainty that the U.S.'s values of democracy and openness to immigration would guarantee it a permanent spot as the global leader in terms of its *soft power* institutions, China's mere increase in *hard power* has been accompanied by a growing increase in terms of *normative soft power*. Unlike the Soviet Union, which, even at its peak, lagged severely in economic terms compared to its Western counterparts, struggling to maintain an economy roughly the size of that of the much territorially smaller West Germany, China's status as a serious economic challenger to the U.S. is a phenomenon unwitnessed during the years of the Cold War. Referring back to Figure 3, it is fair to state that Russia underperformed economically both during and after the Cold War, never being a serious challenger to U.S. financial hegemony.

"The United States retains more traditional hard power resources than any other country. It also has the soft ideological and institutional resources to preserve its lead in the new domains of transnational interdependence." (Nye, 1990, p.171)

Regarding the nexus between a country's economic *hard power* and cultural *soft power*, Nye did later concede in his 2006 article *Think Again: Soft Power*, that the economic power of powerful economies may also have a *soft power* component. Notwithstanding, he still considered such *soft power* strictly a form of *hard power*, vehemently disagreeing with scholars who labeled economic sanctions as a form of *soft power*.

“Economic strength can be converted into hard or soft power: You can coerce countries with sanctions or woo them with wealth.” (Nye, 2006)

The increase in Chinese *soft power* in the South American continent has not been an event but a process. China has worked vigorously in terms of South-South cooperation as early as the 1980s, such as with the establishment of the Brazil-China Chamber of Commerce in 1986. This institution, aimed at increasing bilateral trade between the two countries, had been negotiated with Brazil's military government (1964-1985). The subsequent re-democratization of Brazil, however, was not to bring any significant changes in terms of Brazil-China relations. As explained in the Introduction, Brazil's policy toward China has been wholly pragmatic and largely devoid of ideological considerations. Although Brazil's right-wing military government was intent on crushing communism at home, it constantly sought closer economic ties with the communist world. As explained by Yanran Xu:

“Brazil and China established diplomatic relations in 1974, when Brazil was under an anticommunist military dictatorship. However, the ideological differences did not isolate the opportunities of their bilateral relations.” (Xu, 2017)

Likewise, we may infer that the term *soft power* can take on different cultural contexts depending on the economic and geopolitical goals countries in the global arena wish to achieve. Although *soft power* tactics may have been used over the past decades to draw more and more countries into the U.S. sphere of influence, *soft power* tactics, specifically those related to *normative soft power*, can likewise draw countries away from

the U.S. and increasingly toward China. The assumption that Western liberal democracy would eventually prevail over all of the globe – the ‘End of History’ as Francis Fukuyama famously proclaimed – is a fallacious line of argument as *soft power* is a thoroughly contextual term whose characteristics and results are largely circumstantial.

“Whether soft power produces behavior that we want will depend on the context and the skills with which the resources are converted into outcomes.” (Nye, 2006)

As has been pointed out by Joseph Nye himself, *soft power* is a contextual term and thus may be manifested in many different shapes and forms, thus making the concept rather difficult to define. Notwithstanding, ‘it is not a concept empty of substance’ (Li, 2020, p.280). As *soft power* may manifest itself in a multitude of ways, analyzing all facets of China’s *soft power* over Brazil would far exceed the scope of this paper. Therefore, this Master’s thesis has as its focus the Chinese diaspora in Brazil as a *soft power* mechanism for China, via an understanding of Brazil-China economic and cultural relations in the post-2008 period.

In relation to the economic sphere, this paper will look at how the increase in Brazil-China trade relations in the 1993-2008 period has resulted in the growth of a significant Chinese diaspora population in the central region of the city of São Paulo, mainly working as merchants selling products *made in China* to Brazilian buyers. In regard to the cultural sphere, this paper will analyze how this newly arrived diaspora from the PRC has, in the post-2008 period, been spreading Chinese culture via community-based initiatives (which may receive varying degrees of the support from the PRC government) and state-based initiatives (specifically through their engagement with local communities). As explained by Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania scholar, Sheng Ding:

“The 41-million Chinese diaspora, including both foreign citizens of Chinese ancestry and Chinese citizens living abroad, has become an increasingly important factor in China’s public diplomacy. During the past few years, China’s communist leaders have adopted a series of new diaspora engagement policies to wield Chinese soft power and communicate China’s ideas to the outside world.” (Ding, 2014)

Theoretical Application

There is a general academic consensus that Confucius Institutes are a key vehicle for the promotion of China's soft power. China's economic muscle has seen a tantamount growth in its cultural presence worldwide. In fact, China's growing economic success at home has allowed it to make its initiatives abroad more powerful and noteworthy. Whereas most academic and journalistic writing on the rise of China currently focus on the Belt and Road Initiative and other infrastructure initiatives, as well as foreign loan programs, with China having over an 18-year period 'granted or loaned money to 13,427 infrastructure projects worth \$843bn across 165 countries' (BBC, 2021), Confucius Institutes have, on their hand, been able to further expand China's *co-optive power* into the Global South. The combination of policies aimed at expanding China's *hard power* and *co-optive power* into what was once the U.S.'s backyard represents important gains for China's *normative soft power* at this highly propitious moment wherein U.S. economic influence in the region is shrinking at an astounding rate (please refer back to Figure 1).

"Although CIs and educational offerings are not the same as building roads, harbors, and sports stadiums, they provide a long-term soft power instrument in the new, increasingly Cold War-like environment of Latin America and the Caribbean." (MacDonald, 2022)

The Kingdom of Spain, which has undergone several economic woes over the past two decades, with an unemployment rate peaking at 24.8% in the year 2012 (Statista, 2022), has likewise seen its cultural initiatives abroad severely hampered. In March of 2017, teachers at the *Instituto Cervantes* Spanish language schools in Brazil went on strike, having as their main grievance that the Spanish government had not given them a pay increase since the year 2009, a time period during which inflation in Brazil grew a combined total of 65%. Such event was not an isolated incident but rather the culmination of a larger set of budget cuts by the Spanish government on their Spanish language institutes abroad beginning in the year 2013 (EL PAÍS, 2017). While Spain has faced great difficulties in maintaining its language programs abroad, with the closing of its

Instituto Cervantes in Brazil's city of Recife in 2012 (O Estado de S. Paulo, 2012), just a year before Recife's first Confucius Institute opened its gates to the public, China has opened over 500 language institutes across the world in less than two decades, a success story worthy of the international community's attention. Nevertheless,

"(...) the advancement in China's global soft power status is not the result of a national strategy of deliberate promotion, such as the expansion of the Confucius Institute. Rather, it is a 'causal' outcome brought about by the increase in China's global economic success in general and the normative "diffusion" effect generated by its global institutional role in particular." (Li, 2020, p.279)

Although most academics do argue that Confucius Institutes are a central part of China's *soft power* strategy, Li Xing is correct in asserting that Confucius Institutes as a *soft power* tool have their own significant limitations. Naturally, language teaching by itself does not constitute *soft power*; however, a country's economic success most certainly does. As explained in an article in Foreign Affairs Magazine regarding the expansion of China's *soft power* abroad, the overriding factor in the success of these initiatives has been China's newfound wealth: 'Clearly, Beijing is using the strongest instrument in its soft-power toolbox: money.' (*Foreign Affairs*, 2015)

In order to gauge to what extent Confucius Institutes are in fact a mechanism for the expansion of China's *soft power*, this paper will analyze how community-based initiatives, specifically Chinese diaspora community-based initiatives, have been important in bolstering China's state-based initiatives, such as Confucius Institutes. As explained by Carlos Freire da Silva, the prosperity of Chinese people abroad is often interpreted as the prosperity of China itself (Silva, 2018, p.235). Global Americans Contributor Scott B. MacDonald, in turn, maintains that building ties with local communities is one of the main goals of Confucius Institutes. Via my field studies in Brazil I will use the city of São Paulo as a *case study* to investigate how Confucius Institutes develop ties with local communities, further diffusing the effects of state-based *soft power* initiatives. Through state-based programs aimed at the Chinese diaspora community in specific, and the Brazilian populace in general, people located in such a distant land may

have a taste of China's newfound wealth and prosperity, potentially further whetting their appetite for the culture of China and all things Chinese.

"CIs were created in 2004 by China's Ministry of Education to advance the Chinese 'voice' in the world by teaching Mandarin, instructing Chinese history and other aspects of Chinese civilization, and developing ties with local communities. As of 2022, there are over 500 CIs around the world, including those at universities and in major cities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Additionally, CIs are well-represented in key countries like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Peru." (MacDonald, 2022)
[Emphasis mine]

Chapter 4: Analysis

The year 2008 was nothing short of a major turning point in China's soft power relations with the foreign world. In the time period leading up to the 2008 Summer Olympics held in Beijing, foreign news teams were allowed to make live broadcasts from Chinese territory for the first time. However, Brazilian news teams were quick to complain about the inconvenient number of restrictions placed on them as part of an effort by the Chinese government that foreign news teams portray their country in the best light possible (*Globo*, 2008). That same year, the BBC worked in collaboration with China's state-owned broadcaster CCTV to produce the first wildlife documentary shot in China by a foreign production team. Producer Phil Chapman made the observation that China was

"(...) understandably keen to promote itself as a country worth visiting." (CBC, 2008)

This expressive, however conservative stride in transforming China more culturally accessible to the foreign world was not an isolated strategy but rather the very beginning of a larger effort by China to increase its *soft power* on the global stage. Whereas most of the Western world was then reeling from the devastating effects of the 2008 economic crisis, the Beijing Summer Olympics showcased an exuberant and vibrant economy that

seemed largely impervious to the economic woes ravaging the rest of the global economy.

“One particular source of the Chinese soft power of attraction is the normative diffusion of the model of China’s economic success—the “Beijing Consensus”—including the key normative principles of policymaking that challenge mainstream global politics resting on the normative principles of liberal democracy and market fundamentalism.” (Li, 2020, p.284)

Nevertheless, Brazilian journalists could not help but point out Beijing’s blatant efforts to hide any form of poverty or inequality existent in the metropolis (*Globo*, 2008). Journalists went as far as to imply that the inequality they observed in China’s capital city might equal or maybe even exceed that of their native Brazil. Recent efforts at poverty reduction in China, including President Xi Jinping’s belief that lowering social inequalities is essential for building a vibrant economy (*Bloomberg*, 2020), have all combined to attract the attention of the developing world to the Chinese model.

“Today, the Chinese government is committed to using its considerable governing capacity and competence to reduce inequality and clean up corruption and the environment. Underneath the Chinese success and behind the Chinese development model are implicit soft power implications.” (Li, 2020, p.292)

Expanding trade relations between the two countries (refer back to Figure 2) in the years preceding the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics came to herald a period wherein China’s increasing *hard power* relations with Brazil would be accompanied by an increase in *soft power* over Brazil. Ever since the year 2008, the government of China has thought highly strategically in expanding education on Chinese language and culture throughout Brazil. China’s opening of its first Confucius Institute in Brazil’s largest city, São Paulo, in July of 2008, has not only served to expand Chinese cultural influence in Brazil’s largest metropolis but has also brought significant benefits and advancements to the university housing the institution. São Paulo State University, a public university founded in 1976,

has in recent years suffered from severe issues in terms of lack of funding (Nakazato, 2018).

“Currently, the Confucius Institute is the main institution for the spread of Chinese in Brazil. The first Confucius Institute in Brazil was established in July 2008 by Hubei University and São Paulo State University. The scale of the college has been expanding since the establishment of Confucius Institute.” (The Diplomat, 2020)

The first section of the Analysis will examine how China’s economic might, or *hard power*, has been crucial in expanding China’s cultural influence, *soft power*, throughout Brazil. By first looking at how China’s ever-increasing importance over economic issues in Brazil is now resulting in an increment in China’s importance over educational issues, we will analyze the importance of government initiatives (i.e., the building of Confucius Institutes) in increasing China’s *soft power* over Brazil. The second section of the Analysis will examine how Chinese diaspora community organizations in São Paulo have been using community-based initiatives to raise awareness on their culture and heritage throughout the Brazilian populace. The Discussion section will then proceed to analyze the link between public and private initiatives for the increase of China’s *soft power* in Brazil, mainly regarding the extent to which they may be (or may not be) coordinated with each other. Having as our starting point the year 2008, we will analyze how China’s government has been important in empowering the Chinese diaspora community in Brazil and how the Chinese diaspora community has been pivotal in building a positive image of China among the Brazilian populace.

Chinese state-based initiatives: Confucius Institutes

As mentioned earlier, China’s first Confucius Institute in Brazil was opened in the megalopolis of São Paulo. According to the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics, São Paulo has an estimate population of around 12.396.372 inhabitants (IBGE, 2021), making it by far Brazil’s largest city. São Paulo’s status as Brazil’s largest city has cemented its standing as Brazil’s economic capital, dwarfing in population Brasília’s

3.094.325 inhabitants (IBGE, 2021), Brazil's political capital. Over the past decade, increased economic and diplomatic cooperation between Brazil and China have inevitably turned São Paulo into a hotspot of cultural exchange between the two countries, making São Paulo the obvious choice for the opening of Brazil's first Confucius institute in the year 2008.

“During the past 10 years, the BRICS countries have had many achievements in various fields, such as infrastructure construction, international trade, education, and so forth. And among all the different kinds of cooperation, educational cooperation and cultural exchanges are playing the key role as bridges, among which Confucius Institute and Chinese language teaching/learning activities have made a great contribution.” (The Diplomat, 2020)

Classified by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network as an ‘Alpha Global City’, São Paulo is likewise the city concentrating the overwhelming majority of immigrants of the Chinese diaspora in Brazil. In the year 2012, in the context of the celebrations of 200 years of Chinese migration to Brazil, the *Associação Chinesa do Brasil* (Chinese Association of Brazil), working in unison with the Chinese Consulate in São Paulo, estimated that Brazil had approximately 250,000 citizens of Chinese ancestry, 180,000 of those living in São Paulo (Silva, 2018, p.224). It is particularly worth noting, however, that although Chinese migration to Brazil is a phenomenon that now spans over two centuries, the majority of these migrants arrived in Brazil after the year 1995, with the first decade of the 2000s witnessing a notable spike in Chinese immigration (Ibid.). The surge in Chinese immigration to Brazil in the 2000s has been conditioned by the increased economic interactions between the two countries (refer back to Figure 2) in that decade.

“The rapid rise of China has set off a global “Chinese wave,” and Chinese language teaching has also developed rapidly in Brazil. Since language is the carrier of culture, the lack of language skills is one of the major obstacles to the political, economic, trade, and cultural exchanges between China and Brazil.” (The Diplomat, 2020)

Chinese merchants living in the central region of the city of São Paulo have been essential in promoting the circulation of goods *made in China* throughout Brazil's largest city (Silva, 2018, p.225). The ensuing flow of people, merchandise, and cultural capital resultant of this increased trade between Brazil and China has been having mutually beneficial effects for both of the parties involved, leading to a further increase in the economic and cultural dynamics connecting the two rising markets.

“From the economic opening of China in 1979 until these days, a socioeconomic dynamics has been forming, linking wholesale centers between China and Brazil through trade flows and migratory mobilities. These are routes that supply popular markets and involve a constant movement of people, especially between São Paulo and the cities of Guangzhou and Yiwu.” (Silva, 2018, p.223)

The transnational character of these inter-city trade relations has been accompanied by increasing flows of money and prosperity between these far away and disparate metropolises. The central region of the city of São Paulo, a region that has grown increasingly less prosperous over the past few decades, has benefitted from a number of renovations thanks to investments from the Chinese community. One of such investments took place in the year 2007, when Colégio São Bento, founded in 1903 by Benedictine monks and once one of São Paulo's most elite schools, was on the brink of shutting its gates due to lack of funds and lack of students. This school, whose student population is now 50% Chinese or Chinese-Brazilian, was saved by funding and renovation projects provided by Chinese merchants and businessmen active in the regions surrounding the school, specifically Rua 25 de Março (25 de Março Street), a popular commercial area amongst Chinese merchants going as far back as the 1970s (Ibid., p.233). Moreover, this school currently offers nighttime Portuguese-language classes to Chinese immigrants as well as Mandarin-language classes to the Brazilian public (Ibid., p. 226). Chinese-Brazilian educators, such as Lucas Xian and Juliana Wu played a crucial role in the renovation of the school's library, turning the school into an attractive institution not only to Chinese immigrants, but also to immigrants from other backgrounds as well as the local Brazilian population (Yokota, 2011). Taiwanese

businessman philanthropist Liu Shie Lin, who migrated to Brazil in 1965 (*Câmara Municipal de São Paulo*, 2012), also played a key role in the reformations at the school. The school encourages its Brazilian students to take part in the Chinese cultural activities organized on campus, as well as receiving frequent visits from Chinese diplomats, with part of the language learning material used at the school having been donated by the PRC government (*Rede Nacional Primeira Infância*, 2011).



Figure 4. Colégio São Bento. This old Catholic School in the central region of São Paulo went through a series of reformations funded by the Chinese-Brazilian and Taiwanese-Brazilian business community in the year 2007. (Source: *APCEF/SP*, 2018)

Given such efforts by Chinese immigrants to improve the educational situation of their community (and of interested Brazilians), in addition to the benefits that a prosperous Chinese overseas population may have for the trade between Brazil and China, the opening of a Confucius Institute in the city of São Paulo in the year following the renovations of Colégio São Bento seems like a logical progression of activities wherein the Chinese government could further increase the amount of Brazilians and Chinese-Brazilians studying the Chinese language. The Confucius Institute at the State University of São Paulo, offering affordable Mandarin Chinese language classes (at the Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced levels), in addition to study abroad programs at the

University of Hubei lasting between 6 and 12 months – although now put on hold due to the pandemic – has caught the attention of Brazilian and Chinese-Brazilian prospective students alike. According to Vitória Lee, a 22-year-old Chinese-Brazilian International Relations student at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo:

“I attended Mandarin classes at the Confucius Institute at the State University of São Paulo between March 2014 and November 2015. I have family in Hong Kong and wanted to search for work opportunities in the Chinese job market. China is currently a country with a vibrant economy, making the study of Mandarin essential for foreign trade in the globalized economy we currently live in, especially as an International Relations student.”
(V. Lee, personal communication, 10/04/2022)

Subsequently, a Confucius Institute was established at the University of Brasília in the year 2009 and has since been promoting activities related to entertainment, culture, as well as study abroad opportunities in China (*UnB Notícias*, 2019). Thereafter, a Confucius Institute was established at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro in the year 2011 (*Instituto Confúcio PUC-RIO*, 2022), in the heart of Brazil’s second-largest city, with a population of 6.775.561 inhabitants (*IBGE*, 2021), followed by the opening of a second Confucius Institute in São Paulo in the year 2012 at the Armando Alvares Penteado Foundation (*China Aid Data*, 2012) and a Confucius Classroom (CC) at Fluminense Federal University (located in Rio de Janeiro) in the year 2018 (*China Hoje*, 2018), both of which also offer Portuguese-language instruction to foreigners. Due to the gargantuan size of Brazil’s two largest metropolises, in addition to the massive surge in interest on China occurring throughout Brazil in the past decade (in the context of the aforementioned “Chinese wave”), it made sense that the Chinese government was willing to invest additional sums of money in these institutions which diffuse not only Chinese language, but also Chinese culture in Brazil’s political capital and largest cities (*Instituto Confúcio na UNESP*, 2022).

Yet another Confucius Institute was established in November 2013 at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, in Belo Horizonte, the 3rd largest city in Brazil’s Southeast Region (see Appendix A) – São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro being the 1st and 2nd largest,

respectively. This Confucius Institute, working in partnership with the Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), in addition to teaching Mandarin classes, offers a multitude of other Chinese cultural activities, such as Tai Chi Chuan (*Instituto Confúcio da UFMG*, 2022).

“Up to now, Brazil has built 11 Confucius Institutes and three Confucius Classrooms. In addition to the regular Chinese language courses, the Confucius Institutes and Classrooms are also fully integrated with the practical conditions of each school, offering courses in additional topics such as business Chinese and kung fu, and actively cooperate with the local education bureau to promote Chinese language courses in Brazilian middle schools.” (The Diplomat, 2020)

An additional significant gain for the spread of Confucius Institutes around Brazil was the inauguration of a Confucius Institute at the University of Campinas on April 22nd, 2015. The University of Campinas, located in the city of Campinas (approximately a one-hour drive from the megalopolis of São Paulo), is according to ‘QS World University Rankings 2022’ currently ranked the 2nd best university in Brazil and the 3rd best university in Latin America (*QS Top Universities*, 2022). Preparations for the inauguration of the Confucius Institute at the University of Campinas began as early as November 2009, on occasion of a visit by the provost of Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) to the University of Campinas. Thereafter, on July 17th, 2014, Brazil’s then-president Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) and Xi Jinping (2012-to present) witnessed the signing of the agreement for cooperation between the two universities (*Instituto Confúcio na Unicamp*, 2022). The ceremony for the signing of this education agreement between the two universities did not take place on the university’s campus, but rather at a state ceremony in the political capital of Brasília, specifically at the presidential residence, the *Planalto Palace* (*Instituto Confúcio na Unicamp*, 2014).

“On the noon of 17 July, 2014, Chinese President XI Jinping and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff witnessed the signing of over 30 bilateral cooperation agreements in trade, finance, culture, technology, education, national defense and personnel exchanges at the

presidential residence, including the establishment of Confucius Institute between BJTU and the State University of Campinas in Brazil. (...) Both institutions are committed to start cooperation on scientific research, student mobility, graduate student scholarship and the development of Portuguese language program.” (Beijing Jiaotong University, 2014)



Figure 5. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff witnessed the signing of BJTU-UNICAMP Confucius Institute in Brazil. (Source: *Beijing Jiaotong University*, 2014)

The fact that such agreement for cooperation between the two universities was not an isolated event occurring at the university's campus, but rather a formal state event signed within the context of 30 other bilateral cooperation agreements, witnessed by the heads of state of the respective countries, evidences a strong diplomatic component behind the building of Confucius Institutes and language exchange programs between the two countries. As explained by Jake Gilstrap in a paper titled 'Chinese Confucius Institutes in Latin America: Tools of Soft Power' published by the William J. Perry Center

for Hemispheric Defense Studies at National Defense University located in Washington D.C.:

“Simply put, CIs are “the most extensive and most future-oriented” components of China’s “massive international soft power campaign” and they have “the greatest long-term potential impact.” This campaign seeks to counter the Western narrative that paints China’s ascent as threat to the global community by revealing its “true nature” to the world. It believes it can achieve this by sharing its culture, philosophies, and language with the international community.” (Gilstrap, 2021, pp.19-20)

Nevertheless, despite the magnitude of such events, cultural interactions between Brazil and China still severely lag behind the language exchange programs existent in the Global North. As may be observed in Figure 6, the amount of Chinese exchange students in Brazil remains very limited. This is probably a result of Brazil’s relative unimportance regarding Chinese international trade and the lack of prestige of Brazilian universities. Moreover, language barriers and the geographic distance between the two countries may be a further setback for student exchange programs between Brazil and China.

“(…) the 100 Thousand Strong, launched by then President Barack Obama, who aimed to send 100 thousand U.S. students to study in China; and finally, after surpassing the goal, the 1 Million Strong, announced in 2015 by Barack Obama and Xi Jinping, aimed to expand the number of middle and high school students from the United States to study Mandarin to one million by 2020.” (Becard, 2019, p.9)

As an inevitable result of the magnitude of these East-West student exchange programs, the overwhelming majority of academic literature on the Chinese diaspora as a *soft power* mechanism focuses on students-turned-migrants and emigrating professionals in the Global North. In contrast, the PRC diaspora to Brazil in the twenty-first century has been predominantly concentrated in the central region of the city of São Paulo, where Chinese merchants mainly work as street vendors selling products *made in China*, as well as migration to other large cities in Brazil, such as Recife, where they also

work as vendors. As explained by Neves in her 2016-2018 study of Chinese migration in Recife:

“The study on this issue of Chinese migration is still underdeveloped in Brazil and, although the expansion of this immigration to the country is not something recent, over the years it has been increasingly present in the reality of cities.” (Neves, 2019)

Furthermore, when in the year 2009 the Brazilian government opted to provide amnesty to illegal aliens, approximately 5,5 thousand Chinese migrants applied for legal residence status, making them the second largest demographic group in the country to do so, coming in just behind migrants entering from neighboring Bolivia, who filed approximately 17 thousand applications (Silva, 2018, p.224). The still undocumented status of the migrants arriving in the years after the 2009 amnesty, coupled with the paucity of academic articles on Chinese migration to Brazil, makes the analysis of Chinese migration to Brazil a particularly daunting task. Although there is a great abundance of studies on the earlier Chinese migration to Southeast Asia, where the Chinese also mainly worked as merchants, more recent studies on the Chinese diaspora primarily focus on Chinese migration to the Global North, where the Chinese are largely represented as foreign students and migrant professionals.

“In the twenty-first century, ethnic Chinese have become a central part of global migration flows that have arisen in response to technological, economic, and immigration policy changes in Western societies. (...) First, new Chinese immigrants who originated in mainland China began to occupy a dominant position in the Chinese overseas population. Second, new Chinese immigrants and second- and third- generation overseas Chinese are better educated and more highly skilled than previous generations of immigrants. Most new Chinese immigrants are students-turned-migrants or emigrating professionals and their family members (Ding, 2007).” (Ding, 2014) [Emphasis mine]

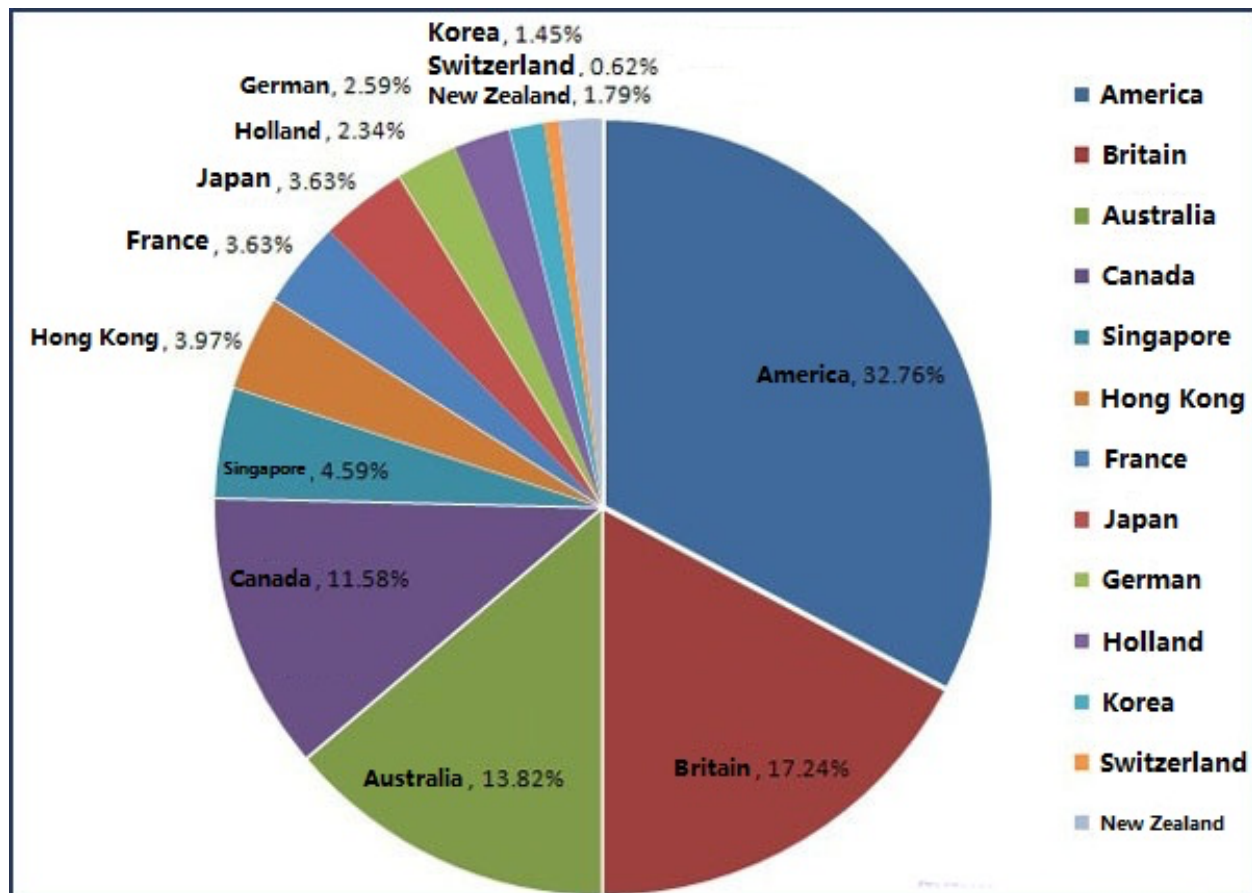


Figure 6. Chinese students abroad by country. Note the omission of Brazil as a significant destination for Chinese foreign students. (Source: *Nanjing Marketing Group*, 2017)

As it may be difficult to take Brazilians to China, it is easiest to bring China to Brazil. Therefore, China has also more recently been building Confucius Institutes in regions of Brazil that are less densely populated and considerably less economically important. As already mentioned on page 12, the first of such came with the opening of a Confucius Institute at the Federal University of Pernambuco in 2013, working in partnership with the Central University of Finance and Economics in Beijing (*Instituto Confúcio na UPE*, 2014). Subsequently, Confucius Institutes were established in the State of Maranhão in the year 2018 (*Governo do Maranhão*, 2022) and the State of Ceará in the year 2019 (*O Povo*, 2019). These states, located in the Northeast Region of Brazil (see Appendix A), considered the least economically developed in the country (see Appendix B), are among the few that still trade more with the U.S. than with China, making them the logical place for the building of Confucius Institutes assuming China wishes to increase its *soft power*,

and eventually *hard power*, over the regions in Brazil still predominantly under U.S. influence (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. Main destination of Brazilian exports by state in 2020. Note how most exports either go to the PRC or Hong Kong. The Northeast Region of Brazil still trades more with the U.S. than with China. (Source: *O Povo Amazonense*, 2020)

Working in partnership with the University of Nankai – Tianjin (*Instituto Confúcio na UFC*, 2022), the latter two of these Confucius Institutes provide Chinese-language instruction in regions of Brazil where opportunities to learn other foreign languages may be unavailable or unaffordable. Unlike the Confucius Institutes in the wealthier São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the instruction offered at the Confucius Institute in Maranhão, the poorest of Brazil’s 26 states, is free of charge (*Governo do Maranhão*, 2022). Students in

this destitute region of Brazil, who are not afforded the opportunity to learn other foreign languages (such as English or French), are being introduced to Mandarin as a second language. China's gains in *soft power* over Brazil's Northeast Region could very well result in increased trade opportunities in the region, eventually breaking this last bastion of U.S. *hard power* over Brazil.

Although Brazil's Northeast is the country's least economically prosperous region, it has a vibrant agribusiness that has been increasingly catching the attention of China's business community. It is also noteworthy that the first Confucius Institute in Brazil's Northeast Region was built in the year 2013 in the State of Pernambuco, the state in Brazil's Northeast Region with the largest Chinese population, which is indicative of the importance of the Chinese diaspora for the spreading of China's cultural soft power. Pernambuco is, moreover, the location of China's first Consulate-General in Brazil's Northeast Region, built in the year 2016 (*O Diário de Pernambuco*, 2020). As explained by Neves in her study on Chinese immigration to Brazil during the 2016-2018 time period:

"The State of São Paulo is the one that concentrated the largest number of immigrants among all Federative Units, concentrating in the period an average 53% of the national total. (...) the State of Pernambuco, despite representing, on average, less than 2% of the national total of immigrants, has a significant participation within the context of the Northeast region, establishing itself as the main north-eastern destination of the Chinese." (Neves, 2019)

In addition to the opening of three Confucius Institutes in Brazil's semi-arid and destitute Northeastern Region, in 2016 the Chinese government opened a Confucius Institute in Brazil's tropical Northern Region, in the heart of the Amazon rainforest (*Agência Pará*, 2020). Acting in partnership with Shandong Normal University (*Instituto Confúcio da UEPA*, 2022), the Confucius Institute of the University of Pará grew from 120 students in 2016 to 1,310 students of Mandarin in 2020, as well offering Tai Chi Chuan classes to 134 students (*Agência Pará*, 2020). The State of Pará, the only state in Brazil's Northern Region that currently has China as the main destination of its exports (refer back to Figure 7), is a good case study of China's hard power being translated into soft power.

More recently, in the year 2019, a Confucius Institute was established in a second state in Brazil's Northern Region, the State of Amazonas (*Universidade Federal do Amazonas*, 2019). Created as a result of a partnership between the Federal University of Amazonas and the Confucius Institute at the State University of São Paulo, the Confucius Institute in Amazonas is modelled on the success of the Confucius Institute in Maranhão, also the result of a partnership between the State University of São Paulo and the Federal University of Maranhão (*Instituto Confúcio na UNESP*, 2022). These two institutions serve as a blueprint for the opening of Mandarin-language centers in more isolated and less economically wealthy portions of the country, i.e., rather than being formed as a partnership between a Brazilian university and a Chinese university, these two Confucius Institutes came as the result of a partnership between a Brazilian university housing a Confucius Institute and another Brazilian university that still lacked one. Brazil's Northern Region, more so than Brazil's Northeastern Region, has been growing economically closer to China over the past few years, leading to diverse socioeconomic and environmental changes in the region.

"The rain forest here in Brazil has progressively fallen victim to global demand for soy and beef. And the country's biggest customer for both is China. The story of the Amazon has become entangled not simply with the story of Brazil's poor protection of its forest frontier but also with that of the rise of this new superpower and its food-security strategy. Soy is China's weak link, the main food commodity it needs from the outside world." (The Atlantic, 2020)

Brazil's adhesion to Belt and Road Initiative projects in the regions covered by the Amazon Rainforest (*Foreign Policy*, 2021) mark a trend in increased Chinese investment in infrastructure projects in Brazil, and of China increasingly displacing the U.S. as Brazil's largest trading partner (see Figure 8). The opening of Confucius Institutes in Brazil's rainforest-covered and sparsely populated Northern Region, as with the opening of a Confucius Institute in Brazil's more economically advantaged southernmost state, Rio Grande do Sul, which also has China as its largest trading partner (refer back to Figure

7), evidences China's coherent *hard power* and *soft power* strategy for the different regions of Brazil.

The Confucius Institute at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, working in collaboration with the Communications University of China (*Instituto Confúcio na UFRGS*, 2022), demonstrates how, as pointed out in the quote by Silva on page 34, whereas trade and migration between Brazil and China are often centered between linkages of specific cities and urban centers in China to specific market regions in São Paulo rather than the nation as a whole, cultural relations may follow a different pattern. China building Confucius Institutes in diverse parts of Brazil and promoting exchange programs between different Brazilian universities and various universities spread throughout China is taking Brazil-China cultural and trade relations out from the inter-city nexus and building wholly transnational flows of goods and people between the two countries. The increase in Brazilian University students seeking exchange programs in China, combined with China's increasing importance as a destination for Brazilian exports (see Figure 8), evinces the *hard power* + *soft power* nexus of Brazil's diplomatic and trade relations.

In addition to spreading Chinese language throughout Brazil, in the year 2019 a Confucius Institute aimed at teaching Traditional Chinese Medicine was opened in the State of Goiás (*Instituto Confúcio de Medicina Chinesa da UFG*, 2022), in the heart of Brazil's rural and sparsely populated Central-West region. The first of its kind in Latin America, it is demonstrative of China's efforts to spread other facets of its millennia-old culture throughout regions of the world where learning opportunities are very often scarce and far apart. Brazil's Central-West region, which has been seeing a very large increase in Chinese economic *hard power* and state-based *soft power* initiatives (i.e., Confucius Institutes), is mainly devoid of community-based initiatives due to its negligible Chinese diaspora population.

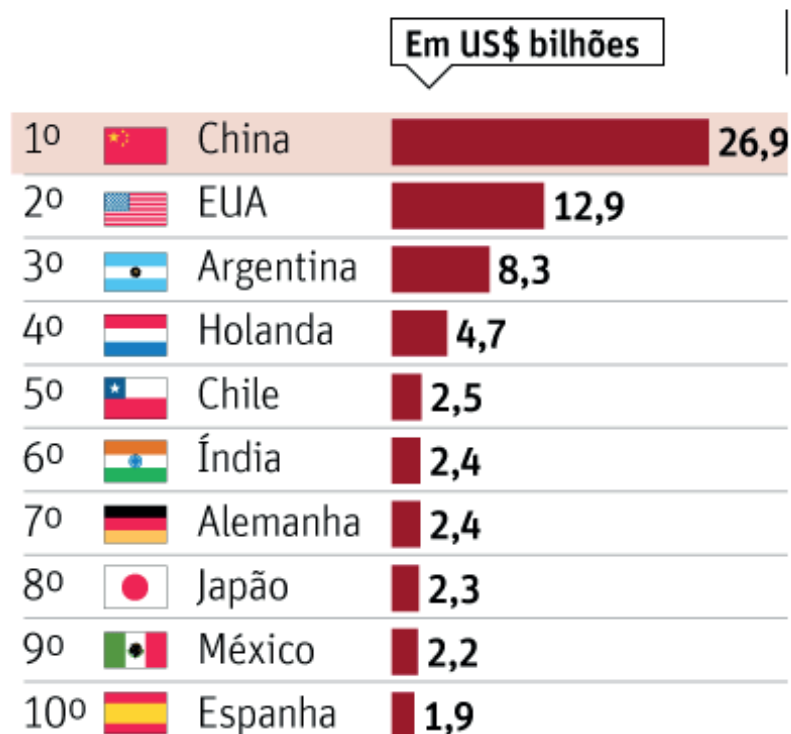
“Over the past decade, Chinese investments in Brazil have expanded and diversified considerably, especially ones involving infrastructure. Chinese investors have also diversified geographically. Increasingly, major Brazilian infrastructure projects are being planned or implemented with Chinese backing in environmentally sensitive regions such

as the Amazon rain forest and the Cerrado, a large savanna region in Central-West Brazil.” (Abdenur, 2021)

Due to Brazil’s continental size, encompassing diverse climates, biomes, and vegetations (see Appendix C), tailoring national policies toward a large and complex country may frequently be a challenge. Therefore, China often negotiates directly with the Governors of each of Brazil’s 26 states. As each of the 26 states have different climates, economies, and levels of economic development, such policies have been streamlining the economic interactions between China and the different regions of Brazil. A prime example of this is China’s vaccine diplomacy:

“In Brazil, for example, even though the negotiation for the production of Coronavac (Sinovac) was made between the State Government of São Paulo and the Chinese government, the ultimate decision-making for the production and distribution relied on the Federal Government in Brasilia. (...) As the pandemic grew and the government’s lack of organization in acquiring vaccines became evident, the Federal government had to rely on the agreement tailored between the Government of São Paulo and Sinovac.” (Aragão, 2021)

BRASIL: Principais destinos das exportações (primeiro semestre de 2017).



Fonte: FAGUNDES, Álvaro. Pela 1ª vez, China compra um quarto de todas as exportações brasileiras. **Folha de S. Paulo**, 22 jul. 2017. Disponível em: <<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2017/07/1903460-pela-1-vez-china-compra-um-quarto-de-todas-as-exportacoes-brasileiras.shtml>> Acesso em: 01 set. 2020.

Figure 8. Main destinations of Brazil's exports - first semester of 2017 (Source: *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2017)

Brazilian government initiatives

A notable development in the expansion of China's *soft power* in Brazil occurred when, in the year 2014, the Government of the State of Rio de Janeiro invested a sum of R\$ 21,4 million to refurbish a historic building from the year 1849 in the city of Niterói (O *Globo*, 2014), a city located 15 kilometers outside the city of Rio de Janeiro. These improvements were financed by a partnership between the Government of the State of Rio de Janeiro and the University of Hebei, in China, for the building of the 'Colégio Estadual Matemático Joaquim Gomes de Sousa – Intercultural Brasil-China', a bilingual public High School that teaches both Portuguese and Mandarin (not to be confused with the Chinese Elementary School in Rio de Janeiro mentioned on pages 11 and 16, which

is a private school established in the year 2021 as the result of a Chinese community-based initiative). This school is the fourth bilingual public school in the State of Rio de Janeiro, with bilingual schools teaching English, French, and Spanish having been previously established. The school, which houses a capacity for 216 students, and sends teachers directly from the university in China to the school in Niterói (*Conexão Lusófona*, 2015), evidences that the Mandarin language is now beginning to be given similar importance as the main European languages within Brazil's public education system. The school opened its gates in September 2014 with a focus on Mathematics and Physics (*Curso Maciel*, 2015), being indicative of an attempt by the Brazilian government to emulate China's high performance on international Math and Science examinations. In March of 2018, three students from the school's first graduating class were sent on 6 months study programs at universities in China (*Governo Aberto RJ*, 2018). In August 2021, the Government of the State of São Paulo and the Consulate-General of China in São Paulo began talks for a similar initiative in the State of São Paulo (*R7*, 2021).



Figure 9. Colégio Estadual Matemático Joaquim Gomes de Sousa – Intercultural Brasil-China (Source: *Curso Maciel*, 2015)

Chinese community-based initiatives

São Paulo field work

In the earlier section we examined how state-based initiatives aim at expanding China's *soft power* throughout the different regions of Brazil. This section examines how community-based initiatives by Chinese citizens and their Brazilian descendants have been spreading Chinese language and culture, as well as products *made in China*, throughout the different regions in Brazil. Chinese diaspora communities scattered throughout the country, such as in the town of Foz de Iguaçu, on the border with neighboring Argentina and Paraguay, where the Chinese are now the second-largest foreign ethnic group other than those from neighboring Paraguay (Click Foz de Iguaçu, 2014) are mainly supplied by Chinese merchants operating in São Paulo. These communities have been essential in transnationalizing Chinese merchandise (Silva, 2018, p.23) and culture (Globo, 2020) to other South American countries, representing significant *hard* and *soft power* gains for China. In fact, without the existence of this trade conducted by Chinese merchants on the Brazil-Argentina-Paraguay border, Chinese immigration to Brazil's Southeast Region, in general, and the city of São Paulo, in specific, may not have grown in the first place:

"In Brazil, the years 1979 and 1980 are distinctive by Chinese immigration to Paraguay, Ciudad del Este, mostly from Taiwan who settled in this city because of its commercial dynamism and easy distribution of goods, since it was located near to Brazil and Argentina. After entering Paraguay and seeing the opportunities created by merchants in Brazil, the Chinese were no longer just distributors when sending their goods to Brazilian merchants, but also became retailers and wholesalers by moving to the local southeast region, which was characterized by thriving popular commerce (PINHEIRO MACHADO, 2009)." (Neves, 2019)

Although understanding the transnationalization of China's *soft power* in the Brazil-Argentina-Paraguay border region would be a fascinating research project in itself, due

to Brazil's size, field studies were limited to the city of São Paulo, wherein most Chinese immigrants in the country are located (refer back to pages 33-34). To conduct field studies regarding the Chinese diaspora, I arrived in São Paulo on Sunday, April 3rd, 2022. My first destination was the Economic and Cultural Office of Taipei in São Paulo on April 5th, 2022. The office is located in São Paulo's Liberdade neighborhood, which in the 1950s started to become associated with the Japanese diaspora in Brazil (*Veja São Paulo*, 2016), with Brazil having the largest Japanese population outside Japan (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, 2019). However, over the past two decades, it has gradually become less of a Japanese neighborhood and increasingly a home for the Chinese diaspora in São Paulo. A plaque at the entrance of the office states that the first Taiwanese immigrants to Brazil arrived on August 25th, 1955, which is now celebrated as 'Taiwan Day' by the diaspora community. According to Silva, as emigration from the PRC was highly restricted between the years 1949-1979, most Chinese immigrants arriving in Brazil during those three decades were from Taiwan (Silva, 2018, p.232).

The Taipei Office is located in a four-storied building called the Hakka Plaza, wherein the Hakka Social Center of Brazil and the Hakka Chung Tsan Cultural Center of Brazil are also located. The Hakka are the ethnic minority of the island of Taiwan – the Hoklo being the majority (Ling, 2008, p.17) – which have their origins in the north of mainland China (Ibid., p.155) and migrated to the south of China and to Taiwan throughout the 1860s (Ibid. p.161), mainly arriving in Brazil in the period between the years 1949-1979 (Ibid., p.189). The building also houses a privately owned Fu Guang meditation center.

Due to the government of Brazil choosing to recognize the government of the PRC over that of the ROC, state-based cultural initiatives between Brazil and the ROC are very limited. In fact, the Taipei Office acts as a surrogate for a Consulate of Taiwan in São Paulo, as Brazil officially dissolved diplomatic relations with the ROC in 1974 (see Figure 10), while the Economic and Cultural Office of Taipei in Brazil's capital, Brasília, acts as a surrogate for a Taiwanese embassy in Brazil. Accordingly, it seems that all Taiwanese diaspora cultural initiatives in Brazil are community-based, such as the aforementioned Hakka community initiatives and the Saint Confucius School in São Paulo, a Mandarin-language elementary school established by Taiwanese immigrants in the year 2003

(*Escola Santo Confúcio*, 2022), utilizing textbooks and other learning material used in Taiwanese schools. Of most relevance for this thesis was the revelation that Taiwanese diaspora community-based religious institutions, such as the First Presbyterian Church of Taiwan in São Paulo and the Buddhist Fo Guang Shan Temple Zu Lai in the city of Cotia (about a 40-minute drive from São Paulo), due to the state-imposed atheism in mainland China, are popular among members of the PRC diaspora who wish to join religious organizations. Therefore, although cultural interactions between Brazil and the ROC are highly limited, there seems to exist a certain degree of cultural exchange between the PRC and ROC diaspora communities in Brazil.

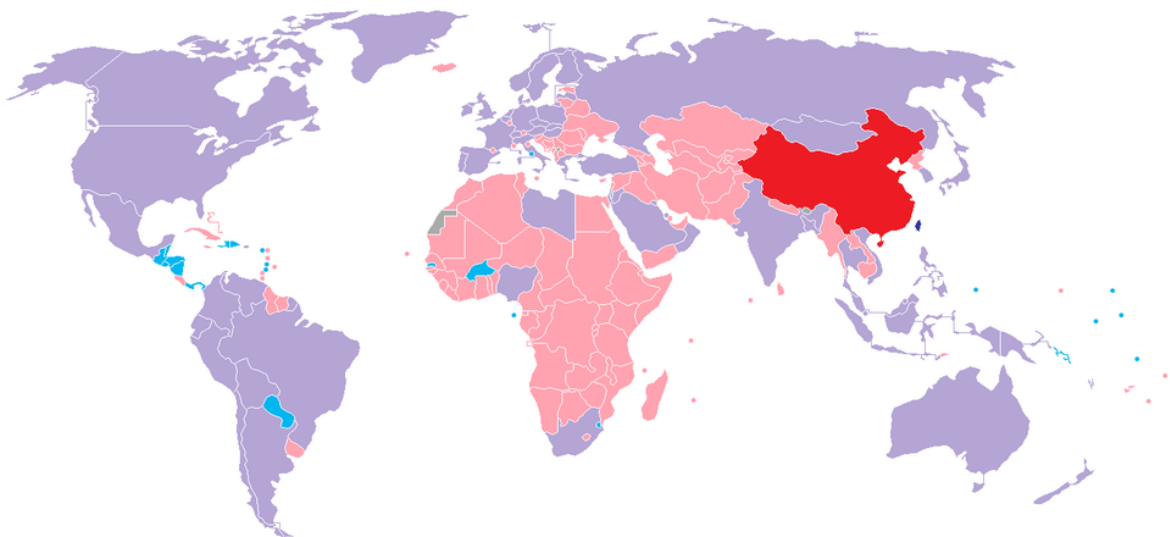


Figure 10. One-China Policy: Countries exclusively recognizing the PRC in pink, countries exclusively recognizing the ROC in blue, countries officially recognizing the PRC though *de facto* recognizing the ROC in purple. Although Brazil recognized the PRC over the ROC in 1974, Brazil currently holds a 'Commercial Office' in Taipei as a surrogate for a proper Embassy. (Source: *Electomatic.com*, 2016)

My second destination was the Confucius Institute at the State University of São Paulo (UNESP), the oldest Confucius Institute in Brazil (see pages 31-32), on the morning of April 6th, 2022. The purpose of my visit was to ascertain to what extent Brazil's Chinese diaspora community participates in Chinese state-based initiatives in the city of São Paulo. The staff informed me that at any given time, approximately 15-20% of students at the Institution are Chinese or of Chinese ancestry. However, due to the pandemic,

classes at 15 of the 16 Confucius Institutes managed by the State University of São Paulo (14 in the State of São Paulo + 1 in the state of Amazonas + 1 in the State of Maranhão) had been moved online. The Ipiranga unit of the Confucius Institute of the State University of São Paulo (the one I visited) was the only one open to the public, then teaching a total of 70 students in person and approximately 1,650 students online. Teachers at the Confucius Institutes at the State University of São Paulo are selected in China by Hubei University, all in accordance with the stipulations of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), with work contracts lasting between one to two years (which may later be extended to three years).

“In the past 11 years, the number of students at the Confucius Institute at São Paulo State University has grown from the 104 to more than 2,000 registered in 2019; the number of teaching points has increased from the original 1 to 14.” (The Diplomat, 2020)

Naturally, as a result of the pandemic, fewer teachers were being hired due to most students learning online rather than in classroom settings. The Confucius Institute at the State University of São Paulo takes great pride in the fact that it has been selected three times as the best overseas Confucius Institute (years 2010, 2012 and 2016), and I was shown the plaques commemorating such achievements. Students at that Confucius Institute are eligible to take part in study abroad programs at Hubei University for time periods spanning 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, or to take part in summer or winter programs at the University, each lasting 21 days. At the University, students can attend classes related to Chinese language, Chinese History, and Chinese Philosophy. The institution also offers annual scholarships for the 6 months and 1 year study abroad programs, in addition to a scholarship for a Master's program in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. However, students who are Chinese citizens are not eligible to take part in these exchange programs. As explained in an article titled 'China's Soft-Power Push' published in Foreign Affairs Magazine:

“Another weapon in China's arsenal is education. About 300,000 foreign students now study in Chinese universities (the vast majority learning the Chinese language), with

additional numbers in vocational colleges. Every year, the China Scholarship Council offers some 20,00 scholarships to foreign students.” (Foreign Affairs, 2015)

Later that morning, I attempted to visit another Confucius Institute in São Paulo called the Center for Chinese Language and Culture in Brazil (CHINBRA). According to their website, they had been founded in the year 2003 by the Chinese community in São Paulo, with the support of the Chinese Consulate-General in São Paulo, and were in the year 2011 elevated by Hanban to the status of a proper Confucius Institute (*chinbra.com.br*, 2022). Further, their website states that they have, over the years, formed learning partnerships with prestigious schools in the city of São Paulo (such as Colégio Porto Seguro) as well as with prestigious universities (such as the Higher School of Advertising and Marketing). It is noteworthy that Hanban’s Confucius Institute program only began in the year 2004, a year after CHINBRA was established. Therefore, CHINBRA was most likely some form of blueprint for the establishment of Chinese state-based cultural initiatives in Brazil, initially supported by the Chinese diaspora community. The time period following the year 2001 was certainly a turning point in Brazil-China commercial *hard power* relations (refer back to Figure 2), naturally being accompanied by a concomitant surge in cultural *soft power* relations. As explained by Wang Peng:

“The political and economic relations between China and Brazil have developed rapidly in the 21st century. In December 2001, China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Chinese language teaching in Brazil enjoyed an unexpected and rapid development boost.” (The Diplomat, 2020)

However, when I arrived at the Institute, I was informed by security guards on site that the language school had permanently closed down two years earlier due to the start of the pandemic (although their webpage is still up and running). Language schools are naturally easier to establish when there are a large number of expats in a given region, and these institutions likewise suffer tremendously when there is a decrease in the number of expats arriving at that region. As later confirmed by Xiaoshu Zhu, the Chinese

Director of the Confucius Institute at FAAP (also in São Paulo), Confucius Institutes in Brazil have been severely hampered due to the pandemic:

“It has been a tremendous negative influence on everything. Had it not been for the pandemic, we would have had more Chinese teachers. I mean, teachers sent from China. Because of the pandemic, in China, it was reported that the pandemic situation in Brazil was particularly serious. That has also affected teachers from coming, they believe that it is better, and is safer, to stay inside China than going out of China to any other place in the world, in this particular moment. That’s why we don’t have enough teachers, or as many teachers as we used to, because of the pandemic.” (Xiaoshu Zhu, personal communication, 20/04/2022)

My third destination, on April 7th, 2022, was the Chinese Social Center of São Paulo, on a Thursday. Upon my arrival at the center, I was informed by a man at the front desk, Mr. Kao, that the center only opens on Saturdays, when they teach Mandarin classes between 9:00-12:00a.m. Nevertheless, Mr. Kao explained to me that the Chinese Social Center of São Paulo is in fact a Taiwanese community-based organization, unlike what the organization’s name had had me infer. Mr. Kao also explained that his family emigrated to Brazil from Taiwan back in 1967 (when he was aged 14), during the heyday of Taiwanese immigration to Brazil. However, Kao did explain that the flood of immigration from the ROC between 1949-1979 has now been reduced to a mere trickle, with the overwhelming majority of Chinese immigrants to Brazil currently coming from the PRC rather than the ROC. Further, Mr. Kao added that although the Chinese Social Center of São Paulo is a Taiwanese community-based organization, many Brazilians and people originally from the PRC take part in the activities at the institution, although Mandarin classes there are only offered at a beginner’s level and thus they often proceed to different institutions once they have achieved more advanced language proficiency. Likewise, Mr. Kao added that the more recent PRC diaspora is becoming increasingly integrated with the older ROC diaspora. As later explained by Vitória Lee, a 22-year-old Chinese-Brazilian International Relations student at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo:

“Although my father is from Hong Kong in the PCR, I did my elementary school education at the Saint Confucius School, a Taiwanese diaspora community-based organization. Throughout my elementary school education, most of my classmates were either first-generation or second-generation Taiwanese-Brazilians.” (V. Lee, personal communication, 10/4/2022)



Figure 11. Chinese Social Center of São Paulo (Source: Picture taken from my iPhone)

Naturally, changes in internal affairs and international relations have also been changing both the characteristics and the distribution of the Chinese diaspora in Brazil. Whereas in the earlier part of the 20th century, Chinese immigrants in Brazil were generally concentrated in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Silva, 2018, p.231), Brazil's political capital up until the year 1960, and were mostly from Zhejiang Province in mainland China (Ibid.), followed by a period of immigration exclusively from the ROC between the years

1949-1979 and a surge in immigration from the PRC beginning in the 1990s, both of which have been overwhelmingly concentrated in the city of São Paulo. Likewise, changes in Brazil's international relations and internal political and economic affairs, such as the growing economic importance of the city of São Paulo and Brazil's closer regional integration with its southern South American neighbors via the MERCOSUL (Ibid., p.233), and the subsequent opportunities for foreign trade created by the regional trade bloc, have been continuously pulling Chinese migration southward from Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo. Up until the 1990s, almost all Chinese cultural activities in the city of São Paulo were organized by the Taiwanese diaspora community.

“Most of the earliest Chinese language teachers and tutors in Brazil were immigrants and their descendants, who came to South America from southeastern China in the late 19th century. Before the establishment of diplomatic relations between the People’s Republic of China and Brazil, Brazilian students were learning traditional Chinese for the most part, and most of their teachers and tutors were from Taiwan.” (The Diplomat, 2020)

My fourth destination, on April 18th, 2022, was the Lohan Buddhist Temple. Originally an old Portuguese warehouse from the late 19th century (CCTV, 2020), it was transformed into a Buddhist temple in 1986 by the Taiwanese diaspora community. A plaque at the entrance bearing the seal of São Paulo’s City Council states that the building is considered a municipal landmark due to its historical relevance. Although it was originally a Taiwanese Buddhist temple, it is currently a Kung Fu school run by Brazilians, mixing the philosophical teachings of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and to a lesser extent, even Christianity. The Temple, moreover, stresses other Chinese cultural learnings, such as Chinese language and calligraphy, as the means for a holistic understanding of Kung Fu and its teachings.

My fifth destination, on April 19th, 2022, was the History Museum of Japanese Immigration in Brazil. As Japanese immigration to Brazil was a far larger (see page 50) and a currently more thoroughly studied phenomenon than Chinese immigration to Brazil, I visited the museum of Japanese immigration in an attempt to draw an analogy between the two phenomena. According to the museum, Japanese immigration to Brazil officially

began on June 18th, 1908, when the Japanese passenger ship *Kasato Maru* docked at the Port of Santos, in the State of São Paulo, carrying 781 Japanese immigrants (*Bunkyo*, 2018). It is noteworthy that, whereas Chinese immigration to Brazil is an eminently urban phenomenon, with Chinese merchants selling products *made in China* in Brazil's large cities, Japanese immigration to Brazil was a predominantly rural phenomenon.

My sixth destination, on April 20th, 2022, was the Confucius Institute at the Armando Alvares Penteado Foundation. Unlike the São Paulo State University, which is a public university, the Armando Alvares Penteado Foundation (FAAP) is a private university. Opened in the year 2012, the Confucius Institute at FAAP works in association with the University of International Business & Economics in Beijing (*Instituto Confúcio para Negócios FAAP*, 2022) and is hence more business-oriented than the Confucius Institute at the State University of São Paulo, which works in association with Hubei University. Moreover, the Confucius Institute at FAAP has three campi, one in the city of São Paulo and two in the countryside.

On October 6th, 2016, the Confucius Institute at FAAP organized an exposition on the old Silk Road, providing 24 images of Chinese towns which were part of the Silk Road in the 19th century. This exposition, working in partnership with the Brazilian branch of Xinhua News, included lecturers from Chinese Universities on topics related to China's Belt and Road Initiative (in line with the business orientation of this Confucius Institute) and a presentation on ethnic minorities in China by teacher Anna Pesce (*Instituto Confúcio para Negócios FAAP*, 2016). As explained by Foreign Affairs Magazine:

"China's Confucius Institutes – centers charged with teaching Chinese language and culture abroad – form another key part of the effort to build up China's educational soft power. (...) Beijing is assertively promoting its culture and society abroad through sports, fine arts, performing arts, music, film, literature, and architecture – and making considerable inroads." (Foreign Affairs, 2015)

On November 1st, 2019, Anna Pesce, now the Coordinator at the FAAP Business Confucius Institute, took part in an event for the signing of a renovation of the cooperation agreement between FAAP and Beijing's University of International Business and

Economics (*Instituto Confúcio para Negócios FAAP*, 2019). This event, attended by the former Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (1995-2004), Rubens Ricupero, who also served as Brazil's ambassador to the United States and Italy, evidences a diplomatic component to the signing of this educational agreement. Although the BRICS countries are not “a political alliance (like the European Union) or a formal trading association” (*The Diplomat*, 2020), there is a conspicuous *soft power* component to interactions amongst the BRICS countries. Such *soft power* interactions have the potential to lead to a strengthening of ties between the BRICS countries, and possibly even for the building of future trade and *hard power* relations amongst the BRICS countries.

“Looking ahead to the future, more two-way communication and exchanges are urgently needed, in which Chinese students may also enjoy and learn about the splendid Brazilian culture and history through Confucius Institutes and its Brazilian counterparts or cooperation partners. In particular, the growing strategic mutual trust generated by the BRICS framework may provide the indispensable political environment for all these people-to-people exchanges and cultural activities, and finally construct a valid source strengthening the people-to-people ties among all BRICS countries.” (The Diplomat, 2020)

During my visit (see Appendix E), I was informed by Anna Pesce, the Coordinator at the Confucius Institute at FAAP, and Xiaoshu Zhu, the Chinese Director at the Confucius Institute at FAAP, that the activities at the Confucius Institute at FAAP are not limited to the university's students. In addition to offering courses in Business Chinese language, the Confucius Institute at FAAP organizes cultural workshops, sends teachers to private companies, offers courses in intercultural communication, organizes workshops in intercultural communication at private companies, organizes photography and art expositions in association with the university's library, and hosts an annual cultural show at the university's theater, as well as offering other activities open to the public, such as cultural activities related to the Chinese New Year, as happened in February 2022 (*Clientesa*, 2022). Moreover, members of the Brazilian Military are offered a 25% discount

on the language courses at the Confucius Institute at FAAP. A more recent project, the Octagon Project, aims to get members of the diaspora community to share stories of their Chinese heritage and immigrant experiences in Brazil. As explained by Chinese American scholar Sheng Ding regarding the spread of Confucius Institutes (CIs) and Confucius Classrooms (CCs):

“To a great extent, the spread of CIs and CCs have forged strategic alliances with businesses, industries, governments, and other institutions with an interest in closer and more productive ties with China and the Chinese diaspora. Recognizing the centrality of the language in increasing cultural attractiveness, China has introduced a series of initiatives to promote the study and research of Chinese around the world, particularly among overseas Chinese.” (Ding, 2014, p.16)

Regarding quantitative data, they informed me that in the year 2021, the Confucius Institute had 502 students and 7 teachers. Of these seven teachers, two are sent directly from China; two are local native Chinese resident in Brazil; one Brazilian director; one Chinese Director (Xiaoshu Zhu); and one Coordinator (Anna Pesce). Furthermore, unlike the Confucius Institute at the State University of São Paulo, where teachers are allowed to stay a maximum of three years, the Confucius Institute at FAAP allows teachers to work at the school for at most four years. In addition to hiring both local and foreign Chinese teachers, the Confucius Institute at FAAP cooperates with Brazilian NGOs to take Chinese culture to Brazilians of disadvantaged backgrounds.

“We have here at FAAP a department called FAAP Social which helps poor communities, and we organize some donations and some events for these kinds of people. This year, for Chinese New Year, we organized an action with them, and we went together to an NGO, and we organized an event for children. We launched a book for children, which is about Chinese Lantern Festival, and we organized this event. (...) We had the Lion and Dragon dance.” (Anna Pesce, personal communication, 20/04/2022)



Figure 12. Dragon Dance for the Chinese New Year 2022 at a Brazilian NGO, organized by the Confucius Institute at FAAP (Source: Photograph provided by Anna Pesce, taken from her Smartphone)

Moreover, the Confucius Institute at FAAP works closely with Chinese diaspora community-based initiatives, such as the Brazil-China Sociocultural Institute (Ibrachina), for the organization of events aimed at spreading Chinese culture among non-Chinese Brazilians, taking advantage of their knowledge of both languages in order to make Chinese culture more accessible to the Brazilian public. The hiring of local native Chinese residents as teachers (refer back to page 59) is further indicative of the importance of the diaspora community for the success of Confucius Institutes.

“We work very closely with Ibrachina, which is another institution, a more recent institution, but we have a good partnership with them. (...) We also have a strong partnership with Colégio São Bento. (...) In 2019 together with Ibrachina we organized a Brazilian-themed Chinese New Year here at FAAP, and in 2020 we organized a Chinese-

themed Brazilian Carnival event in association with a local Carnival school, taking aspects of Chinese culture to the local Brazilian community.” (Anna Pesce, personal communication, 20/04/2022)



Figure 13. A Brazilian-themed Chinese New Year (Source: Instituto Confúcio para Negócios FAAP, 2019)

Through this association with Ibrachina, Brazil's most important Chinese community-based initiative, the Confucius Institute at FAAP (a state-based initiative) has also reaped great benefits from efforts stemming from the Chinese diaspora community. This evidences the central argument of this paper, that the existence of a large and prosperous Chinese diaspora community may greatly aid state-based initiatives abroad, with the results being mutually beneficial.

“Ibrachina is like an association for enterprises of Brazil and China, they act as sort of a bridge, and we are in close cooperation with each other, in the sense that this Thomas Law, which is the president of this association, is a Brazilian-born Chinese. He doesn't

He speaks much Chinese himself, but he is of Chinese origin. He is also a graduate of FAAP and he gives us his full support whenever we need him. And also, when he has to organize any event our Confucius will be there and provide whatever he needs.” (Xiaoshu Zhu, personal communication, 20/04/2022)



Figure 14. A Chinese-themed Brazilian Carnival (Source: *Instituto Ibrachina*, 2020)

My seventh destination, on April 28th, 2022, was Colégio São Bento (already mentioned on page 34). The staff was kind enough to show me around the premises of the school, including the classrooms dedicated to teaching Mandarin, as well as allowing

me to watch parts of a Portuguese class for Mandarin speakers, which happened to be going on while I was on the school's campus.

My eighth destination, on May 1st, 2022, was the Chinese Catholic Church of São Paulo. At the Church, Priest Lucas Xian stated that not only were they the first Chinese Church in Brazil, they are also Brazil's oldest Mandarin language school. Established in 1958 by the Taiwanese diaspora community, the Church is now approximately 50% Chinese and 50% Taiwanese. Priest Xian, who is from the PRC, having migrated to Brazil in 1997, explained to me that, although their Mandarin language school is nowadays rather small and currently only offers classes on Sundays, at its peak in the year 1964, it had over 700 students.

Lucas Xian was also kind enough to show me around the church's premises, which houses the largest Mandarin library in Latin America (*Missão Católica Chinesa*, 2022), including books over one hundred years old. The cultural activities at the church have caught the attention of the government of the PRC, and the church has since been visited by the Chinese Ambassador to Brazil and other important government officials (*Arquidiocese de São Paulo*, n.d.). According to Priest Xian, the Chinese government pays the salaries of their native Mandarin language teachers and provides for their housing, in addition to providing their school with free textbooks. This support from the Chinese government was later extended to Colégio São Bento when, in the year 2007, the Chinese business community chose to refurbish the then decadent school, which is nowadays a modern school housing a vibrant Chinese diaspora community and offering Mandarin classes (refer back to pages 34-35). According to Priest Xian, Colégio São Bento, in its current form, is an extension of the Mandarin school founded way back in 1958. Students at Colégio São Bento also often take part in the cultural activities organized by the Confucius Institute at FAAP.

Moreover, the Mandarin language school at the Chinese Catholic Church of São Paulo currently offers Mandarin classes at the neighboring Brazilian High School, Colégio Avanço, which are now compulsory for all of their students. These classes have recently been approved by the Brazilian government's board of education and are now fully integrated with the Brazilian curriculum at the school. The example of this community-based initiative (The Chinese Catholic Church in São Paulo), which has been able to

extend its cultural activities throughout the Chinese diaspora population with the reformations at Colégio São Bento, in addition to offering Mandarin language classes to the local Brazilian population, via Colégio Avanço, thanks in part to the strong support from the government of the PRC, such as with the providing of language teachers, is central to my argument regarding the nexus between state-based initiatives and community-based initiatives.



Figure 15. Chinese Catholic Church in São Paulo (Source: *Arquidiocese de São Paulo*, n.d.)

Discussion

As was made patent in the Analysis section, it is often hard to dissociate state-based initiatives from community-based initiatives. Another example in that line would be the Xinhua Portuguese-language website, an online newspaper owned by the Chinese government but maintained by the expat community (*XINHUA Português*, 2022). Xinhua has been growing more influential in parts of Brazil with larger Chinese expat

communities, such as the State of Pernambuco, which has witnessed a noticeable surge in Chinese immigration since the year 2009 (Neves, 2019). In August 2021, Xinhua initiated a cooperation agreement with the state-owned TV Pernambuco. This partnership involves the exchange of information between the two news outlets and transfers of technology from Xinhua News to TV Pernambuco (*Diario de Pernambuco*, 2021), representing obvious *soft power* gains for China. As mentioned earlier, the growth of the Chinese community in Pernambuco resulted in the opening of a Chinese consulate in the state's capital, Recife, in the year 2016. This new consulate provides consular services not only in Pernambuco, but to all states of Brazil's Northeast Region (see Appendix A). Furthermore, in April of 2022, the Chinese Consulate in Pernambuco took part in the signing of an agreement for cooperation between the University of Pernambuco and Liaoning University in Shenyang (*Consulado-Geral da República Popular da China em Recife*, 2022). As mentioned on pages 12-13, the building of a Confucius Institute in Pernambuco back in 2013, as well as the more recent news exchange programs between the State of Pernambuco and the PRC, may all have contributed to expedite this process.

"In 2009, China became Brazil's largest trading partner, largest export destination, and second largest source of imports. As China's large enterprises successively invest and build factories in Brazil, China-Brazil economic and trade cooperation has reached a new high. Exchanges and cooperation in the fields of science, technology, education, and culture have also been further deepened." (The Diplomat, 2020)

Although community-based organizations may flourish without support from the government, state-based initiatives may be severely hindered if there is a decrease in the number of expats arriving in the country. State-based initiatives are largely dependent on a country's *hard power* resources (e.g., financing capabilities); community-based initiatives, in turn, merely require the existence of expats in that country. My São Paulo field work described in the Analysis section has confirmed that, naturally, initiatives which combine funds from the state and coordination from the community provide the most solid results. Taking the aforementioned Xinhua News Agency as an example, despite the great geographical distance and cultural barriers between Brazil and the PRC, Xinhua's

strong presence in the Portuguese-speaking world, especially in places such as Pernambuco and São Paulo, the latter where Xinhua signed a collaboration with the state-owned São Paulo-based television channel TV Cultura in September 2021 (UOL, 2021), is most likely a direct result of the large Chinese diaspora community existent in those regions (refer back to the quote by Neves on page 43):

“Xinhua News Agency currently has 180 international offices – therefore surpassing Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France Press (AFP) – with more than 3 thousand correspondents and locally recruited employees, publications in eight languages (Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese, and Japanese), as well as audio, video, and photography programming 24 hours a day (Zhou and Wu 2018; Yang 2018).” (Becard, 2019, pp.4-5)

Beyond schools and language centers, the PRC is now finally beginning to draft sweeping projects for the consolidation of its cultural *soft power* throughout Brazilian society. Building on long consolidated state-based initiatives, such as the construction of the first Confucius Institute back in 2008, and most importantly, founded on the work of community-based initiatives from the PRC’s now flourishing diaspora community, such as the establishment of the CHINBRA language institute in 2003 and the renovation of the São Bento school back in 2007, China now has the means to showcase the success of its economic model to the Brazilian populace.

In the neighborhood surrounding the São Bento school, where approximately 100,000 members of the PRC diaspora community currently reside, Ibrachina, in association with 50 other PRC diaspora community-based initiatives, is planning to invest in a R\$150,000,000 (approximately US\$ 30,000,000) project for the creation of a *Chinatown* in the central region of the city of São Paulo. The objective is to turn one of the city’s most decadent and run-down areas into a prosperous new district laden with museums and technological centers (O Globo, 2020). Such initiative, which plans to lay its cornerstone in the year 2024 in commemoration of the 50 years of diplomatic relations between Brazil and the PRC, has already caught the attention of the government of the PRC (which has shown interest in donating *paifang*-style entrance arches) and of the

local Chinese business community (Ibid.). The project, currently being discussed by São Paulo's City Council, has run into a barrage of criticism as it may be perceived as benefiting only a specific area of the city and serving exclusively the interests of the Chinese business community (Ibid). Although São Paulo's City Council does indeed have larger and more important urbanistic plans at present, the enthusiasm and funding for this project far exceed that of any comparable urban project. In fact, the leadership of Ibrachina currently wishes to streamline the project so that public works may begin before 2024.



Figure 16. Chinatown São Paulo - Artist's conception (Source: O Globo, 2020)

As explained by Silva, due to the prosperity of the Chinese people being interpreted as the prosperity of China itself (Silva, 2018, p.235), the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO) has been growing increasingly supportive of *soft power* initiatives at home and abroad, hoping that the Chinese diaspora community may eventually choose to invest in the PRC itself (Silva, 2018, p.235). As an unfortunate result of this perceived wealth, assaults and robberies on members of the Chinese diaspora community and their

property throughout the city of São Paulo have seen a substantial increase since the year 2015 (Ibid., p.238). As noted by Verás, due to Chinese migration to Brazil since the early 19th century having been divided throughout intermittent time periods and having included immigrants spanning disparate regions of China and Taiwan (see Figure 17), and also due to Brazil's humongous size and the subsequent scattering of the Chinese diaspora throughout Brazil's different regions, there has never been a large enough concentration of Chinese immigrants for the formation of regional *Chinatowns* such as those existent on the West Coast of the United States or in Australia (Verás, 2008, p.242).

Períodos	Origens	Ano e estimativa
1812-1900	Guangdong - Macau	1812 – 1.410 pessoas 1881 – 2.000 pessoas
1910-1949	Zhejiang (Qingtian)	1931 – 820 pessoas 1949 – 1.000 pessoas
1950-1979	Taiwan e países do sudoeste asiático	1959 – 6.748 pessoas 1967 – 17.490 pessoas 1972 – 40.000 pessoas
1980-2016	Guangdong, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Shandong, Anhui, Shanghai, Jiangxi	1984 – 70.000 pessoas 1988 – 100.000 pessoas 1999 – 130.000 pessoas 2012 – 250.000 pessoas*

Figure 17. Cycles of Chinese Migration to Brazil - Periods, Origins, Year and estimate
(Source: Weinong, 2012, p.6, In: Silva, 2018, p.231)

However, with the surge of Chinese immigration since the 1990s and early 2000s, coupled with their overwhelming concentration in the city of São Paulo, such situation is rapidly changing. The Chinatown São Paulo project encompasses the region of Rua 25 de Março (25 de Março Street), which already hosts a large Chinese diaspora community. The region surrounding Rua 25 de Março, which has already seen other Chinese community-based initiatives, such as the renovations to Colégio São Bento in the year 2007 (see page 34), is evidence of an increasingly large and increasingly prosperous Chinese diaspora community in the central region of the city of São Paulo. The direct result of this Chinatown project (if it actually materializes) will most likely be an even larger

surge in Chinese immigration to the city of São Paulo, due to Chinatowns allowing for a greater sense of security and community among the Chinese diaspora. Although Neves correctly states that ‘researches aimed at analysing the Chinese migratory flow from China to Brazil are still scarce’, the conclusions reached by Neves in her study of Chinese immigration to Pernambuco between the years 2016-2018 may most likely also be applied to the immigration dynamics existent in São Paulo.

“Furthermore, in studies focusing on Chinese migration, there are no gaps that meet the criteria that foster this dynamism of migration. For example, the Chinese immigrants that arrive in Brazil are met with supporting mechanisms that enable a cultural and ethnic organization that allows new immigrants to feel supported in the destination country.” (Neves, 2019)

The Chinatown São Paulo project, which was first submitted to the City Council back in 2018, was conceived by Ibrachina’s president Thomas Law’s uncle, Fernando Ou. According to the project’s architect, Sophia Lin, the project’s main setbacks have been related to its difficulties in securing approval from the Department of Urban Planning, which she accuses of being overly bureaucratic and of acting in a political manner (*IG Economia*, 2020). Such a massive urbanistic plan could in fact have far-reaching social and economic ramifications for the city of São Paulo. As may be observed by Figure 7, the State of São Paulo (see Appendix A) is one of the few states in Brazil that shares greater trade with the USA rather than with the PRC. This community-based *soft power* initiative by the Chinese diaspora community may result in concomitant *hard power* gains for the PRC, for according to the president of Ibrachina, Thomas Law, the Chinatown São Paulo project aims not only at creating a Chinese cultural zone, but also a Chinese economic zone (*IG Economia*, 2020). Whereas in the past, Chinatowns in the Anglo-Saxon world often implied social exclusion and racial segregation (*Ibid.*), the São Paulo Chinatown project symbolizes integration and prosperity.

As explained by Marcos de Araújo Silva, an anthropologist specialized in the Chinese diaspora community in Brazil, such an undertaking could lead to an increase in

Chinese migration and an increase in investments by the Chinese business community in the city of São Paulo:

“We know that large enterprises like this undoubtedly involve the socio-cultural sphere. As occurred in other cities around the world, it allows for the creation of new cultural, social and economic ties and the strengthening of the existing ones between Brazil and China.” (IG Economia, 2020) – Translation by Ezra Fischer

Ibrachina also works with the São Paulo City Council for the organization of Chinese cultural activities in Brazil’s largest city, such as a Chinese New Year celebration featuring drones in February 2020 (*Prefeitura de São Paulo*, 2020). However, in spite of this thesis having its focus on culture, it is imperative to note that China’s *soft power* strategy over Brazil does not limit itself to language centers and Chinese New Year celebrations but is rather a multifaceted approach covering several funding and aid programs, such as those occurring within the context of the pandemic.

“China will offer aid to the Brazilian state of Amazonas to help overcome the serious health crisis caused by the lack of oxygen in hospitals to treat patients with COVID-19, Chinese Ambassador to Brazil Yang Wanming said.” (XINHUA, 2021)

Furthermore, it is equally important to mention that such philanthropic initiatives do not limit themselves to the Chinese government. There was a certain degree of support and coordination from Ibrachina for the expediting of the Chinese government’s humanitarian efforts in Brazil’s tropical North Region, helping the Chinese government go through the legal processes necessary for the delivery of 1,700 cylinders of oxygen to the COVID-19 smitten State of Amazonas (*Metrópoles*, 2021).

Chinese community-based initiatives require a reappraisal of how the concept of *soft power* may be applied to the rise of China. These community-based initiatives often receive varying degrees of support from the Chinese government, such as China limiting itself to the donation of the entrance arches in the case of the Chinatown São Paulo Project, up to very large degrees of support and engagement from the Chinese

government, such as in the case of the founding of the CHINBRA language institute back in 2003 (see page 53). However, although the Chinese diaspora certainly serves as a *soft power* mechanism for China, it has thoroughly different characteristics to government-based initiatives. Whereas in China the government manages almost all cultural activities, the Chinese diaspora community is far less subjected to the rules and regulations of the government of the PRC, often blurring the demarcation between state-based initiatives and community-based initiatives.

“The father of soft power, the political scientist Joseph Nye, defined it as emanating largely from society – specifically, cultural, political, and social values. Nye also allowed that a country’s political system and foreign policy could earn respect and thus contribute to its soft power. But this definition is premised on the clear demarcation that exists in democratic societies between state and nonstate spheres. In China, the government manipulates and manages almost all propaganda and cultural activities.” (Foreign Affairs, 2015) [Emphasis mine]

Moreover, the tendency of the foreign media to label PRC cultural activities abroad as a form of propaganda is especially hard to apply to the *case study* of São Paulo, where there is a large degree of integration between the Chinese diaspora community and the Taiwanese diaspora community. For example, the Mandarin language activities at the Chinese Catholic Church of São Paulo, whose membership is approximately 50% Chinese and 50% Taiwanese, receive a large degree of assistance from the Chinese government. Therefore, it would be overly simplistic to state that these funding programs are merely an ‘external propaganda’ tool for the Chinese government, rather than a *soft power* strategy comparable to the public diplomacy employed by Western powers.

“China’s diplomatic and development schemes form just one part of a much broader agenda aimed at enhancing its soft power in media, publishing, education, the arts, sports, and other domains. Nobody knows for sure how much China spends on these activities, but analysts estimate that the annual budget for ‘external propaganda’ runs in

the neighborhood of \$10 billion annually. By contrast, the U.S. Department of State spent \$666 million on public diplomacy in fiscal year 2014.” (Foreign Affairs, 2015)

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Evolving *hard power* relations between Brazil and the PRC have naturally resulted in expressive advances in the *soft power* relations between the two countries. As the PRC grows increasingly more powerful and influential, members of the Chinese diaspora (as well as their descendants) spread across the world are also gaining a new position of prominence. Through this case study conducted in Brazil, it has been possible to note that knowledge and understanding of Chinese language and culture are becoming increasingly important in a country whose economic relationship with the PRC has radically shifted over the past two decades.

Whereas Chinese immigrants to Brazil in the past had to adapt to Brazilian culture and society, China is now slowly imposing its language and customs on Brazilian society. The Brazilian government’s historically tolerant policy toward Chinese immigration (Verás, 2008, p.140), when contrasted with the U.S. Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 or the Australia White Policy (Ibid., p.109), has created a socially integrated and economically stable Chinese diaspora population throughout Brazil that is now finally receiving their due attention and importance.

Although the term *soft power* was first coined without having China in mind, China does most certainly exercise a form of *soft power*, albeit with its own characteristics and wherein the diaspora community play a key role. The strong degree of integration between the Chinese and Taiwanese diaspora communities in Brazil, in addition to the PRC government’s limited control over local Chinese cultural activities, including religious activities, make state-based initiatives and community-based initiatives disparate yet complementary activities. Moreover, the PRC government does not actively differentiate between the Chinese and the Taiwanese diasporas. Notwithstanding, the Hakka community of Brazil (refer to my field studies on page 50) seems to prefer to identify exclusively with the ROC.

Whereas community-based initiatives flourish best where there is a large diaspora population, the Chinese government has invested the most in *soft power* initiatives in the few states of Brazil that still trade more with the U.S. than with China, with the Chinese government going as far as to offer free Mandarin instruction in Brazil's poorest and most U.S.-oriented regions, in addition to creating a Portuguese-language magazine aimed at raising interest about China in Brazil's U.S.-dependent Northeast Region (see Appendix D). Confucius Institutes, which 'have unabashedly served as the global-local keystone for China's commercial, cultural, and linguistic proselytization' (Ding, 2014, p.16), along with the exchange programs they promote between Brazilian and Chinese universities, represent China's desire to attract foreign students to its universities not only from the wealthiest regions of Brazil, but from all regions of Brazil, evidencing the centrality of Confucius Institutes for the spreading of Chinese *soft power* across the globe.

"During the last three decades, as a result of China's dynamic economic growth and ascending international status, not only has China become an international business centre, tourism destination, and cultural lodestone, but China's uptick in soft power is also reflected in China's becoming an increasingly popular host country for international students. According to Nye (2004, p. 45), the political effects of cultural and education exchanges have always received the attention of policymakers. (...) International education exchange is an effective way to project a state's soft power appeal." (Ibid., p.14)

The first Confucius Institute established in the city of São Paulo in November 2008 came in the wake of significant community-based initiatives throughout Brazil's largest city, such as the founding of the CHINBRA language school in 2003 (later elevated by Hanban to a Confucius Institute in 2011) and the renovations to Colégio São Bento by the Chinese diaspora community in 2007. As has become evident from my interviews and fieldwork, the descendants of the Chinese diaspora are inevitably the most dedicated and passionate about the learning and teaching of Chinese language and culture, often being the first stepping stone for the establishment of Chinese state-based language schools and newspapers, thus acting as a bridge between the cultures of Brazil and China. The

city of Recife being an early site for a Confucius Institute, despite its small size and weak economy, demonstrates the importance of a large diaspora community for the raising of interest on Chinese language and culture. As demonstrated on page 59, Confucius Institutes in regions where there is a local native Chinese diaspora population have the option of hiring local teachers rather than require that Hanban bring them all the way from China.

Continuing economic and cultural cooperation between Brazil and China, allowing the Chinese diaspora community in Brazil to benefit and learn from the Chinese government's cultural programs in Brazil, such as Confucius Institutes, as well as the Chinese government being indirectly benefited by the cultural activities organized by the Chinese diaspora community in Brazil, has allowed for major strides in China's *soft power* throughout the region. The Chinese diaspora community's pivotal role in overcoming legal and cultural barriers between the two countries, aided by both state-based as by community-based activities, has been central for the building of closer cultural bonds between Brazil and China in the time period following the year 2008.

"Language teaching and learning activities may play the most important role in cultural communication and people-to-people exchange. The rapid growth of Confucius Institutes in Brazil has made a lot of contribution in this field since 2008 when the first Confucius Institute was jointly established by Hubei University and São Paulo State University." (The Diplomat, 2020) [Emphasis mine]

Chinese migration to Brazil, the establishment of Confucius Institutes throughout the country, and the building of collaboration agreements between Chinese and Brazilian news outlets, are phenomena intimately related to the globalization process and have likewise been severely hindered by obstacles to cultural communication and people-to-people exchange, such as the pandemic (see page 54). On the other hand, in regions of Brazil where there is a large diaspora population, Chinese cultural initiatives have continued to flourish despite a decrease in activities sponsored by the Chinese government. Confucius Institutes as a public diplomacy strategy are dependent on and indissociable from efforts stemming from the overseas Chinese population for the

spreading of their community-based cultural and linguistic activities into the local educational institutions of their host country.

“Such public diplomacy strategy, built on the close cultural and language bonds between overseas Chinese and their motherland, has already made significant headway in entering foreign education institutions, with the CIs targeting foreign universities and colleges and the CCs targeting the secondary and even primary schools.” (Ding, 2014)
[Emphasis mine]

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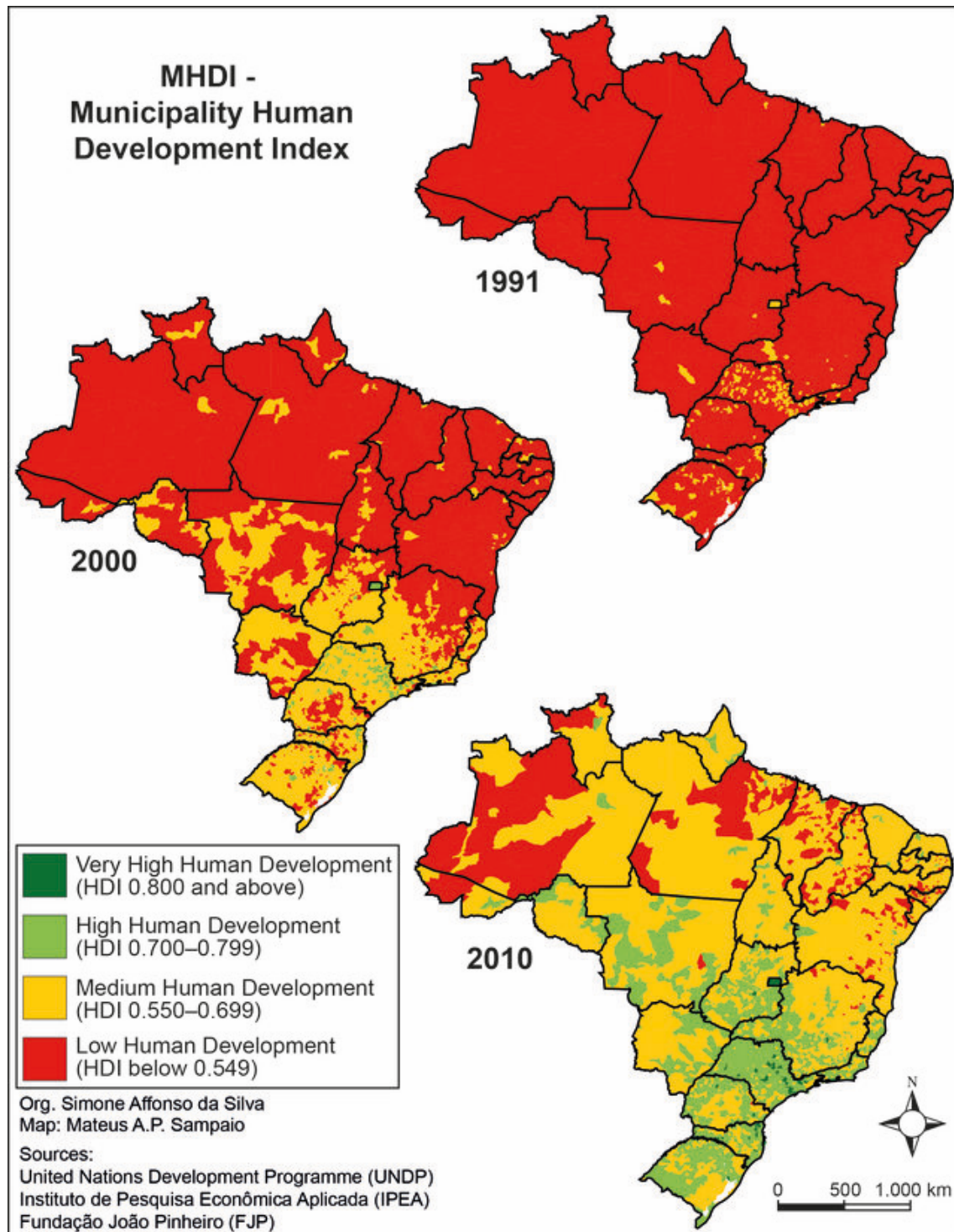
The Economist (2021) 'Joe Biden is determined that China should not displace America', 17 July. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2021/07/17/joe-biden-is-determined-that-china-should-not-displace-america>

Appendix A – States and Regions of Brazil



States and Regions of Brazil - Source: *figshare.com*. Available at:
https://figshare.com/articles/figure/This_map_identifies_the_regions_and_states_that_make_up_Brazil/251301/1

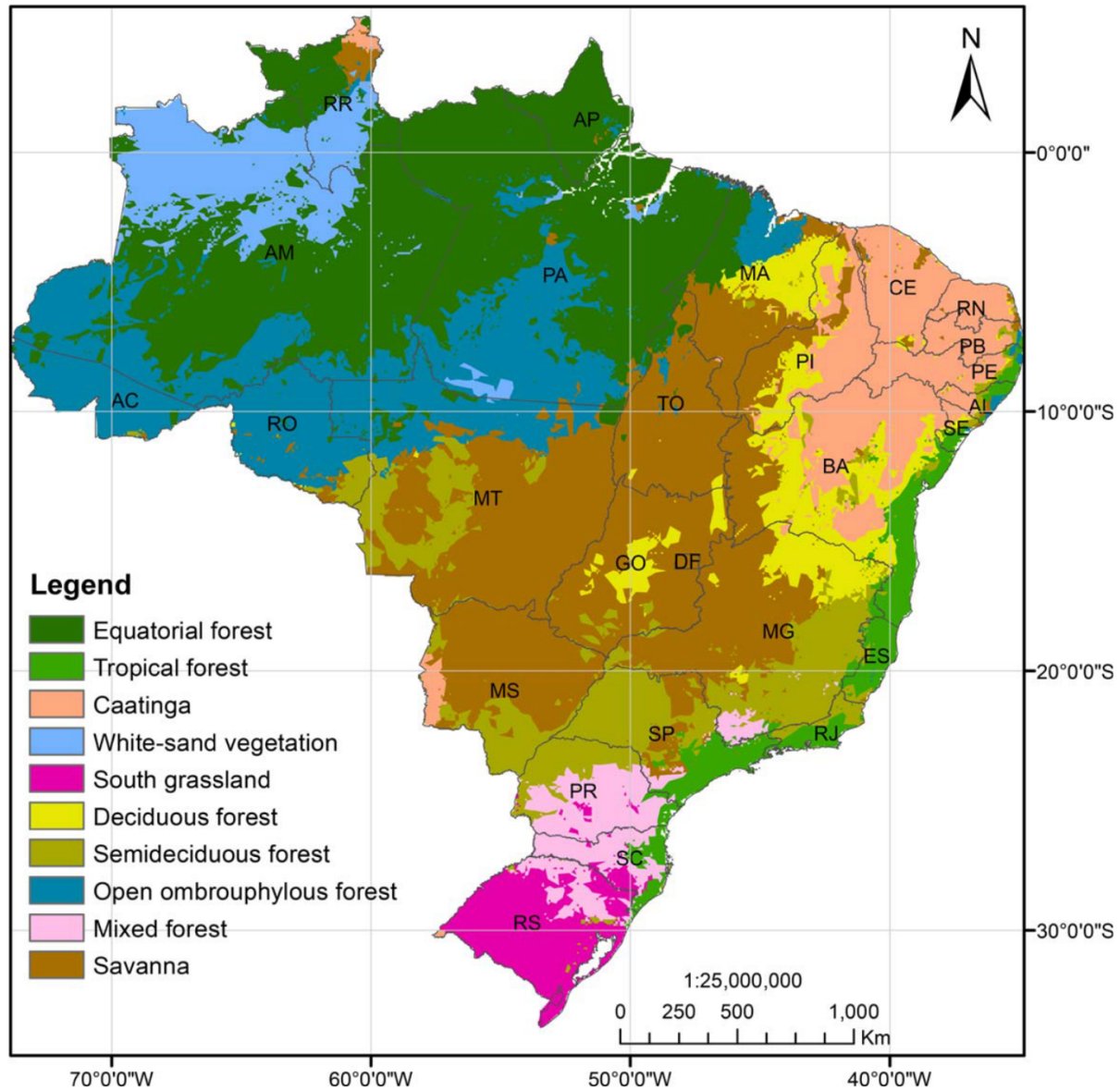
Appendix B – Regions of Brazil by Human Development Index



Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320084774_Regional_Inequalities_in_Brazil_Divergent_Readings_on_Their_Origin_and_Public_Policy_Design/figures?lo=1

Appendix C – Climates and Biomes of Brazil



Climates and Biomes of Brazil. Source: Arruda et al. (2017), In: *Global Ecology and Biogeography* · October 2017 - Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/DanielArruda2/publication/320351562_Vegetation_cover_of_Brazil_in_the_last_21_ka_New_insights_into_the_Amazonian_refugia_and_Pleistocenec_arc_hypotheses/links/59e68d764585151e545ce194/Vegetation-cover-of-Brazil-in-the-last-21-ka-New-insights-into-the-Amazonian-refugia-and-Pleistocenec-arc-hypotheses.pdf?origin=figuresDialog_download

Appendix D – Main Destination of Brazil's Exports by State - Year 2020



Brazil's exports by state, year 2020. Source: *Inova China Hub*, 2020. Available at:

https://mediaexpl.licdn.com/dms/image/C4D22AQGbneqzSmhJQ/feedshareshrink_800/0/1621390588920?e=1650499200&v=beta&t=TA-oxDcX3tSKRy00-7pa3Eh7hcMT7TtjwyCWvXCIRt4

Appendix E – Interview at the Confucius Institute at FAAP – April 20th, 2022

Anna Pesce is the Coordinator at the FAAP Business Confucius Institute.

Xiaoshu Zhu is the Chinese Director at the Confucius Institute.

(Recording begins)

Pesce: Our Confucius Institute is an agreement between universities. We have universities – higher education institutions – in our case we have a headquarters, like all the other Confucius Institutes, and we have two institutions, two universities. One is the local university, like us, here from São Paulo, and the other one is another university over there in China, in our case it is UEBE - University of International Business and Economics. So we have a partnership with them, you know, so that we set up the Confucius Institute.

And I saw that one question that you wrote and sent me via e-mail is why we have two Confucius Institutes in the same city, right?

Fischer: Correct, that is part of my qualitative research.

Pesce: So, actually, we cannot have two Confucius Institutes in the same city, ok. But here, we have two reasons, why we have the Confucius Institute here, at UNESP, for example. The first one is that São Paulo is a really big city, so, we cannot have more people. And the other one, that is maybe more important, our focus is a little bit different, because they are a Confucius Institute in general, with a cultural focus, and our Confucius Institute is a Business Confucius Institute, so our focus is on business, you know, so we have both Chinese language and we have courses about business Chinese language, and we offer cultural workshops, and at the same time we have business workshops, and we organize side training in companies, you know like we offer, also, our class in company, we send our professor to the company to deliver classes over there. So our focus is a little bit different, so, the headquarters at the time agreed with this decision.

Fischer: So, you said send teachers companies. I also understand you have a 25% discount for the Brazilian Military.

Pesce: Yes. And also for our students we offer a 10% discount for the courses. And we have other partnerships with other universities, like FACENS in Sorocaba, you know? So we offer this 10% also for their students, employees, and professors, etc.

Fischer: It has a business focus, Chinese language, Business Chinese language, cultural workshops, and you send teachers to companies, 25% discount for the Brazilian military, 10% discount to other universities..

Pesce: Yes.

Zhu: I can also add something to what my colleague just said. Our Confucius Institute is a Business Confucius Institute. It is also special in the sense that the partner university in China is called University of International Business and Economics, that's where I worked before I was sent here as the Chinese Director. And, for example, I myself, I specialize in intercultural communication. In fact I did my PhD in Germany and my major was Intercultural Communication. And, here, the local director, Lourdes, Lourdes Zilberberg, she has her PhD in International Relations. And Anna, my colleague here, she studied Chinese as a foreign language, and her focus is also intercultural communication. So, all the three of us here are sort of specialists in intercultural communication and related fields.

Pesce: And we also delivered training, you know, intercultural communication training in companies.

Zhu: Yes. Before the pandemic we actually went to several companies to conduct outside intercultural communication training, for the employees in different companies. Only the pandemic has stopped us from doing it, and we are thinking of resuming when the situation allows.

Fischer: Intercultural communication workshops in companies.

Pesce: Yes.

Zhu: Right.

Fischer: Anything more regarding the activities?

Pesce: We organize expositions, photography and art expositions, in partnership with MAB, which is the FAAP museum. And we also organize other kinds of cultural events in the FAAP theater. Once a year we host a show, a cultural show, in FAAP theater.

Zhu: And also different kinds of exhibitions. For example, the one we did, China's ancient water system.

Pesce: If you want, you can have a look on our website. We have a page 'Aconteceu', this one (points to computer monitor screen), and here we have all the events that we already hosted, already organized, in the past. This one is a virtual art exposition that we organized in partnership with the Chinese Consulate, and also with the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Cultural and Tourism. The exhibition was on Liangzhu culture. And, actually, we celebrate every Chinese celebration, you know, so,

Zhu: The Dragon Boat festival.

Pesce: The Dragon Boat festival, which is in June. The Chinese New Year. The Moon Festival. Also the Immigration Day, which is the in August 15th, the Confucius Institute Day, and today is the International Chinese Language Day!

Zhu: Right! Quite a good coincidence.

Pesce: If you want, I can send you our website link, and you can have a look. During the pandemic period we organized a lot of online events on YouTube. Also for example, for the Chinese New Year, here, we called this MasterChef, Jiang Pu, which is a MasterChef, I don't if she won or not, or if she was a finalist in the program, the TV program, she came here, and we have a very good TV department, TV and radio department. So, we have a huge structure and equipment to organize this kind of online event or TV program and so on, so we can count on their help to organize this kind of program.

We launched a book here, which is, this is a Brazilian poet, and, he wrote a book, and he has to translate this book in Chinese. So we launched this book, 'Tempo Obtuso', and we also work very closely to Ibrachina, which is another institution, I think more recent institution, but we have a good partnership with them.

Fischer: Anything more about Ibrachina?

Zhu: Ibrachina is like an association for enterprises of Brazil and China, they act as sort of a bridge, and we are in close cooperation with each other, in the sense that this Thomas Law, which is the president of this association, is a Brazilian-born Chinese. He doesn't speak much Chinese himself, but he is of Chinese origin. He is also a graduate of FAAP and he gives us his full support whenever we need him. And also, when he has to organize any event our Confucius will be there and provide whatever he needs.

Fischer: That's very important, because basically my thesis is about how government-based initiatives and community-based initiatives sometimes interact.

Pesce: I think that maybe it would be good to talk to them. Because it is this kind of organization.

Fischer: And Chinatown São Paulo project?

Pesce: Yes, exactly! They are organizing this project, they are leading this project. So, that's very good if you can have an interview with them.

Fischer: Ibrachina is a community-based initiative. The other community-based initiatives that I have researched so far are the CHINBRA Language Institute, founded back in 2003, and the renovations at Colégio São Bento, back in 2007.

Pesce: Oh! Yes! Do you know Colégio São Bento? Do you know the director? Would you be interested in talking with him? Because we have a strong partnership with them.

Padre (Priest) Lucas is the director of the Colégio São Bento. Maybe I could contact him and see if he has time to talk with you. He is a nice person!

Fischer: That would be wonderful.

Zhu: He is Chinese. But he has been here for many years, and he speaks Portuguese like a native Brazilian.

Pesce: Yes.

Fischer: Interesting. This is very important for my thesis about community-based initiatives like Colégio São Bento and Ibrachina, how they communicate with government initiatives.

Pesce: We organize, together with Ibrachina, we organized, some actions, you know. For example, here in 2019, we organized together a Chinese New Year, which is here in FAAP, and we called an amazing *Olodum* group, from Bahia, and the Lion Dance, together. So, this event was really, really good. This year we worked directly with Ibrachina.

Oh, and also for Carnival, we organized also an event, together with Ibrachina, *Unidos da Vila Maria*, which is a Samba school. It was in the year 2020, just before the pandemic. *Unidos da Vila Maria*, which is a Samba school, decided that the topic of the presentations that year, would be China. So, we work a lot together, because they didn't know so much about China, so they came here, we helped them with the content, you know? With the symbolics, you know? We informed them about a lot of content about China. And it was a partnership...

Zhu: And for Carnival of 2020, I actually contacted Hanban back then, because we need to find the resources on China.

Pesce: We contacted our headquarters to help. To send out some funds, you know?

Fischer: In 2022 you had the Chinese New Year with like the drones?

Pesce: No, that was Ibrachina's New Year, with the drones.

Fischer: And it was officially published by *Prefeitura de São Paulo* (São Paulo's City Council).

Pesce: Yes.

Fischer: So, Chinese, my point, Chinese Diaspora community helps communicate with the Brazilian government to organize these initiatives. Thomas Law, he's a lawyer and all, he helps go through the legal processes necessary for the organization of these events.

Pesce: Because, who organized the drone event was Ibrachina. Ibrachina is an institution which is a bridge, you know, so, maybe yes.

Fischer: I understand that, also, when the Chinese government donated 1,700 cylinders of oxygen to Manaus, Thomas Law went through the legal processes necessary. What I mean is that Ibrachina helps sometimes go through the legal paperwork of bringing Chinese initiatives to Brazil.

Pesce: I don't know, you should ask them.

Fischer: I hope that I'll get an interview eventually.

Pesce: It would be great for your thesis. What else? Oh, actually, we worked together also with the, we have here at FAAP a department called *FAAP Social* which helps poor communities, and we organize some donations and some events for these kinds of people. This year, for Chinese New Year, we organized an action with them, and we went together to an NGO, and we organized an event for children. We launched a book for children, which is about Chinese Lantern Festival, and we organized this event. Very, very good event! We had the Lion and Dragon dance, and we had online *tai chi* and on campus *tai chi*. It was great! We organized also a storytelling about the book that we launched.

Fischer: It's a book about Chinese language?

Pesce: This book is a story about Chinese Lantern Festival.

Fischer: Chinese Lantern Festival...FAAP Social?

Pesce: Correct. So, sometimes we organize this kind of event.

Fischer: So, I think when it comes to qualitative data, that's enough. Could you go maybe to a bit of quantitative data? Like, how many students do you have, how many teachers do you have?

Pesce: Ok.

Zhu: Last year our resident service student was 502.

Fischer: 502?

Zhu: Last year.

Fischer: 2021?

Zhu: We don't have many teachers at the moment. We have two teachers sent from China. I myself am sent by the University of International Business and Economics, as the Director. That's all we have, the Chinese staff.

Fischer: So two teachers, plus you?

Zhu: Only two teachers. And one of them, one teacher, just arrived, two weeks ago. So, last year, we only had one teacher.

Pesce: Actually, we have four teachers. Two teachers, a Director from China sent by our headquarters. And then we have other two teachers, which are local teachers, they are native also, but they live here, in Brazil.

Zhu: Native Chinese.

Pesce: Yes, native Chinese. And then we have a Chinese Director, Mrs. Zhu.

Fischer: And you're the coordinator?

Pesce: Yes.

Fischer: So, 6 members of staff?

Pesce: Yes. The Coordinator, two directors: the local one and the Chinese one, and then we have the four teachers.

Fischer: Wait a second. Two teachers from China? Two local teachers?

Zhu: Local teachers. Ana, Local Director Lourdes. And Chinese Director, me. So, we have seven.

Fischer: Two local directors.

Pesce: Which is Lourdes Zilberberg.

Fischer: Two local teachers, that kind of goes to the point of my thesis. According to the study made in 2012 by Associação dos Chineses do Brasil, out of the 250,000 Chinese in Brazil, 180,000 live in São Paulo. More recent statistics say around 300,000 people. Anyways, my point is that places where you have a larger diaspora community, it is easier to find local teachers who are native. That's why I argue that the first Confucius Institute opened in Recife, was because Recife has by far the largest diaspora community in Brazil's Northeast Region. It's only 2% of the diaspora community, but it's still the place in the Northeast with the most, hence the opening of a PRC Consulate in 2016.

The Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO) wants the Chinese diaspora to eventually invest in the People's Republic, hence they've started a magazine at the Chinese Consulate in Recife that covers all economic affairs in the Northeast Region. I just found it interesting that they chose Recife and not Salvador, which is the largest city in the Northeast Region. My argument is that when you have larger native communities, it is a bit easier to open language centers, hence in São Paulo, not only because of its size, you have a lot more Confucius Institutes than in any other part of Brazil. Whereas you do have very recently Confucius Institutes in Manaus, Pará, São Luís, and Fortaleza, but that's a very recent phenomenon. The logical place to start was UNESP in 2008 because it's the largest city and has the most Chinese people.

Zhu: Do you have any idea of how many Confucius Institutes there are in total in Brazil?

Fischer: Oh! I have it written down some place. (*Reads from list*) UNESP, FAAP, UNICAMP, UFRGS, UFMG, UPE, UFG, PUC-Rio, UnB, UFC, UFPA.

Zhu: How many?

Fischer: 11.

Zhu: That is correct.

Fischer: But it's a complicated statistic, because UNESP has 13.

Zhu: Some have Confucius Classrooms.

Pesce: As Institutions, we have 11. As obviously, UNESP is a huge university, it has a lot of campi. So, we have Confucius Classrooms, and so on. But as institutions, 11.

Fischer: I understand. You have a campus in Ribeirão Preto and São José dos Campos.

Pesce: Yes.

Fischer: As you mentioned, UNESP has multiple campi. It is similar to?

Pesce: Before we had a Chinese professor over there.

Fischer: Where, Ribeirão Preto?

Zhu: Yes, Ribeirão Preto.

Pesce: So, she used to deliver classes over there, and so on. But now, because we have fewer teachers right now because of the pandemic, we don't have a professor over there.

Fischer: It's online?

Pesce: Yes, because we developed an online, a Business Chinese online.

Zhu: That's the only one of its kind. Not only in Brazil, but also in the whole world. Because it is taught in Portuguese, it teaches Chinese through Portuguese. So, if you have a chance, you can take a look. It is very well organized. It one of our major projects of our Confucius Institute.

Pesce: Also because we have the possibility to spread our course all over Brazil, because it is online. And also it is something new because, as my colleague told, it is a huge project, it is business Chinese language. It is taught in Portuguese. Professors our native, Chinese native. And it is a course which starts from the beginning. So, a lot people ask me whether they need any background knowledge of the language, feeling intimidated by the name of the course 'Business Chinese Language', expecting that it would require significant previous knowledge of the language. We developed this course from zero, from the beginning.

Zhu: We have a total of five levels.

Pesce: Yes, five levels. From beginning to intermediate to advanced.

Fischer: Any comments about the campus in São José dos Campos?

Pesce: São José dos Campos. We used to deliver the online classes. And we always organized some cultural and business events over there, and also in Ribeirão Preto.

Fischer: So it's always been online? You've never had a Chinese professor?

Pesce: Not directly on campus. In São José dos Campos, was always, no, just once we delivered a professor over there, once a week. And then, when we created this online course, so, we used the online course, over there also.

Fischer: It was a Chinese professor? I mean, was he from China?

Pesce: Yes.

Fischer: And, in Ribeirão Preto, it was permanent?

Pesce: For a while. For a while it was permanent, the professor over there. And then the professor went back to China, and at the same time, the new course was ready, so we didn't send another professor over there.

Fischer: Okay, so. Permanent professor, pandemic, and you haven't send another one there, that's what you said?

Pesce: Sorry?

Fischer: You said that, Ribeirão Preto professor was permanent. And since pandemic you haven't send another one?

Pesce: It's not since pandemic, before pandemic. Because every, almost every two to four years, professors from China go back to China, and the headquarters sends us new professors to substitute the professors that go back to China. So, in this period, before the pandemic, I think that already the professor was here for four years, and then went back to China. At the same time, our new course got ready, so, we thought, ok, now we have an online course, so we don't need to send another professor over there to deliver classes because we can use our online course.

Fischer: So it was simultaneous to the institution of the online course?

Pesce: Yes.

Fischer: When I visited UNESP, it wasn't an interview, it was just a visit. Teachers can stay one or two years, and they can extend it to three years.

Pesce: Here they can stay here for one, two years. They can extend it to at most four years.

Fischer: So generally speaking the pandemic has been a disadvantage for the bringing of teachers?

Zhu: It has been a tremendous negative influence on everything. Had it not been for the pandemic, we would have had more Chinese teachers. I mean, teachers sent from China. Because of the pandemic, in China, it was reported that the pandemic situation in Brazil was particularly serious. That has also affected teachers from coming, they believe that it is better, and is safer, to stay inside China than going out of China to any other place in the world, in this particular moment. That's why we don't have enough teachers, or as many teachers as we used to, because of the pandemic.

Pesce: Yes, because, in the past, we used to have more teachers, six or seven teachers, both from China and local teachers. Local teachers we used to have one or two, and the most part was from China. We used to have a lot from China.

Zhu: If I may, I would like to add one more point. That is, I noticed that your Master's degree thesis, you only mentioned that it is important for local Chinese communities and Confucius Institutes to support each other. The point I want to make, or I want to add, is that, in our case, for example, in the case of FAAP, the three of us, I mean, the local Director, Lourdes, Anna, and me, we work together like friends, at least, even as sisters. You know we just feel that we are a small community, in the sense that, Lourdes is from Uruguay, she speaks Spanish, and normally she speaks multiple languages, and she normally speaks Italian with Anna, and Chinese with me, and Portuguese with our

colleagues. And she speaks Chinese to me, and Italian to Anna, and Portuguese to the others, and also Chinese to some other teachers. And I myself, I speak English, Chinese my native tongue, that comes without saying, and Portuguese I understand, people can speak to me in Portuguese, and Spanish, I also sometimes send messages to Lourdes in Spanish. So, you know, I mean, inside a Confucius Institute, if people like us, we are all specialists in intercultural communication, and we know how to cultivate our relationship with each other. You know, this kind of friendship, it is also important.

Pesce: It is a special relation.

Zhu: Yes. I was talking to her this morning. I said, when the time comes for me to go back, I will miss you guys. You know, that's a fantastic feeling. It is a totally different from those Confucius Institutes which people, you know, they feel very much business like, and they communicate only when work requires them to do so. But, in our case, we were having (*inaudible*) together, I cooked something very Chinese for the guys here to taste, and you know, we often do that. We just feel near. I personally cherish this environment; I like my work surroundings. If I could be granted or allowed to work further or longer here, it would be my pleasure. You know, that's the point I want to make, I want you to make, in your thesis. And you can cite my name, if necessary. Because that's something I really feel. I just value this, it's like work and pleasure together.

One more thing! I should definitely mention. Other Confucius Institutes, they are just Confucius Institutes. We do something extra. For example, for three consecutive years, I have been heading a team each year to participate in the world Chinese-Portuguese translation contest, organized by an institution in Macau. You know, I mean that, things like that all help, all facilitate, understanding between members in a Confucius Institute. That's why we have been able to do a better job. And that's why we were allowed, those Confucius Institute in the world, to get the, you know, best Confucius Institute of the Year Award.

Fischer: Which year?

Zhu: That was in 2015.

Fischer: How exactly does the award process work?

Zhu: Before the pandemic, before 2019, each year, Hanban, the headquarters of all Confucius Institutes in the world, would organize such an evaluation campaign at the end of the year to see which ones are the best. We have over 500 Confucius Institutes in the world, you know, maybe including Confucius Classrooms, there would be more than a thousand.

Fischer: I argue that China took a very smart approach toward the Confucius Institutes, because like, the one that you have in Maranhão, that's in partnership with UNESP, the classes are for free. So, I guess that they do kind of use their common sense and try to

make the language learning affordable for people depending on what region of Brazil they come from. And give them opportunity to learn the language whereas they probably wouldn't have the opportunity to learn a foreign language. So, giving free Mandarin instruction to people in Maranhão is a very, very smart idea. I mention how Brazil is very large, has many different regions, economic development, climate, vegetation, etc. And China is taking an economic approach to Brazil that takes in all the different regions, and some regions are agrarian, such as the Central-West Region and North Region, whereas some regions are commercial, such as São Paulo. China takes an economic approach to certain states, such as selling vaccines to specific states, they're also taking a cultural approach to different states, giving affordable language instruction depending on what state you're in, especially to people who can't afford it. Anyways, UNESP in Maranhão all went online because of the pandemic, which strengthens your argument that the pandemic was very, very bad for Confucius Institutes so far.

Zhu: In Chinese we say 'When you are poor, just take care of yourself. When you become rich, it is in your responsibility to spread your wealth with the world'. I like that sentence tremendously. I think China is getting better off with time, so that is what we're doing. I don't believe we are spreading our culture intentionally with Confucius Institutes, but we are sharing our wisdom, our intelligence, our heredity of intercultural aspects with the rest of the world. So, you know, when we were doing the translation, Anna and I, and also some other members, we just love this task, just find it such a word that exactly describes the meaning we are looking for. This kind of thing, we're just for the fun of it, we're just doing it for the fun of it. We're not looking for something else. You know, that's a wonderful feeling, if you can sense what I want to say.

Pesce: In July we have a project, project eight, in celebration of the 10 years of our Confucius Institute here at FAAP, which is maybe something related to the community, because we are going to interview eight people from Chinese immigrant community.

Fischer: Eight people?

Pesce: Yes. Because eight is a symbolic number in Chinese culture. Is something indicating prosperity, luck, and good energy. So we chose this number, which is a symbolic number, so everything is related to this eight number. We have eight people, they show us eight pictures about their lives, they talk about their life and their trajectory here, how was their immigration, how was their life in China, how is their life here in Brazil.

Zhu: Also, eight objects. Also, something like souvenirs. But not the bought ones. I mean the ones they brought from China.

Pesce: Objects of personal significance to them. And then we are going to write a book, a digital one a physical one, and also an exposition, a physical one and a virtual one. We are in partnership with two professors here at FAAP, from the journalism course. And we are keeping on this project. We are a work in progress.

Fischer: Any other points of interest regarding Chinese culture here in São Paulo?

Pesce: Associação de Intercâmbio Cultural e Artístico Tangyun Brasil. You can talk with Rebecca Lin. If you want I can send them a message.

Fischer: Of most importance is that I visit Ibrachina eventually. And Colégio São Bento, of course. Perfect, yes, thank you very much!

Pesce: You are welcome!

Zhu: You are welcome!

(Recording ends)