Soft Power in China

An Historical Analysis

Of the

Notion and Role of Soft Power

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Abstract:

Master Thesis in Development and International Relations

Title: Soft Power in China: An historical analysis of the notion and role of soft power

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This dissertation has analysed two closely related subjects: investigating the notion of soft power and an analysis of soft power's role in China's foreign policy in the 21st century. The study has used a comparative historical analysis into the idea and use of soft power in Ancient, as well as a contemporary investigation to by whom and how soft power was (re) popularised in the 21st century China, though originally China according to Joseph Nye barely wielded any soft power.

The idea and use of soft power in ancient China formed the dissertations point of departure. Soft power behaviour, historically, was prioritized over that of hard power – first used in the Zhou dynasty (1122-256BC). The uniqueness of Chinese Confucianism derived from after achieving self-sufficiency relying on the power of attraction in form of virtue and self-cultivation of the leaders to maintain peace and prestige, rather than resorting to the use of force. The significant role of soft power in ancient China, epitomized in the concept of "rule by virtue" can arguably also be seen as facing the Middle Kingdoms management challenge, facing numerous neighbours that it was unable or unwilling to conquer.

Taking the dissertations focus in the modern age, the thesis analysed how the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 influenced the (re) popularisation of soft power in the post-cold war period. Furthermore, perspectives showed how China's new international status subsequently ignited the "China threat theories," likewise influencing the understanding and use of soft power in the 1990s.

The dissertation investigated how policy-makers and academics defined and used soft power historically and contemporary as well as how the political situation and development influenced soft powers conceptualisation and role. Using an critical analytical approach, combining neo-gramscinism and constructivism as a reflective theory, this paper has studied by whom and for what purpose soft power was (re) introduced into China in the 1990s.

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Mattias Munk-Petersen

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1.0 Problem Area

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Deng Xiaoping in 1978, believed it could solve all the country's problems by more development. Deng, seen as the architect behind China's modernization in the 21st century, stated "*development is the most important means to solve China's problems (fazhan si ying daoli)*"[1] The challenges were enormous; China had since the opium wars in the 19th century gone through social unrest, destructive division, domestic political violence, civil wars, ideological governance and numerous external and internal wars - effectively destroying its society and economy.[2]China launched its long awaited modernization plan in 1978, focussing on getting rid of the material poverty following the end of the Cultural Revolution. China's economy soon experienced its "take-off" moment, reaching an unprecedented continuous annual growth rates in the double digits, sustaining its economic growth for more than three decades. Subsequently, China successfully entered the world economy being assessed by the international community, especially the developing world, as a "miracle" and "rising great power."

The rise of China has been acclaimed as one of the most significant changes in the turn of the century global relations.[3] It has progressed from an isolated state to a regional power, to a potential great power, capable of exerting much influence not only within the Asian-Pacific region but also increasingly internationally. The world, it seems, is increasingly being swayed by the rise of China.[4] The continued fascination, or "obsession" about the recent transformation in China can be seen in the quotation from Minxin Pei, writing in Foreign Policy: "*The only thing rising faster than China is the hype about China*"[5] In the world of International Relations (IR) concerning the rise of China, the latest of these hypes is about China's soft power. Critics and enthusiasts alike are fascinated or disconcerted by China's rapid influence and assertiveness in global and regional economic development and political affairs.

Originally, Joseph Nye coined soft power, nearly two decades ago to debunk the then popular view that the global status of the US was in decline. He later developed the concept, to detail how the US could make use of its unique strengths, beyond its material assets, to revive and prolong its leadership in world politics. Its subsequent introduction and propagation by Chinese scholars and policy makers alike, introduced something of a dilemma as originally China was never identified as wielding any soft power. Initially, Nye only identified four sources of Chinese soft power, where

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[1] Li, Mingjiang – "*Soft Power*" – chapter 7
[2] Jacques, Martin – "When China Rules the World" – Chapter 1
[3] Lanteigne, Marc, "*Chinese Foreign Policy,*" Page 22
[4] Lizee, Pierre P. "*A Whole New World,*" Page 2
[5] Minxin, Pei, "*The Dark side of China's Rise,*" in Foreign Policy, page 1

two of them can be dismissed instantly: The example of Gao Xinjian winning the nobel prize for literature, who had been officially dismissed by Beijing, and the case of the successful *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, which was a Hollywood Production directed by Ang Lee – a Taiwanese national. Bearing in mind how China and the US also differ in status, means and objectives of their soft power – underlines the dilemma; how soft originally coined to depict how the US could extend its capabilities beyond its material strengths entrenching its position, yet it became popularised and prominent in China – a rising power.[6]

Indigenous Chinese academics argue that foreign observers will need to take China's historical and cultural context into consideration, when analysing its foreign relations. Looking back is an essential means to look forward, and interest in China's history and traditional Chinese thoughts of foreign relations are growing. The popularity of soft power has especially been tied to the long and extensive use and importance of soft power in China's history of foreign relations and culture, especially compared to that of the West. Thus, while Europe was busy using force and religion to impose its force upon other countries, China already had made soft power a central element in its external relations. Likewise, it is argued that soft power is a core element in Chinese culture and philosophy as witnessed for example in Confucianism.

The majority of literature on Chinese soft power is dominated by an excessive search for threats to Western dominance. Yet, while numerous scholars, both sinologists and indigenous scholars have covered the "rise" of Chinese soft power in the 21st century and the challenge it poses to the established powers, the internal Chinese conceptualisation of soft power has so forth remained a much less debated subject.

In China, the soft power discussion among policy makers and academics has evolved in the previous decade. It has shifted towards a more comprehensive and sophisticated review of Nye's definition of soft power. Likewise, Beijing has progressively applied the concept of soft power, in diplomatic language and initiatives, such as in the "Peaceful Rise and "Harmonious World." Millions of references, discussions, analyses and publication on China's soft power, can be found on the Chinese search engine (Baidu), and in Chinese literature.[7] The soft power theory is far from the first American centred and coined concept, subsequently popularized in China. But it is unique in how quickly and widely it has spread – both among academics and officials in China. It is also

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[6] Li, Mingjiang – *"Soft Power"* – chapter 3
[7] Li, Mingjiang – *"Soft Power"* – chapter 1

one of the few concepts, where sinologists such as Joshua Kurlansky,[8] have embraced the Chinese conceptualization of soft power in their research of China's external relations. However, a gap of knowledge seems to exist on the internal conceptualization of soft power, in China. How is it understood there, is essentially in our understanding of China's relative soft power in its external relations.

The Chinese conceptualisation is a rich discussion which has significant importance in understanding how Chinese perceive a central concept, which has influenced the studies of IR in the 21st century. Furthermore, it is essential to comprehend the tools and concepts that are developed in a Chinese context, in order to understand their role and application in Beijing's foreign policy.

1.1 Problem Formulation

I have, based on my introduction, narrowed down the problem area which I wish to focus on in this thesis. I will throughout my paper attempt to answer the following problem formulation:

How is the soft power discourse conceptualised in China and what role is it assigned in China's international strategy in the 21st century?

Sub questions:

- How have China's history, society and culture influenced the understanding and popularisation of soft power in contemporary China?

- How have China's position, status and means as a rising power in the international system, influenced the conceptualisation and application of soft power in China?

The thesis's focus is not on disaggregating the Chinese conceptualisation of the soft power discourse as a task in itself – but the emphasis is on investigating how the discourse was popularised, and how it later was used in policy making. The reason for this is twofold: First,

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[8] See for example Joshua Kurlantzick's "*Charm Offensive: How China's soft power is transforming the World*" (2008).

though the internal discussion on the soft power discourse in China has evolved in the previous decade, it is not yet matured. Though, Chinese scholars have presented many interesting arguments and deductions – a general agreement or accord has yet to be reached on what exactly constitutes soft power in a Chinese context. Secondly, my Chinese language skills are not sufficient to analyse publications in Mandarin. Thus, I will have to wait for English translations. A certain delay thereby exists between the original Chinese publication and its translation into English.

2.0 Methodology

This chapter has the function of providing an understanding of the structure and approach of my paper. It will offer an explanation of my choice of sources and data while also presenting my approach (qualitative or quantitative.) Furthermore, it will (in short) go through the theories that will be applied, in this process giving an understanding as to why these theories are relevant to my problem area, ending with a critical perspective of the theoretical framework. Lastly, I will shortly describe how I have limited the projects scope, followed by an short presentation of Nye's original conceptualisation of soft power.

2.1 Philosophical Framework

All scientific research rests on assumptions and principles derived from the ontological and epistemological philosophical foundations, whether it is acknowledged or not by the researcher. The methodology rests on a foundation of ontological and epistemological assumptions, where different philosophical assumptions highlight how and why the approaches to research are different. [9] However, introduced in this paper, is only a simplified account, intended and written to provide a shorter and generalised account of the philosophical framework - hopefully, also enabling the reader to understand the philosophical foundation of IR research to such a level that is necessary in the context of this research paper.

Ontology concerns the issue of what exists or the fundamental nature of reality. When we undertake a study, we are making assumptions about what we will study and its place in the world. Two basic positions within ontology are the realist (interrelated with materialism philosophy) and the nominalist (interrelated with idealism philosophy.) Materialism philosophy posits that reality is the material things around us. Thus, in order to understand our society and world, it is important to

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[9] Neuman, W. Lawrence, "*Social Research Methods*," page 91

study our environmental, physical, economical and historical factors. Human consciousness, in this context, is largely irrelevant. Realism is considered, in principle, a traditional adherent of materialism. Idealism, in contrast, demands that we take seriously the role of ideas in world politics. The world is defined by material and ideational forces. Reality does not exist out there waiting to be discovered; instead, historically produced and culturally bound knowledge enables individuals to construct and give meaning to reality. [10] Constructivism and neo-gramscians are nominally considered adherents of idealism – in one form or another.[11]

Realists see the world as "out there," assuming that the "real world" exists independently of humans and their interpretations of it, to use a cliché: "what you see is what you get." The emphasis is on disassociating themselves from the research process, claiming that human consciousness does not exists or is irrelevant. In order to understand our society and the world, we must study our environmental, physical, economical and historical factors. A subgroup of realism, critical realist, modifies this assumption, claiming that our pre-existing ideas, subjectivity or cultural interpretations influence our contact with reality. A few safeguards or adjustments are therefore needed to control the effects of such interpretations.[12] Summarised, a "hardcore" realist says that we see what exists, and we can easily capture it to produce objective knowledge. A "critical" realist is more cautious - recognizing that subjective-culture interpretations may colour some of our experiences with reality.[13]

The nominalist, in contrast, assumes that humans never directly experience a reality "out there." Our experience or contact with the "real world" is always occurring through a lens or scheme of interpretations and inner subjectivity. Subjective-cultural beliefs influence what we see and how we experience reality. They maintain that we can never entirely remove the interpretive lens. [14] Therefore understanding human consciousness or spiritual forces are essential to understand our society and world. Summarised, a moderate nominalist contends that subjective-cultural factors greatly shape all our experiences with the physical and social world, we can therefore never completely remove such factors. An extreme nominalist would adhere that our basic understanding of every physical-social experience depends heavily on interpretative-cultural factors, the experiences make no sense without these factors and any form of objective knowledge is

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[10] Baylis, John, Steve Smith & Patricia Owens, "*The Globalization of World Politics*," page 155
[11] Presentations of said theories can be found in the "theory presentation" chapter.
[12] Neuman, W. Lawrence, "*Social Research Methods*," page 92
[13] Ibid: 92
[14] Ibid: 92

impossible.[15] This paper posits a hybrid form of realism and nominalism. While realism is clearly interrelated with materialism philosophy, and constructivism with idealism philosophy – the elements of neo-gramscianism that will be used in this paper, more closely relates to that of a mix.[16] I am off course also aware of the potential confusion and problems deriving from such approach.[17]

Epistemology is an area of philosophy concerned with the creation of knowledge. It focuses on how we know what we know or what the most valid way is to reach "truth." How we can learn about the world or know it is rooted in our ontological assumptions. Epistemology includes what we need to produce knowledge and what scientific knowledge looks like once we have produced it. [18]

According to the realist positions we produce knowledge and learn about reality by making careful observations of it. There is an empirical world "out there" that exists apart from our inner thoughts and perceptions of it. We gather empirical evidence to verify some ideas of reality and can in the process also falsify some of our ideas, as they lack supporting empirical evidence. We can distinguish truth from myth and illusion and produce objective knowledge.[19] Positivist theory (interrelated with the realist position) asserts a deterministic and empiricist philosophy, where causes determine effects and aims to directly observe, quantitatively measure and objectively predict relationship between variables. Therefore, personal values and any other factors that potentially can lead to biases are to be carefully removed. Adherents believe and emphasizes in objectivity. An example of a positivist theory, could be drawn from Nye's conceptualisation of soft power in the 1990s. For example, he believed that a number of polls, taking over a longer period of time, would be able to "scientifically" prove, how populations perceived a given country – thus, also "measuring" said country's soft power.[20]

According to the nominalist position, making observations will not lead to knowledge about reality because interpretations and subjective views greatly influence all observations. What we perceive as reality is constructed from the outcome of a constant process of actions and interpretations that take place in particular locations and times. It is impossible to separate an objective "out there" reality from interpretations or effects of the time or place in which it occurs. The best knowledge about the

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[15] Neuman, W. Lawrence, "*Social Reseach Methods*," page 93
[16] Please refer to the later sections of "presentations" for a clarification of the theories applied in this paper.
[17] Please refer to the last section in the "theory presentation" chapter
[18] Neuman, W. Lawrence, "*Social Reseach Methods*," page 93
[19] Ibid: 93
[20] See for example, Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power - The means to Success in World Politics" (2004)

world that can be produced, is offering careful considered interpretations of specific situations in specific settings.[21] Interpretivist theory (interrelated with idealism philosophy) adheres that factors and values cannot be separated. "Understanding" is therefore inevitably prejudiced because it is situated in terms of the individual and the event. Researchers bring their own unique interpretations of the world or constructions of the situation to the research. The researcher will need to be open to the attitudes and values of the participants, thus believing in subjectivity.

The author of this paper neither adheres to an extreme- nominalist nor realist position. Like the work of numerous other scholars, this paper will reflect a position in-between the two extremes – in the area between a moderate nominalist and critical realist. I believe that human consciousness exists, and our experiences or contact with the "real world", to a certain degree, will occur through a lens or scheme of interpretations and inner subjectivity. "Blindly" analysing or measuring variables and a belief in complete objectivity is therefore dismissed. Yet, I do believe that my education, especially my background in history, has taught me to better disassociate myself from the process of analysing or interpreting a given situation. I will maintain that complete objectivity is an illusion, and that subjective-cultural factors necessarily will shape all experiences – to a varying degree – with the physical and social world.

Epistemologically, therefore I will emphasise that each researcher or scholar brings their own unique interpretations of the world or situation to the research. In practice that entails both the sources introduced in this project, as well as my own analysis. It will not be possible to merely aim to observe, measure and objective predict the relationship between different variables. The project will thus mainly rely on the use of the interpretetivst theory, seeking to a greater extent to investigate and analyse with an open mind with regards to the subjective socio-cultural, political and economic factors influencing the popularisation and conceptualisation of soft power in China. Part of my problem area, is likewise based, on the "idea" that as soft power originally was coined by an American, in an American context, it would necessarily also have been influenced by said authors unique interpretations of the world. Likewise, soft powers popularisation and conceptualisation would thus, in the Chinese context also be influenced by the Chinese scholars' unique interpretations of the world.

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[21] Neuman cit. op.: 93

I will to maintain a balance between offering careful considered interpretations and observations of the valid factors surrounding my problem area. The following sections of the methodology chapter will further elaborate on this process as well as my approach to investigate my problem formulation.
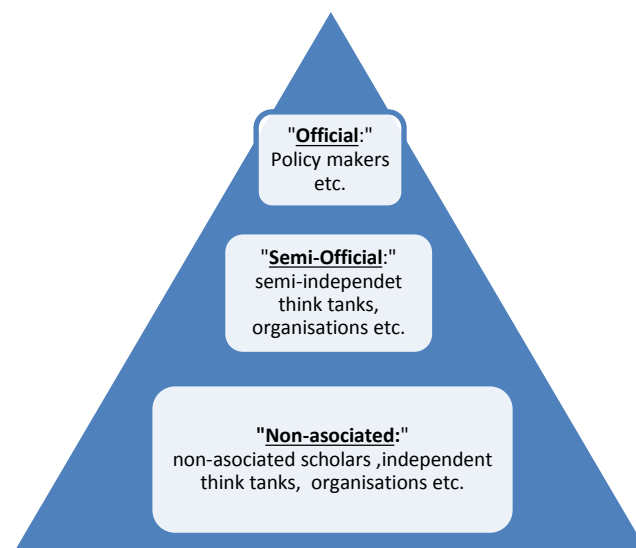
2.2 Approach & Data

A scholar can choose between different methods when approaching his problem area – each with their advantage or disadvantage. Each approach or method departs from a different philosophical foundation – as presented in the previous section. While one approach may emphasize "hard data" in its form of sources – another may focus on "soft" interpretative data. Simplified, two different methods or approaches can be used – e.g. a qualitative or quantitative approach. In this section, I will clarify my approach and methods to investigate my problem formulation while illustrating the types of sources and data that mainly will be employed in this paper.

Chiefly, data for meaning will be used, rather than for example data for measurement. Thus, the data and sources will primary be "complex and rich" data, open to interpretation, instead of numeric data such as statistics. This will include evidence such as books, articles in journals, and news articles as well in smaller degree official and semi-official publications from government departments. As my topic is focused on how soft power has been popularised and conceptualised internally in China, it would be logically to a larger degree to include Chinese sources. I am aware that the very origin of a source does not necessarily indicate definite perceptions towards any given subject, though I believe that by attempting to go "straight to the source" – a more interesting and reliable view into the process, in which soft power has been discussed in China, will be uncovered. However, my access to Chinese sources can at times be limited, due to various factors such as language barriers and government policies, i.e.: censure. I will note that some of my sources, in their very nature can be *more* biased or subjective than others, for instance, when relying on official publications or statements, an investigation into the corresponding political, economic agenda should be included. Due to these prevalent and sometimes radical biases, I will attempt to limit my reliance on such sources.

As a principle a flexible border exists between those defined as academic and those of official nature. A distinction will be made between policy makers and actors influencing the policy making, for example prominent think tanks etc. This paper will primarily be interpreting and analysing publications and statements from three groups of sources internally in China, flexible, characterised

as: "officials," "semi-official," and "non-associated" [22] Examples on the categorisation are: The department of Policy Planning of Ministry of Foreign affairs (official), the China institute of International Studies [23] (Semi-official/Official) – or the Shanghai Institute for International Studies [24] (non-associated). See for example, figure 1.1 [25] for further clarification. Most Chinese newspapers would be defined either as "official" or "semi-official" in this paper, as they are under either a direct enforced, or self-imposed, censorship from Beijing. However, it is to be acknowledged that "non-associated" news sites in China also can be located.

In summary, this generalization is to be judged in a very flexible manner, nominally a case-by-case, or probably more concretely, source-by-source categorization will be conducted. However, the distinctions, will not be noted directly in the paper, but be performed indirectly in my own notes. It is acknowledged, that I could have made far more distinctions, by for instance also including the platforms through which the sources have used for publication. However, due to considerable limitations, I am forced to simplify the process as much as possible.

It is expected that academic sources hold more "objectivity", implying that they have a different sort of status than for example journalists or officials representing their governments or organizations. Due to the nature that an academic article, it being more analytical and objective, a stronger argument can be made using it, as a premise. I will therefore primarily focus on the use of academic sources in my paper, as also depicted on the pyramid (figure 1.1) – where non-associated sources (e.g. including the majority of my academic sources) form the foundation of the pyramid.

In the bibliography and in my references (i.e.:. footnotes), Chinese authors are written with their family name (as for example Western authors), which in Chinese is their first name, for example:

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[22] It is acknowledged that several sub-divisions should be drawn in-side the category of "non-associated" - for example between "sinologists" and Chinese academics – as their socio-cultural contexts, arguably, also has great significance for their "output." However, due to several limitations, such as time, and space, following simplification was chosen.
[23] China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) is the think tank of China's ministry of Foreign Affairs. It conducts research and analysis on a wide range of foreign policy issues. Homepage: www.ciis.org
[24] Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS) is a research organisation for studies of international politics, economy security, strategy and China's external relations. Homepage: www.siis.org.cn
[25] The figure has been based on my own work and categorization.

Zheng, Yongnian (Zheng Yongnian) and Nye, Joseph (Joseph Nye). I have in the paper also used several (doctorate) dissertations and other publications and articles, located at the National Library in Beijing. These will be referred to as "normal" books in the sources, though a distinction will be made in the bibliography at the end of the paper.

Empirical or measurable data will, to a smaller degree, be included combined with a critical analysis. Considering my limited time and resources I will not directly sample any empirical data myself, but will introduce data retrieved from other sources, such as surveys or polls performed by third parties. Upon doing so, I will always maintain a critical perspective; as such data can be manipulated or considered as ephemeral. In introducing critical arguments, I will support and verify my empirical data, as statistics alone will not be adequate. Complex or measurable data will for example be introduced, in analysing the Confucius Institutes.

Summarised, as depicted on the table (1.2)[26] to the right, my approach will primary be that of a qualitative. However, the paper will at times follow some of steps, nominally, localised in a quantitative approach, for example in the potential introduction of data for measurement. The paper will,

Quantitative Approaches	Qualitative Approaches
Ontological assumption: objectivity	Ontological assumption: subjectivity
Epistemological assumption: positivism	Epistemological assumption: interpretivism
Role of researcher: outsider	Role of researcher: insider
Simple numeric data : statistics	Complex rich data: words, texts, descriptions
Data for measurement	Data for meaning
For the purpose of explaining	For the purpose of understanding
Hypothesis Testing	Exploratory

somewhat, differentiate from the quantitative approach, in its ontological and epistemological assumptions in subjectivity and interpretivism. As clarified in the following theoretical sections, realism which nominally departs from my ontological and epistemological assumption will also be applied in this paper.

2.3 Application of Theories
Scholars always have the choice between different theories when operationalizing an academic paper, the results varying, depending on the theories applied, whom, departing from their

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[26] The figure is adapted from Li Xing's lecture, "Introduction two: Philosophies, Terminologies, Paradigms, Methodologies and Methods (2)," conducted at Aalborg University in February, 2013. https://cgs.moodle.aau.dk/mod/resource/view.php?id=5294, retrieved 17.5.2013

epistemological and ontological approaches, highlights or devalues different factors in their application. Off course, the different theories compatibility will differ, and some may be deemed not well-matched. The theoretical framework represents the "skeleton" of the paper and are thus of great importance when conducting the analysis and in the validity of the results presented at the end, which would represent "the meat."

Neo-Gramscianism

In investigating the internal popularisation and definition of soft power in China, the neo-gramscian approach will be used. It will focus on a comprehensive analysis of the historical, political and socio-cultural factors, investigating how the discourse was popularised and conceptualised domestically in China. Antonio Cox's critical approach in combination with constructivism will thus critically analyse the process in which soft power was introduced into China.

Constructivism

Constructivism will be used as a reflective and supplementing theory to the neo-gramscian approach. With its concepts of "power" and "social construction," constructivism will enable a more critical analysis of the context in which soft power was introduced into China. In the spirit of a complementing methodology, it will indirectly be applied as an analytical tool, disaggregating the process in which the social power discourse was "constructed" in China.

Realism

The application of realism will be introduced as an accompanying analysis. With its strengths on analysing state behaviour in the international system, it will focus on explaining how states rationally seek to enhance their power through power politics. Realism will supplement the neo-gramscians focus on the states internal factors. It will in this context concentrate on the policy-making-process, in effect analysing soft power's role in China's foreign politics.

Though, traditionally seen as a paradigm to the gramscian and constructivism approaches, realism is not introduced in its capacity to test the validity or a specific hypothesis on the findings from the internal analysis – but to support a wider scope – on external factors. Furthermore, it is hoped that it

can connect the otherwise more interpretive theoretical focus of the paper, with the "real world" of policy making – broadening the relevance and practical usefulness of the paper.

2.4 Presentation of Theories

Martin Wright, a prominent scholar in the world of IR theories has written the following quotation, which I felt was needed to be included in, its almost, complete form:

The three traditions of IR theory are not like three railroad tracks, running parallel into infinity. They are not philosophically constant and pure like three stately, tranquil and independent streams flowing... They are streams, with eddies and cross-currents, sometimes interlacing and never for long confined to their own river bed. They are, to vary the metaphor, threads interwoven in the tapestry of Western civilization. They both influence and cross-fertilize one another, and they change, although without, I think, losing their inner identity.[27]

Thus, the theories that will be applied in this paper are not considered "global truths" or rigid in their form. However, the theories are still essential in their individual prioritization and understanding of this thesis' problem area and its context. They offer different – and at times – contrasting explanations and investigations into the subject. In the following presentation of my theories, I will only introduce the elements of the theories which are deemed important for my analysis – focussing, in general, on what Wright defines as the "identity" of the theories.

Neo-Gramscianism

For approximately three decades the work and ideas of Antonio Gramsci has been used to understand the practices and workings of international politics, and more recently as an increasingly prominent critical theory within the discipline of IR.[28] Gramsci entered the world of IR mainly, though not exclusively, through the domineering work of Robert Cox – one of the principle figures behind "neo-gramscianism." [29] Both gramscians and neo-gramscians claim to provide a

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[27] Wright, Martin, "*International Theory*," page 260
[28] McNally, Mark and John Schwarzmante, "*Gramsci and Global Politics*," page 19
[29] Ayers, Alison J, "*Gramsci, political economy, and international relations theory*," page 156

methodological critique of the empiricism and positivism that characterise orthodox IR including realism.[30]

Hans Morgenthau, a senior of the dominant realism outlook in IR analysis neatly summarised the realism theories approach as consisting of ascertaining facts - giving them meaning through reason. Realist theory thus, to a large degree, adheres to positivist epistemology. In contrast, gramscians and neo-gramcians are commonly known to use an interpretivistic epistemology. They associate themselves with idealism, insisting upon the constitutive and transformative role of human consciousness.[31] Neo-gramscians belief in that the world of nations has been "made by men," and its guise therefore must be found within the modifications of our own human mind.[32]

Neo-Gramscians claim that knowledge defining standard are conventional – reflecting particular needs and interests, and corresponds to conflicting social and political agendas. The standard that we all deploy is therefore "paradigm specific." Since there is no universal criteria or theory-independent facts by which to assert their relative merits - the different paradigms become impossible to measure.[33] The idea of a theory in itself, divorced from a standpoint in time or space is considered delusional. Therefore, when we analyse different specific interpretations, concepts or theories, we must be guided by the question *"who benefits*?"[34] Neo-gramscian will be used to analyse the context in which soft power has been used and for whom it has been applied in China. In short, the neo-gramscian's approach will be used to critically analyse the context in which soft power was introduced, popularised and conceptualised in China, essentially constituting the theoretical framework of this paper.[35]

Gramsci identified the intellectual process as a creative, practical, yet open-ended and continuous engagement to explain an apparently intractable social reality. The process is therefore a part of the historical process, not excluded from it.[36] In my context, it will thus be essential to explain the historical process, in which soft power has been conceptualised in China. Intellectual work towards social explanation is often directly or indirectly linked to political strategies – themselves developed from different strategies. By linking the theory of knowledge production, to a theory of identity and

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[30] Ibid: 8
[31] McNally, Mark and John Schwarzmante, "*Gramsci and Global Politics*," page 32
[32] Cox, Robert W, in Keohane, R.O. (ed.) "*Neorealism and its critics*," page 242
[33] McNally, Mark and John Schwarzmante, "*Gramsci and Global Politics*," page 35
[34] Ibid: 35
[35] The neogramscian approach will in this paper be used in combination with constructivism, which will be introduced later in this chapter.
[36] Gill, Stephen, (e.d.) "*Gramsci, historical materialism and international relations,"* page 23

interests; *"Theory is always for someone and for some purpose."* [37] From a neo-gramscian perspective, all theories have a perspective; these can derive from a position in social and political time and space.[38] A key implication of this is that there can be no simple separation between facts and values. Consciously or not, all theorists bring values to bear on their analysis.[39]

Gramscian analysis was intended to be applied to a particular historical and political situation, investigating its potentialities without any dogmatic expectations of a particular outcome.[40] This papers investigation and analysis is likewise, intended at keeping an "open conclusion," in that the paper is not aimed at testing any specific hypothesis. When Cox, and later Gil, argued for a broad Gramscian research agenda in IR, they also called for a wider ontological agenda, encompassing the interlinking levels of the economic, political and socio-cultural.[41] With regards to concept formation, our idea of what is or what can be produced conceptual and our conceptual frameworks are partly produced by the environment or society.[42] Neo-gramscians contend that material capabilities, ideas and institutions are always bound together, mutually influencing one another, and not reducible one to the other.[43]

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[37] Cox, Robert, in "*International Relations*" Volume IV, Andrew Linklater (e.d.), page 1539
[38] Linklater, Andrew, (e.d.) "*International Relations*" Volume IV, page 1539
[39] Baylis, John, Steve Smith & Patricia Owens, "*The Globalization of World Politics,*" page 138
[40] McNally, Mark and John Schwarzmante, "*Gramsci and Global Politics,*" page, 15
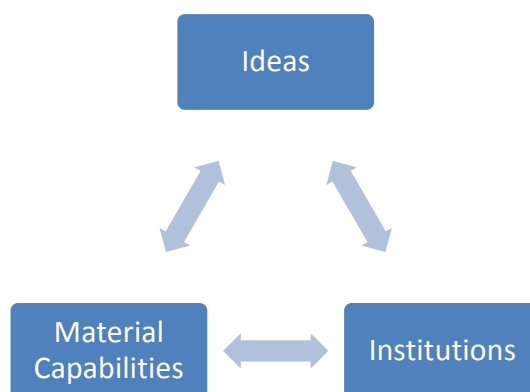[41] Ibid: 28
[42] Gill, Stephen, (e.d.) "*Gramsci, historical materialism and international relations,*" page 28
[43] Ibid: 56

As seen on the figure (1.3) [44] ideas, material capabilities and institutions, taken together, form the existing structure, in this context – that of the soft power discourse. Thus, the analysis will investigate how "ideas, material capabilities and institutions" together formed and influenced each other, in the conceptualisation and popularisation of soft power – in China.

In this context material capabilities is defined in form of value output, for example in the Confucius Institutes. Thus, the focus will be to investigate how soft power has been integrated into Beijing's policies, e.g. how and what value China's soft power has produced. Essentially, it will aim at investigate how successfully (or unsuccessfully) China has integrated soft power into its foreign policy.

Ideas can broadly be divided into two subgroups; intersubjective and collective. Intersubjective meanings, or shared notions of social relations, tend to perpetuate habits and expectations of behaviour. These notions are historical conditioned, making it possible to trace the origins and perhaps detect weakening of some of them, for example in the notion of how to conduct foreign policy. Introducing an historical perspective, this paper will for example show how the use of soft power, in a longer perspective, has dominated China's foreign policy. Collective image of social order is held by different groups of people, differs as both to the nature and the legitimacy of prevailing power relations and can in contrast to intersubjective ideas be several and opposed. For example, in the multiple ideas of what the "right" path to development is - or the multiple definitions of "soft power" that exists among Chinese academics and policy makers. [45]

Institutionalisation is understood as a means of stabilizing and propagating a particular order. Institutions reflect the power relations prevailing, and encourage the formation of collective images consistent with these power relations. In scope of this papers investigation, institutions (e.g. institutionalisation) will be investigated and analysed in combination with the official application of

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[44] Linklater, Andrew, (e.d.) "*International Relations*" Volume IV, page 1550
[45] Linklater, Andrew, (e.d.) "*International Relations*" Volume IV, page 1548

soft power. The conceptualisation of soft power will thus be investigated in relation to how Beijing has introduced and applied soft power in official rhetoric and government policies.

There is a close connection between institutionalisation and what Gramsci defined as "hegemony." The concept of "cultural hegemony" was first put forward by Gramsci in the 1930s. He claimed, that in order to rule the civil society, the ruling class must draw support from intellectuals and cultural institutions to make its ethical, political and cultural values universally accepted codes of conduct.[46] Cox later developed the concept, defining hegemony as how states maintain their influence through consent, and how its character is defined by institutions, ideological- and material conditions.[47]

The rise of neo-gramscianism as a theoretical tool in IR, has added a greater depth to the ways in which gramscian theory is interpreted and applied. Though, the validity and manner of its execution has attracted a great deal of criticism.[48] Ensuing critique has followed those scholars who have applied Gramscians concepts and theories, ever since they became popularised in Thatcher's Britain in the 1980s. It is argued, that Gramsci's original concepts do not travel well, from the national context in which they were first developed, into an international context, which in any case is quite different compared to that of his original writing. Gramsci – who lived in the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, based his theoretical conceptualisation in a world that was ultimately different on almost every level – compared to that of today. Though, Gramsci indeed was aware of the international dimensions of politics, and the spreading of an international or global level of one conception of the world, for example revealed in his definition of hegemony.[49]

The Gramscian approach will be supplemented by Constructivism. It will be applied as a critical reflection, providing a more in-depth and through analysis of the different factors.

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[46] Sheng Ding, "*Soft power and the rise of China,*" page 108
[47] Cox, Robert in, "*International Relations*" Volume IV, Linklater, Andrew, (e.d.), page 1549
[48] Ibid: 19
[49] McNally, Mark and John Schwarzmante, "*Gramsci and Global Politics,*" page 8

Constructivism

Constructivism derives from the 1980s, following a series of critical reactions to mainstream IR theory, namely neo-realism.[50] It differs from the mainstream approaches in its division of "hard facts" and "social constructions." Constructivists believe that there are such things whose existence are dependent on human agreement – and those who are not. "Hard facts," such as rocks, oceans or flowers – exist independently of humans, and would thus continue to exist should humans disappear. However, money, human rights, sovereignty – or as in this context "soft power" – are all social facts, only existing, as long as humans agree on how to categorize or define them – simply put, should humans disappear, so would these concepts.[51] Alexander Wendt adds in his famous quote: "*Anarchy is what states make of it.*"[52] Thus, constructivist's claim, that anarchy – one of the key principles in realism analysis – is actually constructed by humans, unknowingly or not, and is not as realists claim, an "objective truth."

In relation to the context of this thesis, I will claim that "soft power," is a socially constructed concept. Thus, in my analysis, I will investigate how it was constructed, primarily using the neo-gramscian approach in analysing the process of where and to whom it was conceptualised in China. To understand the origin of socially constructed concepts, according to constructivists, requires attention to the interplay between existing ideas and institutions, the political calculations by leaders with ulterior motives.[53] Such analysis will take place in combination with the neo-gramscians approach, emphasised for example in Cox's previously depicted figure.[54] Constructivism will in this project be important in regards to their definition of power. It identifies power as going beyond the material – also being ideational.[55] Effects of power go beyond the ability to change behaviour – for example by coercion or consent. Power also includes how knowledge, the fixing of meaning and construction of identities allocate different rewards and capabilities. For example:

"*If development is defined as per capita income, then some actors, namely states, and some activities, namely industrialisation, are privileged. However, if development is defined as basic*

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[50] Baylis, John, Steve Smith & Patricia Owens, "*The Globalization of World Politics*," page 149
[51] ibid: 149
[52] ibid: 155
[53] ibid: 156
[54] For further information about gramscianism and neo-gramscian pleases see the corresponding section in the "presentation of theories" chapter.
[55] Baylis, John, Steve Smith & Patricia Owens, "*The Globalization of World Politics*," page 157

need, then other actors, namely peasants and women, gain voice, and other activities, namely small-scale agricultural initiatives and cottage industries are visible."[56]

Adhering to the above definition further supports a critical analysis use of the use soft power discourse in China, e.g. supporting the investigation for whom the wider Chinese conceptualisation of soft power benefits. It thereby also supplements and contributes to the neo-gramscian approach used in this paper.

Realism

After the peace in Westphalia in 1648, legitimizing the state system, political realism became the generally accepted conventional wisdom, particular in continental Europe.[57] Typically political realism claims to be the "natural view" of IR, one which arises from ordinary, pre-philosophical and initiative reflections on "the way things are" in world politics.[58] According to this view, theories of IR, are not, mediated by language, mind and value and they do not require the use of "subject related terms," "context" or "practices" – like for example as in Gramscian analysis.[59] Realism is appealing in its applicability to practical problems in IR. It advances analysis and interpretations of actions of those states not simply of their announced policies or on the assumption that they will behave morally, but rather on the premises that they are seeking rationally to increase their power. Martin Wright emphasises: *"It concentrates on the actual, what is, rather than the ideal, or what ought to be; on facts rather than obligations."*[60]

Realism contains three key assumptions:[61]

- States are the key unit of action.
- They seek power as a means to other ends, or as an object in itself.[62]
- They behave in the ways that are, by and large, rational, and therefore comprehensible to outsiders in rational terms.

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[56] Ibid: 157
[57] Robert O. Keohanes (e.d.), *"Neorealism and its critics,"* page 8
[58] Spegele, Roger D. *"Political Realism in International Relations,"* page 14
[59] Ibid: 15
[60] Wright, Martin, *"International Theory"*, page 17
[61] Robert O. Keohanes (e.d.), *"Neorealism and its critics,"* page 7
[62] Neo-realism differs from realism in that they no longer believe that states also can seek power as an object in itself.

Realists still conceptualise IR in the material sense, as consisting of sovereign states in adversary relations with one another,[63] focussing on external power maximising behaviour between the different states. Realists and Neo-realists such as John Mearsheimer, treat the states as "billiard balls;" differentiating in sizes only as they differentiate in their amount of power.[64] Likewise, Kenneth Waltz see states as differentiated in the international system by their power and not their function.[65] Drawing a perspective into the context of this papers focus; soft power was popularised and conceptualised differently in China, than in the US, not because of its different socio-cultural context, ideology or political system, but because China had a different status and means of power and will thus likewise, use and prioritize soft power differently than the US.

The role of power has been – and continues to be central to any theory of realism or neo-realism. How realists define power is therefore very important, however, the individual realists, and neo-realists, define power in quite different ways, and there is therefore no consensus on how *per se* to define power in realism, nor in IR.[66] Neo-realists focus almost exclusive on the fungible power resources, defining power as the combined capability of a state: its distribution across states and changes in that distribution helps to define structures and changes in them.[67] However, realism, or classical realism, also acknowledged the role, or power, of ideational factors. Morgenthau defined power as both material and non-material forces,[68] and both Carr and Morgenthau were sensitive to the role of soft power.[69] Morgenthau argued that focussing solely on the military component of power was a big mistake, as national power is not equivalent to military force. Should a state fail to understand this, and solely focus on militaristic policy it will, according to Morgenthau: *"find itself confronted with the maximum effort of all its competitors to equal or surpass its power."*[70] Morgenthau, also identified nine elements of national power, among which; national character, national moral, the quality of diplomacy and the quality of government were closely associated with intangible sources of power, e.g. what Nye defined as soft power. Pundits, such as Sheng Ding, contends that Morgenthau, like Huntington and Gramsci focus on the coercive aspects of culture, using it as both an explanation and argumentation for their theories.[71] Similarly, Carr has written that power over opinion is no less essential for political purposes than military and economic

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[63] Spegele, Roger D. "*Political Realism in International Relations,*" page 15
[64] Mearsheimer, John J. "*The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,*" page 11
[65] Baylis, John, Steve Smith & Patricia Owens, "*The Globalization of World Politics,*" page 185
[66] Berenskoetter, Felix and M.J. Williams (e.d.) "*Power in World Politics*" p. 43
[67] Linklater, Andrew, "*International Relations"* Volume IV, page 1533
[68] Berenskoetter, Felix and M.J. Williams (e.d.) "*Power in World Politics*" p. 49
[69] Ibid: 50
[70] Ibid: 52
[71] Sheng, Ding "*Soft Power and the Rise of China*" page 110

power.[72] Morgenthau, adds, in regards to the most effective strategy of "conquering" another state, is the use "soft power," rather than that of "hard power:" *State A would not need to threaten or employ military force or use economic pressure in order to achieve its ends; for that end, the subservience of State B to its will, would have already been realized by the persuasiveness of a superior culture and more attractive political philosophy"*[73]

Realists see power as a useful means with states running risks, if they have either too little or too much of it, Morgenthau emphasizes: *"The desire to attain maximum of power is universal."*[74] Calculations about power, dominate how the states in the system thinks and interacts. The competition is characterized by a zero-sum-game, where one actor gains power – resulting in a decrease for another, making it an intense and unforgiving struggle.[75]

In context of this paper, the concept of "zero-sum-game," is applied in connection with a focus on China's soft power, namely culture. Beijing has in the last two decades, increasingly encouraged strategies to promote Chinese culture – in response to what they term as the all-encompassing dominating Western culture – primarily, domestically in China but also internationally. Beijing essentially identifies the "game" as zero-sum, when the West's culture gains influence – China's decreases. Thus, in order to increase its power, China must essentially grow its soft power at the expense of the Wests. Likewise, the rise of China and its emphasis on maximising its hard powers (e.g. economic capabilities) has arguably caused great amounts of concern in the West and among China's neighbours – characterised in the "China threat theories." In the 21st century Beijing has increasingly focussed on enhancing its soft power capabilities – as a mechanism to promote friendly relations with other states, dissuading them from joining "forces" against China. Examples of said strategy could be the "Peaceful Rise Strategy,"[76] the new media initiative, and the establishment of Confucius Institutes worldwide. These initiatives, arguable, constitute elements of a strategy aimed at defusing misunderstanding while improving cooperation.

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[72] Fan, Ying, "*Soft Power,*" page 148
[73] Morgenthau in "*Soft Power and the Rise of China*" by Sheng Ding, page 110
[74] Linklater, Andrew, "*International Relations*" Volume IV, page 1533
[75] Mearsheimer, John J. "*The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,*" page 18
[76] Please see the section "Wielding Soft Power" for further clarification of the "peaceful rise" strategy

Theoretical Framework – Critique

The main dilemma that challenges the paper at this stage is that of the introduced theoretical approaches internal compatibility. How can a scholar possibly argue for the application of, obviously, contradicting paradigms (e.g. neo-gramscianism and constructivism versus realism)? Especially, in consideration of how fundamentally different they see the world, e.g. their different, and opposing ontological and epistemological philosophical approach.

Neo-gramcians and constructivism – as also described in this paper, emerged as critical approaches, to especially realism. All three discourses suffer from, what J. Samuel Barkin defines as the "castle syndrome," in which they are seen as paradigms - in essence being exclusive and self-contained research orientations for the study of IR. It is characterized by their definitional "overstretch," in which they are defined broadly enough, and in such a wide variety of ways, that they threaten to become, what he defines as; *"meaningless descriptions of specific approaches."*[77] Barkin argues, that the discourses should, however, not be perceived as "independent castles" – but as interrelating parts of a matrix, thereby allowing IR scholars to use them more effectively to address their research questions at hand.[78] In combination with only using their "core identity," instead of an all-encompassing paradigm also helps scholars recognizing that no single discourse can provide all the necessary tools to the study of IR. He adds that fundamentally the discourses should be defined by their core concepts and look at the complex ways in which these concepts actually interacts. Barkin contends in *"Realist Constructivism – Rethinking International Relations Theory"* (2010), that constructivism and realism has a lot more in common than nominally assumed.[79] There are even those who suggest that Gramsci in his own writings was more of a "realist" in his analysis of relations between states and that he therefore cannot be enlisted in the ranks of those critical of realism.[80]

This papers theoretical framework can be characterised as a rather unorthodox application of different, nominally seen as contrasting theories and approaches, forming the theoretical framework. In principle, the different theories will be used to analyse dissimilar aspects of my problem area – thus, in effect not focused as opposing approaches but be applied in areas in which their strengths mainly lies as analytical tools of IR. As Wright previously stated, the theories should not be seen as "independent rivers," – but as interconnected, influencing and being influenced by each other -

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[77] Barking, J. Samuel, *"Realist Constructivism,"* Page 154
[78] Ibid: 12
[79] Barking, J. Samuel, *"Realist Constructivism,"* (2010), Cambridge, UK.
[80] McNally, Mark and John Schwarzmante, *"Gramsci and Global Politics,"* page 8

though, still maintaining their "identity."[81] In effect, this paper, will attempt to focus on using the different theories in areas on which their "strengths" are drawn from and their "identity" is founded.

Summarised, neo-gramscians' approach supplemented by constructivism, will primarily be used in investigating and analysing the socio-cultural and historical context in which soft power was popularised and conceptualised, internally in China. Realism will mainly be applied in investigating and analysing how China's status, means and position in the international system influenced the understanding and popularisation of soft power in contemporary China. Furthermore, realism will also investigate the role of soft power in China's foreign politics in the 21st century,

2.5 Limitations & De-limitations

In this paper I will focus on the process in which soft power has been popularised, conceptualized and applied *internally* in China. The emphasis will be on analysing the different factors and actors that has influenced or played a significant contribution in the popularisation and subsequent application of soft power by the Chinese academics and policy makers alike. It will thus not focus *per se* on the product (e.g. how soft power is defined) as much as the very process in which it was conceptualised.[82] As presented in the problem formulation chapter, there is at this point yet any consensus on what soft power specifically can be defined as, nor, as shown in the "central concepts" section is there any consensus among IR theorists how power can be conceptualised or measured.

The paper's point of departure will focus on investigating the historical, political and socio-cultural context, drawing a perspective to the idea and role of soft power in ancient China and Confucianism – China's dominant philosophy for more than two thousand years. Subsequently, the focus will move to how soft power, in China, was perceived and used in the post-cold war period, making a perspective to how external events influenced the internal popularisation and use of soft power. Arguably, an either-or focus, on internal or external factors, would have enabled a more in-depth analysis. However, I aim to provide a more encompassing and comprehensive analysis of all factors – rather than focussing more in-depth on a single cause or factor. Thereby, in my opinion, though not reaching a more detailed analysis, a more complete picture will be accomplished. The time

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[81] Please adhere to the "application of theories" section in the methodology chapter for aforementioned quote.
[82] However, I will offcourse still, shortly and generalised, present how soft power is understood and has been conceptualised in China, as this is in direct relation with the context in which it has been understood.

period will primarily cover the previous three decades, in which soft power has been popularised – reaching a prominent status both among contemporary Chinese academics and policy makers.

I could have the conceptualisation of soft power in America – or the West in general, here a much richer discussion is present and after all it in this context that Nye originally coined soft power. However, I would argue that the popularisation of soft power in China, both among academics and policy makers has been more influential, and its impact has been more pronounced in China than that of the US or West. Besides, the intriguing dilemma – that soft power became popularised in that of a rising power, contrary to Nye's original intention, provides a thought-provoking point of departure for a discussion. The reader should be aware, that due to considerable limitations, this paper will not investigate the role of "hard power resources" though it remains a distinctive priority for Beijing. Thus, this paper will only investigate "one side of the coin" of China's comprehensive national power.[83] Likewise, is it less focused on the effects of soft power, e.g. how successfully or not, Beijing has been in implementing its soft power initiatives and projects. Where deemed necessary perspectives will be drawn – but as Nye originally also mentioned, the effects of soft power are notoriously difficult to measure.

It is acknowledged, that as I have lived in Beijing for almost the entire period while writing my project, from 25th February until 20th May, the very geographic location, both in form of the socio-cultural and political factors, have influenced my writing – sometimes in form of limits, and at other times in form of opportunities. However, the largest constraint, as always when producing a paper, has been the limited time and space.

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[83] Comprehensive National Power (Zonghe Guoli) is a acknowledged measure important in contemporary political thought of the PRC indicating the general power of a nation state. It can be calculated numerically by combining various quantitative indices, including both military and economic factors (hard power) as well as cultural factors (soft power). It is known for a being a original Chinese political concepts with no roots in contemporary Western political theory.

2.6 Soft Power, Nye's definition

Defining Power

Before starting any discussion of soft power, it seems necessary to clarify the most basic question, which I already slightly touched when presenting the realism theory – what is and how do we define "power"? Diving into this topic, reveals that numerous books has been written on the subject – and that there is no consensus yet on this matter. Power is essentially a contested concept with "*different interpretations held together more by a family resemblance than a core meaning*"[84] However, as Felix Berenskoetter adds in "*Power in World Politics*" (2007) the meaning we choose determines which relations we consider relevant - in short it directly influences how we conceptualise "world politics."[85] In the context of this paper, my definition of power is primarily influenced by Nye's conceptualisation, presented in his book: "*Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*" (2004).

Nye defines power as the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes that you want. He identifies several approaches: "*You can coerce them with threats, induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want.*"[86] The first two approaches are classified as classical hard power, while the last two as soft power elements. Soft power is juxtaposed with hard power – which historically has been the predominant realist measure of national power.[87] Power is defined as a relationship between an agent and a subject of power - the relationship is thus bound to vary concerning the specific situation. Expressive statement about power much always specify the context which the resources may (or may not) be converted into behaviour. Thus, Nye contends – we cannot say that any given actor "have power" without specifying "to do what."[88]

In general a basic distinction can be drawn between behavioural power, the ability to obtain the outcomes you want, and power resources, the possession of certain resources that are usually associated with the ability to reach outcomes you want.[89]

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[84] Berenskoetter, Felix and M.J. Williams (e.d.) "*Power in world politics*" page 1
[85] Ibid: 1
[86] Nye, Joseph S, "*The future of power,*" page 21
[87] Nye, Joseph S. - "*Soft Power*"- page 1
[88] Nye, Joseph S, "*The Future Of Power*," page 6
[89] Ibid: 21

Defining Soft Power

The idea "soft power" derives from the works of Hans J. Morgenthau, Klaus Knorr, and Ray Cline in the 19th century.[90] It was formulated and coined by Joseph S. Nye Jr. in his book: *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power (*1990*)*. He developed the concept further in "*Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics (*2004,*)*" whereupon he also coined the "smart power" concept further conceptualising it in "*The Future of Power*" (2011.)

As a descriptive concept, soft power explains a state's ability to influence the behaviour or interests of others through a range of methods. In this sense, the concept of soft power is distinguished from the conventional understanding of power, normally focussing on military or economic inducement and coercion.[91] Originally, Nye conceptualised soft power, as a reaction to the declininst theories becoming popularised in the 1980s. Their central claim was that US policies during the Cold War had reached a point of overstretch, the costs of which undermining US power. Nye was one of the scholars whom engaged these critics, in the process conceptualising soft power. One of the arguments raised by Nye was that the declinists were unable to deal with the changes of US power through the "new" international system. In his view, they focused solely on what he defined as "hard power," (e.g. economic and military capabilities) thus, not recognizing the second characteristic of US power (e.g. its soft power).[92]

Nye contended that the changes in the international system, due to globalization and the development of the information society, changed the distribution of power in the modern world. Thus, he claims that the distribution of power in the contemporary international system resembles a three dimensional chessboard:[93]

- **The Top** chessboard**,** is characterised by military power in a unipolar system, dominated by a supreme United States

- **The Middle** chessboard: is characterised by economic power, and has been multipolar for more than a decade, with US, Europe, Japan and China as the major actors, and others gaining in importance.

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[90] As noted in the realism chapter and in Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power*," page 2
[91] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vechicle for Disseminating Soft Power*," page 2
[92] Parmar, Inderjeet and Michael Cox "*Soft power and US foreign policy*," page 13
[93] Nye, Joseph S, "*The Future of Power,*" page xv

- **The Bottom** chessboard is a realm of transnational relations that cross borders outside of government control. It includes non-state actors and transnational challenges. Power at this board is widely diffused.

Nye contends that where hard power resources can be effective in the military and economic sphere, only soft power can work at the transnational level.[94] He has consistently argued that soft power, primarily, rests on three resources; (1) culture, in places where it is attractive to others, (2) political values, where it lives up to them at home and abroad, and (3) foreign policies, when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority."[95] He measures their capability in the extent as they are able to attract or repel other actors to "*want what you want.*"[96] Furthermore, he adds that soft power can be used both for zero-sum and positive-sum interactions.[97]

Nye, in responding to critics that soft power, according to some, had started to seem to mean everything, argues that many types of <u>resources</u> can contribute to soft power. However that does not imply that soft power is any type of behaviour. In general, the types of resources associated with hard power include tangibles, such as force of money. On the contrary, soft power is *typically* associated with intangible factors such as institutions, ideas, values, culture and the perceived legitimacy of policies. In general it depends on the subject, i.e.. the receivers, perception, in whether a given resource produces hard or soft power behaviour.[98] Nye, as an example, argues that China's successful economic performance has produced both hard power, in terms of sanctions and restricted market access, as well as soft power in terms of attraction and emulation of success.[99]

Summarised, Nye argues that soft power is pull, whereas hard power is push, defining soft power as: ..."*the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes*"[100] The figure (1.4) is based on Nye's previous makings.[101] It depicts a representation of the spectrum of power behaviours, ranging from "coercin

Command → *(Hard Power)*	Coerce	Threat	Pay	Sanction	Frame	Persuade	**← Co-opt** *(Soft Power)*

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[94] Parmar, Inderjeet and Michael Cox "*Soft power and US foreign policy,*" page 15
[95] Nye, Joseph S, "*Soft Power,*" page 11
[96] Ibid: 31
[97] Nye, Joseph S, "*The Future of Power,*" page 90
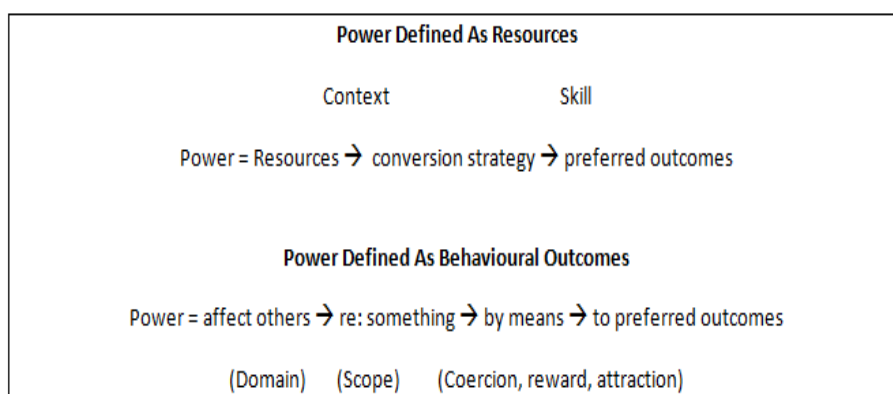[98] Nye, Joseph S, "*The Future of Power,*" page 21
[99] Ibid: 22
[100] Ibid: 21
[101] Ibid: 21

g" to "persuasion" – e.g. from hard power to soft power. In general, he defines soft power as the ability to attract, in the form of positive attraction in the sense of alluring,[102] – arguing that such attraction often leads to acquiescence (e.g. co-option).[103]

Nye differentiates between what he defines as power *resources*, as the tangible and intangible raw materials or vehicles underlining power relationship, and power *behaviour*, as whether a

Power Defined As Resources

Context   Skill

Power = Resources → conversion strategy → preferred outcomes

Power Defined As Behavioural Outcomes

Power = affect others → re: something → by means → to preferred outcomes

(Domain)   (Scope)   (Coercion, reward, attraction)

given set of resources can produce the preferred outcomes or not, depending on the behaviour in said context. The figure (1.5) based on Nye's work,[104] illustrates and compares power as a resources and power as behavioural outcomes. In practice, many of the terms that are used such as "military power" or "economic power," are hybrids – combining both resources and behaviours.[105] Nye emphasises, that even though, many types of *resources* can contribute to soft power, does not mean that soft power is any type of *behaviour*. He adds, that having the resources of power, does not guarantee that you will always get the outcome you seek or want. Thus, power conversion, getting from resources to behavioural outcomes, is a crucial intervening variable. Converting the resources, according to Nye, into realized power in the sense of obtaining desired outcomes will require well-designed strategies among other things. Essentially, this process is what Nye defines as smart power.[106]

Nye coined "smart power" in 2004, to counter the misperception that soft power alone could produce an effective foreign policy. He defines smart power as the ability to combine hard and soft power resources into effective strategies.[107] He draws a perspective to how China, as a rising power in economic and military resources, deliberately has decided to invest in soft power resources, as to make its hard power look less threatening. Unlike soft power, smart power is an evaluative, as well

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[102] Ibid: 92
[103] Nye, Joseph S, "*Soft Power*" page 6
[104] Nye, Joseph S, "*The Future of Power,*" page 10
[105] Ibid: 9
[106] Ibid: 8
[107] Ibid: 22

as descriptive concept – attempting to address the core of the problem of power conversion.[108] Summarising, he contends that smart power is about finding ways to combine resources into successful strategies.[109]

3.0 Soft Power in Ancient China

The idea of soft power has for over two millennia been consistently advocated and comprehensively utilized by ancient Chinese elites. Thus, it is possible to find the idea of soft power in China's ancient philosophies, culture and in its conduct of foreign policy throughout history. This chapter will focus on investigating the idea of soft power in Confucianism, China's dominant ideology for more than two thousand years, and subsequently look at soft powers role in ancient China. Thus, the chapter will primarily look at how China's culture, society and history influenced the subsequently popularisation and conceptualisation in the contemporary China.

3.1 The Soft Power Idea

Chinese history, in authentic written records, can be traced back to more than three thousand years, and archaeological evidence gives an even longer perspective – tracing ancient Chinese culture to around five thousand B.C. Even though, China historically has experienced several invasions and occupations by other ethnic groups, the Chinese culture has also assimilated and converted these interlopers into its own system. Thus, to a larger degree, Chinese culture has developed and evolved from its very beginning down to the present according to its own logic, remaining rather resilient to outside interference.[110] Like Nye, Confucians, believe that the superiority of the power of attraction by virtue is a hard historical fact, rather than a rosy ideal. The Zhou dynasty,[111] on reflecting why the Yin dynasty[112] had collapsed, concluded that it was not because that they had failed to possess sufficient might, but rather because the Yin had lacked moral virtues.[113] Thus, they believed that

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[108] Ibid: 23
[109] Ibid: 207
[110] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power*," page 18
[111]The Zhou (1122-256BC) is the name of a dynasty whose "culture of rituals and music" formed the framework of the philosophical reflection of Confucius.
[112] Yin (or Shang) dynasty (aprox 1600-1046BC) ruled in the Yellow river valley (just south of Beijing). Some claim that Confucius is a descendant of the Shang Kings or priests
[113] Ruiping, Fan, "*The Renaissance of Confucianism in contemporary China*," 114

rulers have to rule according to the people's will based on virtue and benevolence (*ren and li*).[114] Summarised, the Zhou people seemed to adhere to a belief in that the key to survival of the state, did not rely on brute force, but on virtue. Arguably, this also makes it the earliest manifesto of soft power in Chinese history.[115]

During the warring state period,[116] the major political institutions, which to this date define the Chinese state, was created. Besides the military conflict between numerous Chinese sub states, a struggle between opposing philosophies took place; epitomized by Daoism, Legalism and Confucianism. Confucianism won[117] the philosophical struggle between the different schools of thought and from the Han dynasty[118] and onwards, became the major dominating state philosophy in the institutional and spiritual framework of the Chinese state and influenced the thinking and administration throughout China's history.[119] Following the adoption of Confucianism by emperor Wu (Song Dynasty), soft power gained official recognition, at least nominally.[120]

Daoism emphasis on virtue (*de*) literally means relying on a type of power without using physical force; stressing that weakness can be stronger than strength. The idea is closely linked to the Confucian insistence on the superiority of virtue and benevolence over harshness and power, which was emphasised by the legalists.[121] Hence, like Nye, Confucians believe in the power of attraction, identifying virtues as the strongest attraction.[122] Closely interrelated with domestically policies, the emperors moral authority and rule, by virtue, were fundamental to his right to rule in China as well in its relations with foreign countries. Thus, it constituted a central principle in Chinese thought of how the state is supposed to conduct its affairs, both domestically and externally.[123] Confucianism emphasises the rule of virtue for harmony (*he*)[124] – hence the best way to govern for a ruler is through the moral standards of benevolence (*ren*) and rituals and moral standards (*li*). A ruler with high moral standards will be able to maintain harmony in family, stability in a kingdom and peace

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[114] Huiyun, Feng, "*A Dragon on the Defense*" page 70

[115] Ruiping, Fan, "*The Renaissance of Confucianism in contemporary China*," page 115

[116] The Warring state period (475-221BC) was an era of intensive warfare as well as major bureaucratic and military reforms and consolidation. The constant conflict and need for innovative social and political models led to the development of many philosophical doctrines. The developments in political and military organisation was the basis of the power of the Qin state, whom following the conquest of the other six Chinese states in 221 BC effective unified China, creating the foundation of the Chinese state that remains today.

[117] Some pundits, such as Huiyun Feng, argue that Confucianism reflected people's general aspiration for peace, following the long devastating period – characterised by numerous internal conflicts and general devastation. Thus, Confucianism emphasise concepts such as "harmony" – among others.

[118] The Han dynasty (206BC-220AD) was an imperial dynasty of China, preceding the Qin Dynasty (which had unified China) in 206 BC, spanning over four centuries the period of the Han dynasty is considered the "golden age" of China. To this day China's major ethnic groups refer to themselves as the "Han people." Confucianism was adopted as the "national learning" (*guojiao*) by Emperor Wu in 136BC (whom belonged to the Song Dynasty).

[119] Sheng, Ding, "*Soft Power and the rise of China,"* page 64

[120] Ruiping, Fan, "*The Renaissance of Confucianism in contemporary China*," page 115

[121] Sheng, Ding, "*Soft Power and the rise of China,"* page 68

[122] Ruiping, Fan, "*The Renaissance of Confucianism in contemporary China*," page 114

[123] Sheng, Ding, "*Soft Power and the rise of China,"* page 109

[124] Other pundits translate *He* as harmonization (instead of harmony), for example James C. Hsiung in "*China and International Relations"*

in the world at large.[125] The Confucian concept of morality and ethics, dictated both domestic and international politics in ancient China, and maintained that through good government and internal peace and prosperity, China would play a leadership role in the world, serving as a universal model for other countries.[126]

Confucianism viewed the universalized order of the Chinese as a cultural order, and that the only way to accommodate an expansion should be by means of an outward radiation of cultural influence. Mencius[127] stated, due to it being against the virtue and will of people: "*to seek domination by force will simply turn the world against you."* [128] Xunzi[129] divides between three different ways of "annexing" or "gathering" people: by moral power, by raw power and by wealth. The power of morality convinces, whereupon people willingly work for it. Consequently, the power of morality grows with the number of people it rules. In contrast, people moved by raw power and wealth will not do so willingly. Therefore, the more people one conquers, the more one has to invest in controlling these people. Thus Xunzi concludes: "*One who uses moral power to annex people will become a True King; one who employs raw power to annex them will become weak; and one who employs wealth to annex them will become poor."* [130]

Nye in his definition[131] of soft power reasons that moral virtue is a supportive power we should never ignore. However, his main concern remains on that of power, instead of morality – as emphasised in Confucianism. Nonetheless, he still includes the soft power of morality, thus his definition of soft power remains favourable to the Confucian idea of the "kingly way."[132] The concept of the kingly way is a moral concept, concerned about using one's power morally, for example seen in the rule through "virtue" and emphasis on "moral standards." In contrast, according to Nye's definition, once you successfully attract others you will increase your soft power, whether your values are "correct" are not. Thus, morality may help strengthen one's soft power, but it essentially is not necessary.[133] The power of attraction, as emphasised by Mencius among others, likewise with the "kingly way," constitutes the foundation of Confucianism thought, both in relation to the domestic population and in inter-state relations.

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[125] Ibid: 69
[126] Huiyun, Feng, "*A Dragon on the Defense,*" page70
[127] Mencius (372-289BCE) also known by his birth name Meng Ke or Ko, was a Chinese philosopher whom arguably was the most famous Confucian after Confucius himself, and arguably even more influential than Confucius himself.
[128] Mencius in "*A Dragon on the Defense,"* by Huiyun Feng, page 73
[129] Xunzi (312-230BC) was a Chinese confucian philosopher whom lived during the period of the warring states. He was one of the most sophisticated thinkers of his time and was the teacher of Li Si and Han Fei Zi.
[130] Ruiping, Fan, "*The Renaissance of Confucianism in contemporary China*," page 114
[131] Please see the section "Soft Power, Nye's conceptusaliton" for explanation of Nye's conceptualisation of soft power.
[132] Ibid: 131
[133] Ibid: 118

Although classical Confucian tradition, tends to balance towards more pacific and idealistic, it was by no means necessarily one-sided, envisioning both the use of coercion and persuasion as cognate principles, though prioritizing the role of soft power over that of hard power. [134] Confucius advocated that kings should convince others by reason rather than coercing foreign countries using force.[135] If foreign countries came to China under the tributary system[136] it was because they had virtue, if they did not come it was not their fault, instead it was the Chinese ruler whom had to rethink themselves and nurture their virtue. As epitomized by Confucius: "*If remoter people are not submissive, all the influences of civil culture and virtue are to be cultivated to attract them to be so; and when they have been so attracted, they must be made contended and tranquil.*"[137] Brantly Womack adds, that the Confucian emphasis on including virtuous behaviour was particular important, and that China succeeded best at lowest cost, when "*the velvet clove did the trick without revealing the iron hand.*"[138] According to Confucianism, cultural activities play an essential role in the formation of the moral character of a people as a whole. The government should therefore be very careful about the moral implications of its cultural policies. Otherwise it risks that the influence of a culture of degraded morality, will erode the moral quality of its people. Consequently, disintegrating the society, as morality as the cohesive force of society would fail to function. Furthermore, indecent cultural trends may irritate social members with stricter moral standards, thus increasing social tensions in the society. Therefore, is it the governments duty and priority, to pay due attention to foster a proper social and moral atmosphere through cultural means.[139]

The Chinese view of the world order can, arguably, be traced back to the common ancient notion of universal kingship. Thus, a perspective can be drawn to the peculiarly Confucian notion of "rule by virtue," with an absolution of the Confucian moral order. [140] China's external order was so closely related to her domestic that one could not survive without the other; when barbarians were not submissive abroad, rebels might more easily arise from within. Thus, when analysing China's history, one might notice that most dynasties collapsed under the twin blow of "*insider disorder and outside calamity*" [141] – e.g. domestic rebellion and foreign invasion, as was the case for example with the ascendance and abdication of the last Chinese dynasty, the Qing. [142] At the very

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[134] Fairbank, John King, "*The Chinese World Order,*" page 27
[135] Zheng, Yongnian (e.d.), "*China and International Relations,*" page 110
[136] Further clarification and analysis of the tributary system will follow later in the next section
[137] Confucius in "*China and International Relations*" by Zheng Yongnian (e.d.), page 110
[138] Brantly Womack in, "*China and International Relations,*" by Zheng Yongnian (e.d.), page 122
[139] Ruiping, Fan, "*The Renaissance of Confucianism in contemporary China,*" page 125
[140] Fairbank, John King, "*The Chinese World Order,*" page 19
[141] Ibid: 3
[142] Ibid: 3

centre of the Chinese world was "the Son of Heaven," e.g. the Chinese emperor. He remained superior to ordinary mortals because of his unique function in maintaining order among mankind and harmony between human society and the cosmos. The system was maintained by a heavy stress on ideological orthodoxy, especially on the idea that adherence to the correct teachings, would be manifested in virtuous conduct, enhancing one's authority and influence. The system also seems to fit well within Nye's conceptualisation of soft power, in regards to the Chinese using soft power to enhance their authority and influence through co-option, both in terms of domestic and foreign policies. Thus, they believed that correct conduct according to the proper norms was believed to move others by its example. Proper ceremonial forms influenced the beholder and confirmed in his mind the authority of a ruler, official or superior man. The right principles exhibited through proper conduct, including ceremonies, gave prestige among others including power over them. [143]

Confucianism, is not only the fundamental system of though in Chinese cultural tradition, but has and still provides a significant intellectual source for the modern societies of Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore and not least China in their cultural, ethical, legal, political and educational systems.[144] In addition to its long-lasting tradition as the first literate nation in East Asia, China also bears the distinction of having influenced its neighbours and even more distant countries by its writing system, language, philosophy, literature and art. For instance, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese have all adopted Chinese characters, to a large extent, in their writing systems. [145]

The role of soft power in Confucianism thought is epitomized in the below quote, whereupon Confucius was asked which methods or tools the government should use to conduct its affairs:[146]

Zigong asked about government. The Master said, "Sufficient food, sufficient weapons, and the confidence of the common people." Zigong said, "Suppose you had no choice to dispense with one of these three, which would you forego?" The Master said, "Weapons." Zigong said, "Suppose you had no choice but to dispense with one of the remaining two, which would you forgo?" "Food. For from the beginning of time death has always been the lot of all people; but a people that no longer trust its rulers are lost indeed…"[147]

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[143] Ibid: 6
[144] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power*," page 19
[145] Ibid: 18
[146] As shown (…) the original quote has been slighted edited, in order to reduce its size.
[147] Ruiping, Fan, "*The Renaissance of Confucianism in contemporary China*," page 131

"Sufficient weapons" represent coercive force, while "sufficient food" illustrate as an inducement. Thus, according to Nye's terminology they are both identified as typical hard powers. In contrast the "confidence of the common people" is an example of soft power, which Confucius clearly prioritizes over that of hard power. He thus ranks "trust" over that of "food" or "weapons," i.e.: . that "soft power," in form of trust, as more important for the government than having a military or sufficient food for its population. Summarised, the above quote emphasises the connection between Confucian principles governing China's internal social and political order also, historically, has heavily influenced how Chinese perceived foreign relations, including what was perceived as "proper" conduct of directing foreign politic.[148]

It seems clear that Confucianism in ancient China perceived soft power as stronger and more powerful than that of hard power, and that it in general promoted soft power over the use of hard power. However, that does not mean Confucianism was blind for the need for "hard power" at times, nor that the Chinese culture is pacific of nature. Chinese rulers relied not just on Confucianism to extend their influence, and were in fact both using hard- and soft power to obtain their compliance from other states. [149] As a Chinese idiom states: "*Weak countries have no diplomacy*" [150] Traditionally, the Confucian ruling orthodoxy assumes a large foundation of economic and military power. However, the uniqueness in Chinese Confucianism lies in that after achieving self-sufficiency, it relies on virtue and self-cultivation of the leaders or the norms/rules to maintain peace and prestige, rather than resorting to the use of force to expand or invade for more wealth or power. Thus, the ruling elite was far more dependent on cultural appeal to attract followings, rather than resorting to the use of force in obedience of handling inter-state affairs.[151]

It seems clear that the grandeur and rich Chinese heritage arguably constituted a majority of ancient China's soft power. However, its foreign policies and political values, seems also to have clear traces of ancient China's soft power. Long before Nye coined the "soft power" concept in the US in 1990s, using China's cultural attractiveness in dealing with foreigners had already been advocated and practised in traditional China throughout many centuries. While the Christian states were inclined to spread religious beliefs of Christendom to and impose it upon other parts of the world, primarily by resorting to the use of force, China choose to show itself as an example for others to

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[148] Ibid: 126
[149] Zheng, Yongnian (e.d.), "*China and International Relations,*" page 87
[150] Ruiping, Fan, "*The Renaissance of Confucianism in contemporary China,*" page 132
[151] Huiyun, Feng, "*A Dragon on the Defense,*" page 84

follow, primarily through its focus on ethics and moral in both domestic and foreign policies[152] The use and application of soft power, especially culture as an attraction, will be further analysed in the following section.

3.2 The Role of Soft Power

China's land bound centrality, as the "kingdom in the middle," involved both blessings and curses. Its security curse was that of being rich targets for neighbours that could be defended against but not eliminated, arguably exemplified by the Chinese wall, guarding the Northern border against its nomadic neighbours.[153] Centrality of a regional attention creates characteristic pattern of interaction. Even if the periphery did not "band together," using central power against one opponent would weaken its relative advantage against others, and probable increase the alienation of others. Thus, Womack argues, leadership by means of prestige and authority became less risky and more sustainable than domination by means of power.[154] Womack adds: *The grandeur of the Forbidden City, then, is not simply a narcissistic celebration of superiority…leadership by virtue can be seen as a management challenge…"*[155] Summarised, Womack's main argument lies in, that due to ancient China's inability to directly conquer its neighbours, especially its northern nomadic neighbours, the ancient Chinese rulers adopted a system of ruling by "soft power," e.g. what we typically define as the "tributary system."

China's best known mode of traditional diplomatic management has become popularly known as the "tributary system." Associating it with China's traditional foreign relations has become a standard practice since the 20th century, but it was not until John K. Fairbanks immensely influential elaboration upon it, starting in the 1940s, that it really became the "master" in East Asian studies. The tribute system is largely derived and based on ancient Chinese ideas of foreign relations over the centuries. By the 14th century, these ideas and institutions had become the unquestioned rules of regional diplomatic game in Asia.[156]

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[152] Zheng, Yongnian (e.d.), "*China and International Relations,*" page 112
[153] Zheng, Yongnian (e.d.), "*China and International Relations,*" page 118
[154] Ibid: 120
[155] Brantly Womack in *"China and International Relations,"* by Zheng Yongnian (e.d.) page 121
[156] Beeson, Mark and Richard Stubbs (e.d.) "*Routledge Handbook of Asian regionalism,*" page 59

China was clearly the dominant military, cultural and economic power in ancient Asia pre-1840, though its goals did not, ordinarily, include expansion against others, acknowledged or not, political units.[157] To a varying degree, the smaller sinicized states emulated Chinese practices accepting China's centrality in the region. The surrounding states benefitted from the tributary system, and cultural, diplomatic and economic relations were both extensive and intensive. Within this system, cultural achievement in the form of status was as important a goal as military or economic power. The status hierarchy and rank order, were key components of it, though, ranking did not necessarily derive from political, economic or military power. Instead status derived from cultural achievement and social recognition by other political actors. China, in effect, exercised little authority over the other political units. When envoys kotowed before the Emperor, they acknowledged the cultural superiority, not his political authority over their states. Thus, relations with China did not involve loss of independence, as they were largely free to run their domestic affairs as they saw fit, while conducting their foreign policy independently from Peking.[158] All states in the system, in general, used the same Chinese derived international rules and norms in their negotiations with each other. With China in the centre of the system, some states accepted Confucianism to a larger degree (e.g. Korea, Japan & Vietnam,) while others such as in South East Asia merely used those relations with each other.[159]

Wang Gungwu in the classical "*The Chinese World Order*,"[160] edited by John King Fairbank undertook a pioneering research in the 1960's, investigating how classical Confucian tradition, in its foreign relations, from the Han to the Song Dynasties, developed the ideas of the emperor's moral superiority and rule-by-virtue, subsequently exemplified during the Tang dynasty.[161] His research proved that following the conquest by the Mongols,[162] which was achieved solely by the use of hard power, i.e. conquest by military forces, and not at all by soft power, such as virtue, shattered the idea of the emperor's use of moral superiority and rule-by-virtue. However, the temporariness of the Mongol rule was, according to the Chinese, based on that the Mongol empire had in its entirety relied on hard power, rather than the proper balance of power and virtue. Thus, following the Ming

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[157] Ibid: 58
[158] Beeson, Mark and Richard Stubbs (e.d.) "*Routledge Handbook of Asian regionalism*," page 63
[159] Ibid: 71
[160] Wang Gungwu, in "*The Chinese World order*," John King Fairbank (e.d.), Chapter 3
[161] The Tang dynasty (618-907), is in general regarded as the "high point" of Chinese civilization, equal to, or surpassing that of the earlier Han Dynasty. The period is normally referred to as "a golden age of cosmopolitan culture," and besides political hegemony the Tang also exerted a powerful cultural influence over several of its neighbours.
[162] The Mongol invasion of China spanned six decades in the 13th century, starting in 1205 under Genghis Khan. By 1279 the Mongol leader Kublai Khan had established the Yuan dynasty in China having crushed the last resistance by the Song dynasty. It marked the first time in history that the hole of China was conquered and subsequently ruled by a foreign or non-native ruler.

dynasty, [163] a new strategy of balancing hard power and soft power was emphasised by the governments, rather than an all exclusive focus on either. [164] Wang contended that the tributary system, during the Ming dynasty, was the result of both "majesty and power" as well as the previous depicted principles of Confucianism as portrayed in the previous section. Thus, one can see, when analysing the early Ming rule, a modification of the previous rule based on "moral virtue" by previous dynasties, such as the Song and Tang, added with a big show of Ming power and majesty. Consequently, their foreign policy was characterised by an "iron" fist, covered by a "glove."

The story of the Ming Dynasty's admiral Zheng He presents a comparative perspective, of the Eastern naval expedition compared to for example the contemporary Christopher Columbus in the West. Under Zheng He's leadership, the Ming's launched seven major expeditions (1405-33) consisting of a fleet of around 350 ships and 28.000 crewmen, eventually reaching Southeast Asia, India, the Horn of Africa and Arabia. The purpose and significance of the missions, has been described by the Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui as promoting the peaceful coexistence of various civilizations - demonstrating China's cultural tradition in its external relations. [165] In contrast, Columbus's four voyages (1492-1500) to the America's, was subsequently followed by European exploration and colonization – causing devastation, exploitation of the native populations – even though, the contemporary military capabilities of the European states was much smaller in comparison to that of the Ming's.

4.0 Soft Power in Contemporary China

In the previous chapter I investigated how soft power historically has been defined and used in ancient China. It primarily analysed the state's role in relation to how it should conduct policies according to Confucianism, and soft powers role in both domestic and inter-state relations. In this chapter, I will bring the discussion and analysis into contemporary China, focussing on the introduction of the soft power concept into China's academic and policy making environment in the 1990s. Furthermore, it will investigate how soft power became understood and its subsequent use

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[163] The Ming dynasty (1368-1644), followed the collapse of the Mongol led Yuan dynasty, and was the last dynasty in China led by ethnic Han Chinese.
[164] Fairbank, John King (e.d.), "*The Chinese World order,*" page 15
[165] Callahan, William A, Elana Barabantseva (e.d.), "*China Orders the World*" page 6

for the policy makers. Its point of departure will draw from how external events and China's international status influenced the (re) popularisation of soft power.

4.1 China's Rise and International Status

This section will analyse China's status in the new international system dominated by the capitalist liberal West. It will investigate how China's position, status and means as a rising power in the international system and how it influenced the conceptualisation and application of soft power in China. Thus, it will focus on the post-cold war period and how China's rise became perceived as a threat for the West, and how the Chinese became concerned over the West's "subversion" and "smokeless war."

China's Status & the collapse of the Soviet Union

For the first three decades of the People's Republic of China (PRC),[166] China was alienated from the Western countries, and the mainstream international system which they dominated.[167] The decade following the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, China's foreign policy was first focused on how to break away from its international isolation, and then on managing a string of heightened domestic insecurity and international turbulence.[168] Early studies and literature of soft- versus hard power in China, was usually referred to as mental power versus material power. In the 1990s, the ideological elite of the CCP believed that such "mental power," was a prioritised element in the Western countries strategy of "peaceful evolution" against the "anti-capitalist" countries for instance playing an important role in the collapse of the Soviet Union.[169] The massive student movements in 1986 and 1989 were typically attributed to an infiltration of Western culture and political values, destabilizing China. Deng Xiaoping added: *"the rampant spread of bourgeois liberalization may have grave consequences… the imperialists are pushing for peaceful evolution towards socialism in China, placing their hopes on the generations that will come after us."*[170] Consequently, the CCP, up until the middle of the 1990s, launched three waves of nationwide

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[166] The PRC was established in 1949, following the Chinese civil war which left the Communist Party in control of mainland China, and the Kuomintang retreating to Taiwan, establishing the Republic of China (ROC).
[167] Zheng, Yongnian (e.d.), "*China and International Relations,*" page 203
[168] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power,*" chapter 4
[169] Sheng, Ding, "*Soft Power and the rise of China,*" page 89
[170] Deng, Xiaoping in "*Soft Power and the rise of China,*" by Sheng Ding, page 90

campaigns, for "spiritual civilization," in the process also focused on discrediting Western political concepts,[171] emphasizing the "four cardinal principles."[172]

When soft power normally was mentioned by Chinese academics in the 1990s, it was nominally attributed to the US, or the West. Implicit, it was argued that the Western countries, as the dominant parties, controlled the international discourse, institutions and rules, thus manipulating these soft power instruments to justify and legitimize their policies. A typical example, from the Chinese discussion, was NATO's war on Yugoslavia, which from the Chinese perspective, in effect, was a civil strife between two ethnic groups. However, it was subsequently portrayed by Western media and politicians and later accepted by the international community, as a genocide: *"NATO members recast the nature of the conflict and launched a…. international campaign to promote "humanitarian interventionism," a new principle that paved the way for its military attacks…"*[173] Thus, soft power was considered a Western privilege, in principle part of the moral and political high ground dominated by the West. Chinese strategists believed that China should guard against this "soft power", just as it should against Western hard power. An often cited example by the Chinese, of how the West had infiltrated China, was how students participating in the demonstrations in the 1980's had constructed a small copy of the Statue of Liberty – placing it at Tiananmen Square.[174]

The 1990s was defined by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the subsequent end of the cold war. The international system changed from a bi-polar system, characterised by the "cold war" between ideologies, e.g. capitalism versus communism, to a unipolar system, exclusive monopolized by the capitalist countries with the US at the lead. "The End of History"[175] and "Clash of Civilizations"[176] was proclaimed. Academics and politicians alike, in the West and elsewhere, expected that China soon would either peacefully or through revolution conform to the Western democracies, or join the fate of the Soviet Union. Chinese academics and officials are often ascribed to believe that the Soviet Union collapsed, primarily due its over-investment in the military

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[171] Sheng Ding, "*Soft Power and the rise of China,*" page 90
[172] The four cardinal principles were: To keep a socialist road, to uphold the people's democratic dictatorship, to support the leadership by the communist party and to uphold Marxism-Lenism and Mao Zedong thought.
[173] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power,*" chapter 4
[174] Ibid: chapter 4
[175] "The End of history," coined by Francis Fukuyama in 1992, whom argued that the advent of the Western liberal democracy, following the end of the cold war, may signal the end point of humanity's sociocultural evolution and the final form of human government, e.g. Western style democracy.
[176] "The Clash of Civilizations," coined by Samuel P. Huntington in 1996, argued that cultural and religious identities would form the primary source of conflicts in the post-cold war period. Thus it would no longer be based on ideologies, such as during the cold war.

at the expense of the civilian economy and domestic stability, as well as the West's "subtle" demoralising influence and culture – thus, helping the country to break down from "the inside." President Mikhail Gorbachev later told interviewees: *"The Soviet model was defeated not only on the economic and social levels; it was defeated on a cultural level."*[177] Nye uses Gorbachev's embrace of "perestroika and glasnost" (i.e. restructuring and publicity) as an example of how Gorbachev was influenced by ideas deriving from the United States[178] - and argues that "...*military deterrence helped to prevent Soviet aggression in Europe, while the soft power of culture and ideas ate away at belief in communism behind the Iron Curtain."*[179]

Leon Aron summarised, that ideas themselves had become a material, structural factor in the unfolding of revolutions. It seems plausible to deduct, that contemporary Chinese academics and politicians thought that the Soviet Union had sufficient hard power (i.e.. military and economic capacity), but had failed to maintain or amass enough soft power, which in the end significantly contributed to Soviet Union's collapse. For instance, Li Jie**,** former deputy director of the Department of the ministry of foreign affairs China, also supports the notion that the Soviet Union was brought down with culture and norms, rather than by military and political means.[180]

Beijing has continually emphasized Deng's original "Development First" principle, focusing on furthering economic modernization, while simultaneously increasingly paying attention to strengthening "morale" and guarding against the West's cultural and ideological infiltration. In modern China in the 21st century, people whom still share this perception can be easily found among contemporary Chinese academic and official circles. For example, Fan Yinhua a political commissar of the PLA navy, has repeatedly called for the increased spread of Chinese socialist ideology, to fight what he defined as the strategy of cultural subversion, infiltration in the West's smokeless ideological and cultural warfare, intended to destabilize China.[181]

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[177] Mikhail Gorbachev in "*Everything you think you know about the collapse of the Soviet Union is Wrong*," by Leon Aron, page 2
[178] Nye, Joseph S. "*The Future of Power,*" page 96
[179] Ibid: 225
[180] Li, Jie, "*Soft Power Building and China's Peaceful Development*," page 167
[181] Ferguson, Chaka, "*Soft Power as the new norm*," page 124

A survey[182] in 2010 conducted by Nottingham University, revealed that the more Europeans are perceived as aggressive by the urban Chinese, the more their culture is likewise viewed as constituting a threat to Chinese culture. As a whole, which the table (1.6) shows, urban Chinese expressed high levels of positive

	Affect	
	Positive (%)	Negative (%)
1. Spread of European culture	95.5	4.5
2. Spread of European fashion	92.3	7.7
3. European music	82.2	17.8
4. European movies	83.2	16.8
5. European sci./tech. advances	90.0	10.0
6. European ideas about democracy	81.6	18.4
7. European ways of doing business	85.1	14.9

affect towards European culture, including the ideas of democracy, despite that they view the EU's promotion of democracy in the world as being motivated by self-serving interested.[183] Perhaps, this could be explained by how, a majority of the respondents considered the EU as playing a positive role in the world considered "peace in the world" (80 %), "fighting terrorism (76%) and fighting poverty (75 %). Ultimately, the survey concluded that Chinese effect towards European culture is significantly associated with more favourable opinions about all aspects of China-EU relations, the EU's role in the world and the EU's relative performance vis-à-vis China. [184] A series of interviews[185] conducted in connection with the survey, concluded that the interviewees felt that the European countries were interfering in Chinese internal affairs, by allowing anti-Chinese protests over issues such as Tibet to take place, and by tolerating meetings with the Dalai Lama. Many commented that they thought the Europeans "prejudiced" and "arrogant," and though a majority preferred the values of "human rights" and "democracy," they were equally reluctant to accept criticism from Europeans, expressing suspicion regarding their motivation. The interviewees unanimously believed that Europeans had a serious misunderstanding about China.[186]

Summarised, the survey and interviews among the Chinese population, revealed that although, in general, the Chinese were very positive about the EU-China relationship, a significant majority of the Chinese remained rather suspicious about EU's role in for example promotion of democracy internally in China, suspecting that the EU's motivation for propagating its culture and political values in China. Arguably, it is thus possible to summarise, that a majority of the interviewees perceived a need to protect themselves against the spread of foreign values, norms and cultures among the Chinese population.

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[182] The data of this study comes from a collaborative research project funded by the European Commission's Framework Seven Program. It were conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xi'an, Chengdu and Nanning in 2010. In total, 3,728 questionnaires were administered, out of which 3019 valid responses were valid.
[183] Welzel, Christian and Timo Graf, " *Chinese Affect towards European culture"* page 8
[184] Ibid: 7
[185] Six focus group interviews was undertaken, in five different cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Nanning, Guangzhou and Xian, interviewing 64 people in total.It was conducted in 2010.
[186] Tang, Haihua, *"Negative Chinese Views of the EU,"* page 3

Following the Soviet Union's collapse, the CCP realized that uncontrolled ideological and cultural elements could cause significant damage to the party's political structure. Beijing made significant efforts in the post-cold war era to resist Western cultural and political influence, by reinforcing China's internal propaganda and enhancing its external communication. [187] China, who had accommodated itself to the rift between the two superpowers (e.g. the United States and the Soviet Union), focusing on its domestic economic development without much interference from the outside, now suddenly had to receive unprecedented attention from the outside, as the only remaining communist big power in the world. Within this context, the CCP leadership assumed that only through a favourable international environment, could China continue its economic development successfully. Thus, in the wake of Tiananmen incident, Beijing worked hard to rebuild its national image – fostering favourable international opinion. Consequently, one could draw a connection between how the present leadership in the CCP, likewise as according to the realism theory, acknowledge that the country should not fail to acknowledge the power of that besides the "tangible" elements, such as economic and military muscle. Power over opinion had likewise become an important element, that Beijing likewise had to develop, which progressively becoming more obvious following the rise of the "China threat theories" in the mid-1990s.

Following the political disturbances in the end of the 1980's and the demise of the Soviet Union and Communist bloc in 1991, China's national image[188] plummeted throughout the world. Consequently, China's external communication had to be changed dramatically – replacing its previous foreign priorities of "war & revolution" with "peace and development."[189]

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[187] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication As A Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 197

[188] National image, or national stereotype, is typically defined as a generalized and abstract profile of a nation or its people. The image contains concrete aspects of a nation, such as demographics, geographical information etc, as well as abstract components such as cultural codes, ideology and values. Both presents a nation's profile – relying on foreign perceptions. Soft power and national image thus share the same characteristics within the field of IR, and national images serves as an important channel and resource for exercising national soft power in International politics.

[189] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication As A Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 171

China's Rise and international alienation

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 coincided with China's continuing ascent to the position as the world's third largest economy, at which it remained until it overtook Japan in 2008,[190] claiming a second place.[191] Many in the West were anxious about China's continuing economic and military ascendance, especially in combination with the lack of political reforms.[192] According to Shen Yamei, associate research fellow at China Institute of International Studies, the "China threat" alarm can be traced to Lester Brown report "Who will feed China" published in 1994. James C. Hsiung adds, *the cries of the "China threat" thus took off relentlessly and spread like a prairie fire."*[193] The "China threat" theory was essentially foreign fears of China's rise as a destabilizing, aggressive and harmful actor in world politics. It has since been hyped constantly in Western media, resonating in the political, economic, military, cultural and diplomatic spheres.[194]

Interestingly, as noted by Yongjin Zhang, the recent hype about the perceived growth of China's soft power has evoked similar feelings, providing new "fuel" to the "China threat theories.[195] Thus, it has been widely claimed, especially in the West, that China has built its soft power at the expense of the United States. Yongjin adds, that the hype about China's soft power is fallacious, in that it is mirrored in a conceptual misconstruction.[196] He also maintains, that it is genuine puzzle; concerning how a recent "pariah state," can advocate and practice a political system contrary to the prevailing liberal democratic values, and achieve such a soft power status in such limited time.[197]

Huo Zhengde, contends that China is especially facing opposition from the international media, whom in the hands of the Western countries, on the one hand increasingly offer objective and rational perceptions of China, however, at times also added by well-meaning exaggerations or deliberate distortions of China's development. Thus, he contends that though "China demonization theories" and "collapse theories" largely are decreasing in audience – the China "threat theories" continue to pop up.[198] Numerous Chinese scholars and officials have been influenced by the "China threat" theories – for instance Yu Xintian, Director of the Academic Committee of SIIS, notes how numerous people suffers from the "China threat theories" and "China collapses theories," and that

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[190] Several respectable pundits, added by institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, even suggested that China would catch up with the United States, economically around 2025 - thus, claiming a first place as the largest economy in the world.
[191] Zheng, Yongnian (e.d.), "*China and International Relations,*" page 25
[192] James C. Hsiung in "*China and International Relations,*" by Zheng Yongnian (e.d), page 26
[193] Cit. op: 26
[194] Shen, Yamei, "*The Evolution of Western Media Depictions of China*" page 131
[195] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power,*" chapter 1
[196] Please see the section " Nye's soft power," which clarifies that soft power can both be a positive-zero sum as well as a zero-sum game.
[197] Ibid: chapter 3
[198] Huo, Zhengde, "*Rejuvenation of Chinese civilization and China's Peaceful Development,*" page 125

the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of China's foreign and domestic policies and "China threat theories," constitutes the greatest risk against China's peaceful development.[199] Li Jie claims that China, as the only country having developed outside of the Western system in modern history, has structural contradictions with the West, and are regarded as an "alien" – thus also suffering under a "soft containment" policy, from the Western countries, who perceives it with a "cold war mentality." Academics and officials alike seem to have perceived the increased hostile international environment as a hindrance to the continued development of China – thus, acknowledging both the power over opinion, as well as the need to develop a theoretical understanding and effectively implement strategies and tools to efficiently wield soft power.

Summarised, it seems evident from the evolution of public opinion that China, as a rising power, strikes a combination of terror and hope into the hearts of the Western world.[200] Shen Yamei argues that the "China threat" theories, reflects the West's deep-rooted ideological bias against China, whom for example claim that China is practicing the "Monroe Doctrine" in the East Asian region, exploiting the resources of Africa, etc., and that in the West, in general, this perception seems to depict China as an isolated military superpower endowed with unlimited human resources.[201] It seems as though a gap has widened, between how the West has perceived China as a (potential) aggressive rising power, and China's (claimed) adherence to valuing a "peaceful development" – distancing itself from the old paths of seeking hegemony through military means.[202]

Differentiating from Mao's aggressive push of China's ideology to the world through its foreign policy, the post-Maoist leaders asserted that China's foreign policy should and would respect the diversity of social systems and ideologies of the world. Consequentially, the new leaders adopted less confrontational but more pragmatic, confident and constructive approaches towards regional and international affairs.[203] Thus, China started to promote itself as a rising power that pursues "peaceful development," promoting the construction of a "harmonious world," [204] which is underlined by the moral and idealistic elements of traditional Chinese philosophy – "dreaming" of a world in universal harmony.[205] Under this agenda, as for example noted in their references to

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[199] Yu, Xintian, "*Harmonious World and China's Road of Peaceful Development*" page 14
[200] Li, Jie, "*Soft Power Building and China's Peaceful Development,*" page 171
[201] Shen, Yamei, "*The Evolution of Western Media Depictions of China,*" Page 134
[202] Ibid: 137
[203] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 32
[204] For further clarifications of these initiatives, please see the chapter "Wielding Soft Power"
[205] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 33

culture and soft power by the policy makers,[206] significant importance has been attached to the transmission of cultural resources in the state's external communication. Youling Liu, contends that it being so, due to cultural elements being perceived as having less aggressive intent by foreign audiences than economic and military components.[207] However, as also stipulated by realism "the desire to attain maximum of power is universal" and in practice, China pursues a foreign policy that eschewed hard-core power politics, with an emphasis remaining on domestic development and economic diplomacy. These policies, to a large degree, still characterises China's foreign policy in the 21st century, though increasingly combined with numerous other priorities.[208]

4.2 The Soft Power Idea

In the previous chapter I analysed the status for China in the international system in the 1990's as well as how its rise in power had been perceived and characterised by the "China threat" theories throughout the 1990s – remaining influential in the 21st century. In this chapter, I will investigate by whom soft power was introduced and how soft power has been understood and conceptualised.

Youling Liu contends that it is universally acknowledged in our contemporary time, that soft power is a significant and effective means to achieve one's national goals. Although, culture, ideology and diplomacy are common examples of soft power – different countries, according to their specific historical, economic, political and socio situation conceptualise and emphasise their individual approaches in disseminating and defining soft power.[209]

The first Chinese article on soft power, according to Li Mingjiang, was written by Wang Huning in 1993. Huning, a professor from Fudan University and a member of the CCP Central Committee Secretariat, argued that culture was the main source of a state's soft power.[210] In the first decade after soft power's introduction into China, Chinese writing seems to have almost exclusively focused on introducing, and evaluating the concept – discussing how it should be translated,[211] its origin, development and its potential prospects and flaws. More recently, the Chinese conceptualisation seems to have become increasingly comprehensive and sophisticated, covering an

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[206] Please adhere to the sections "Debating the soft power idea in contemporary China" and "Soft Power's Role" for examples on said official references.
[207] Ibid: 209
[208] Mingjiang Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power*," chapter 4
[209] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power*," page 24
[210] Hongyi, Lai and Yiyi Lu (e.d.), "*China's soft power and international Relations*," page 11
[211] The Chinese translation of soft power has four versions: ruan shili, ruan liliang, ruan guoli and ruan quanli. Ruan shili, seems to have become the most popular.

ever larger area.[212] Most pundits in analysing the Chinese conceptualisation of Nye's soft power seem to agree upon that the Chinese discourse largely conforms to Nye's original conceptual framework, while agreeing that the Chinese discourse is deeper in scope.

The discussion is perhaps most evident among the more academic circles in China. Yu Xintian, Director of the Academic Committee of Shanghai Institute for International Studies, argues that culture, especially the core of culture, values, is the nucleus of soft power. She adds that some scholars, emphasizes Confucianism and other Chinese ancient classics. Soft power is the reflection of a nation's cultural influence in its external relations. However, she underlines, that soft power is not a purely cultural concept, but rather a unique phenomenon in contemporary IR. It is not the whole of culture, but focused on the parts concerning politics, especially in relation to international politics.[213]

Yan Xuetong, the Director of the Institute of International Studies at Tsinghua University and Xu Jin from Tsinghua University, offers an original analysis of soft power using a quantitative approach for measuring China's soft power in relation to the U.S. They define soft power as international appeal and its external and internal mobilization capabilities. They identify; cultural allure, power for laying down international rules, mobilization capacity among the domestic elite and mobilization capacity among the domestic grassroots - as the most important quantifying indicators in measuring soft power. Based on their results, they estimate that China has approximately 1/10th of United States soft power.[214] Summarised, their conceptualisation of soft power largely resembles that of the Nye's definition of soft power, even taking a similar quantitative approach in identifying and measuring soft power.

Yu Keping, a well-known political analyst and Director of the Center for Chinese Government Innovations at Beijing University as well as considered a close advisor for the previous President Hu Jintao (2002-2012), argues that education, the psychological and physical condition of the people, technological advancement, superiority of national culture, human resources and strategy, social cohesion and unity, and the sustainability of socio-economic development, are all part of soft power.[215] Wu Zhong summarises soft power in five points: cultural attraction power, influential power of thought and ideas (values), influential power of policies (including domestic and foreign),

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[212] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power*," chapter 2
[213] Yu, Xintian, "*Soft Power Enhancement and China's External Strategy*" page 22
[214] Yan Xuetong and Xu Jin, "*Sino-US. Comparisons of Soft Power*," page 16
[215] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power*," chapter 2

constraining power of institutional framework and controlling power of transnational corporations. He adds that since culture embodies a concentrated reflection of values and largely determines the level of soft power, it also is one of the most important components.[216]

The discussion of soft power has also manifested itself in the rhetoric and remarks from top Chinese leaders and officials. President Hu, for instance, has stated that soft power has two main purposes; first to enhance national cohesion and creativity, and to meet the spiritual demands of people. Second, its purpose is to strengthen China's competitiveness in the competition for comprehensive national power internationally.[217] Li Jie, a former deputy director of the Department of the Policy planning of the ministry of Foreign Affairs, defines soft power as: "*culture, ideology, spiritual pursuit and moral strength,*"[218] adding that soft power covers four aspects; (1) Culture: as the cohesiveness and appeal of the national culture, arguing that culture is the soul of the nation. (2) Ideology: in the influence and radiating power of a country's political system, ideology, values and development model, in general based and supported by the hard power. (3) International influence: A country's control and ability in and influence on the establishment of international regulations, standards and systems. (4) Image: Affinity of a country's image in the international community, thus it is important for a country's image if it can participate on an equal level, for example in resolving international problems.[219]

Li Jie contends that in order to create a favourable external environment and condition for peaceful development, China needs a balanced development of both hard and soft power. Though, hard power traditionally played a dominant role, and "might was right," - in todays' world, peace and development has become the main themes of the times, with war and revolution no longer reflecting the requirement of historical process. Thus, soft power is becoming an important manifestation of international competition, for example he makes a perspective to how the US dominates the media market.[220] He adds, that China's five thousand year old culture is a unique resource,[221] and that traditional Chinese culture – centred around "harmony" and "unity" constitutes China's unique

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[216] Wu, Zhong, "To Enhance Urban Cultural Soft power" page 249
[217] Mingjiang Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power*," chapter 2
[218] Li, Jie, "*Soft Power Building and China's Peaceful Development*," page 164
[219] Ibid: 167
[220] Ibid: 1165
[221] Ibid: 177

resources of soft power.[222] Thus, in front of conflict, Chinese culture stresses to "win people over by virtue" and to "subdue the enemy without fighting."[223]

Meng Honghua from the Party School of the Central Committee of the CCP, believes that soft power engages five core elements: culture, ideas, development model, international systems and international image. [224] Huo Zhengde, a Guest Research Fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, summarises China's soft power to rest on its traditional culture. He adds that Chinese leaders stressing the choice of peaceful development is a logical choice, based on its national conditions, historical and cultural traditions and the developments in our contemporary world. Thus, China's historical and cultural traditions, stressing harmony, good-neighbourliness etc. are consistent with the PRC's independent foreign policy of peace, developing friendly cooperative relations with all countries based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence.[225] Huo adds, that China's peaceful development is consistent with China's traditional culture and foreign policy.[226]

The Chinese discussion, especially that of policy-makers such as Li Jie and President Hu, seem to frequently refers to a domestic context. Soft power, in this context, evinces a mission for domestic purposes, unlike Nye's primary focus, which focused on its use in foreign policy. Soft power in China aims to and is largely perceived as a tool for defensive purposes, such as cultivating a better image of China to the outside world, correcting misperceptions of China, and fending off Western cultural and political inroads in China. Chinese writers, particularly academics such as Yan Xuetong, follow the parameters as identified by Nye, as culture, political values and foreign policy, though emphasizing areas that Nye originally paid little attention too.[227] Traditional Chinese culture, in particular, seems to be singled out as the most valuable source of Chinese soft power on the premises that it boasts an uninterrupted long history, a wide range of traditions, symbols and textual records. Numerous Chinese writings, especially policy makers such as Meng Hong Hua and President Hu, also focus on the soft powers historic use and emphasis in traditional Chinese culture, found in Confucianism, as well as numerous other schools of thoughts. In particular they highlight:

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[222] Ibid: 171
[223] Ibid: 173
[224] Yu, Xintian "*Soft power Enhancement and China's external strategy*," page 21
[225] Huo, Zhengde, "*Rejuvenation of Chinese civilization and China's Peaceful Development*," page 125
[226] Ibid: 126
[227] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power*," chapter 2

""*winning respect through virtues," "benevolent governance," "peace and harmony" and "harmony without suppressing differences.*"" [228] Likewise, it is often mentioned that history demonstrates the advantages of China's cultural soft power.[229] The socio-economic successes of the East Asian "dragons," are, arguably, evidence of Chinese cultural merits. Thus, while China and East Asia are in ascendance, the West has initiated a cultural reflection and readjustment – providing China with a good opportunity to expand its cultural influence.[230]

Yongnian Zheng, Chi Zhang and Hongyi Lai, argues that although Nye's soft power theory is an international politics or foreign policy discourse, the Chinese counterparts discussion is based on soft power in the context of foreign and domestic policies. While Nye focused on how US's foreign policy is effective as compared to other countries, the Chinese seems to focus on China's national cohesion, social justice, political reform, moral level etc.[231] They contend that whereas Nye largely focuses his discussion on American popular culture and political values and legitimate foreign policies, including public diplomacy,[232] in general analysing in the context of the effectiveness of US foreign policy as compared to other countries, the Chinese discussion focus on: (1) Foreign policy, including its good neighbour policy, international peacekeeping and foreign aid. (2) Domestic values and policies, especially its development model and (3) China's traditional culture, for example, propagated through the Confucius Institutes.

Yongnian Zheng, Chi Zhang and Hongyi Lai add that mainstream literature of China's soft power largely has focussed on empirical cases of popularity of soft power in China, investigating the major tools that China has used to cultivate its soft power – such as its focus on polishing its image abroad. Thus, they argue, the literature has mainly focused on the behavioural approach – e.g. how China has used its power "softly."[233] Following Nye's conceptualisation, in effect, the Chinese discussion would then focus on the behavioural power, e.g. how China, in the past and present, has *used* power, rather than the power resources themselves.

Summarised, soft power, seems to be perceived, as a tool for defensive purposes in China's international politics, and is also viewed as a means to achieve various domestic goals, which is in

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[228] Ibid: Chapter 2
[229] Please see the chapter " Soft power in Ancient China"
[230] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power*," chapter 2
[231] Hongyi, Lai and Yiyi Lu (e.d.), "*China's soft power and international Relations,*" page 23
[232] Public diplomacy is nominally understood as a state-centred process of communication with foreign audiences, however it is often also defined as the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests – extending the values of those being represented.
[233] Ibid: 3

contrast to how Nye originally described, as a tool for foreign policy.[234] In comparison with other countries approaches to soft power, such as the American, i.e. Nye's, the Chinese conceptualisation seems to be branded with its own distinctive attributes. As noted previously it seems to be wider in its scope, in general characterised with a significant emphasis on traditional Chinese culture.[235] There seems to be a rather large agreement among the Chinese academics and officials alike, that the rich and long Chinese culture, constitutes a vital element in China's soft power.

4.3 The Role of Soft Power

In the previous chapter I analysed how soft power was understood, primarily by the Chinese academics. In this chapter, the focus will move towards how soft power has been used in China, focussing on the policy-makers. Thus, this chapter will primarily investigate the popularisation and institutionalization of soft power in Beijing.

Soft power is no longer alien, or a foreign concept to the Chinese elite and officials. In Li Mingjiangs book "*Soft Power – China's emerging Strategy in International politics*" (2009), an exhaustive investigation reveals how both top policy makers, as well as academics, widely have embraced the concept. This research has been further supported by numerous other academics in a wide range of books and papers.[236] Pundits more or less all agree on why the concept has gained such a widespread fame in the Chinese rhetoric and application. Mingjiang Li and Zheng Yongian, in particular, argues that the concepts popularity could, in general, be traced back to China's need to fend off the "China threat" arguments and to reassure the world about the peaceful nature of a rising China, and that soft power, historically, has been embedded in Chinese traditional ideology, culture and foreign strategies.[237]

An popular approach in "measuring" or investigating soft power impact and role in China, especially among the academics, seems to follow the quantitative approach, in using polls or "numeric" data in their analysis. Perhaps, one could assume, due to Nye's emphasis on the quantitative approach, when he originally conceptualised soft power. [238] Thus, Li Mingjian investigates the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database, the largest and most

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[234] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power*," chapter 2
[235]Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power*," page 25
[236] Examples on such: Mingjiang Li in "*Soft Power – China's emerging Strategy in International Politics*" (2009), Inderjeet Parmar and Michael Cox in "*Soft Power and US foreign policy –theoretical, historical and contemporary perspectives*" (2010), Zheng Yongnian in "*China and International Relations*" (2010) and Hongyi Lai and Yiyi Lu in "*China's soft power and international relations,*" (2012)
[237] Hongyi, Lai and Yiyi Lu (e.d.)*,"China's soft power and international Relations,"* Chapter 1
[238] For Joseph S. Nye's conceptualisation see "*Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics" (2004).*

comprehensive database of Chinese journals and periodicals. His through search, over several different periods with different approaches, reveals a progressively increasing and comprehensive amount of publications based on or involving soft power.[239]

The beginning of the 21st century marked a newfound interest for "soft power," both among policy makers and academics in China. One Chinese scholars, whom had worked in the field for over twenty years stated: "*Various signs have indicated that since taking office, the new Chinese leaders like Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao have attached greater importance on the study of social sciences from a strategic vantage point, looking at it as an important component of the country's soft power*"[240] Likewise, inhering the traditional views from their ancient culture, Chinese scholars and policy makers viewed soft power as indispensable in their attempt to increase China's comprehensive national strength, and in regaining its position as a leading world power[241]A good and comprehensive approach in investigating the role, and understanding of, soft power in contemporary China, could be investigating and analysing its use in the policy makers rhetoric. I have previously, briefly, stated how, among others, the former deputy director of the department of the Policy Planning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conceptualised soft power. However, I have yet to, more in-depth, study soft power's role comprehensively in the official rhetoric, and not least its application in policy making.

In 2004 at the 13th group study session of the Politburo of the CCP, the Chinese leadership, according to Hongyi Lai, was first exposed to the concept of soft power. Subsequently, two articles were published in the official weekly of the Chinese government outlook (*Jiaowang*). They revealed not only the relation of the study session to soft power, but also the rationale of official thinking on soft power.[242]

The first article defined soft power as the international appeal and attraction of one nation's culture, values, social system and its political or developmental model. Furthermore, it added that the Chinese leadership decided to develop China's philosophy and social sciences as they were components of China's soft power. The second article, entitled "*China needs soft power*," claimed that culture and ideology were becoming increasingly important in the competition among nations. Consequently, China needed to develop its own soft power, aiming to gain international recognition

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[239] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), "*Soft Power*," chapter 2
[240] Sheng, Ding, "*Soft Power and the rise of China,*" page 91
[241] Ibid: 90
[242] Hongyi, Lai and Yiyi Lu (e.d.), "*China's soft power and international Relations,*" page 11

and respect. China should utilize the essence of its traditional culture in developing its soft power, such as emphasising harmony, as later embraced by the previous Premier Wen Jiabao (2003-2013). It added that such a policy would most likely be hindered by US's cultural hegemonism.[243] In 2004, the "Public Diplomacy Bureau" was established under the Information Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," it was designed to strengthen the investment, guidance and coordination of China's public diplomacy – marking an important point of departure for the active institutionalization of the use of soft power.[244] Furthermore, it is the same year that the first Confucius Institute was established in Korea.[245]

During 2004-2007, Chinese top leaders, including President Hu stressed in several high-profile meetings that China should strive for its soft power:[246] Party Chief and President Hu made that clear, at the Central Foreign Affairs Leadership group meeting, in 2006: *"The increase in our nation's international status and influence will have to be demonstrated in hard power such as the economy, science and technology and defence, as well as in soft power such as culture"* [247]

President Hu, again, in 2007 at the 17th Party Congress, stressed the urgency of building China's cultural soft power to meet domestic needs, and increasing international competition. Subsequently, Hu's statements stimulated a new round of interest in soft power throughout China, revealed both in numerous organisations, research institutes, local governments and various cultural communities held forums, discussions and conferences and not least in the attention soft power established in Chinese media.[248] Likewise, soft power had become the subject of annual conferences of both the National Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), clearly demonstrating that the political leadership deemed expanding China's soft power a pivotal part of the country's national strategy.[249]

In January 2009, Li Changchun, a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, addressed the national council of heads of publicity, stressing that publicity efforts should be undertaken to enhance China's cultural soft power, as well as further improving its national image.[250] At the end of 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs upgraded the original "Public Diplomacy Bureau" to "Public Diplomacy Office," aiming at strengthening inter-ministerial coordination, enhancing

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[243] Ibid: 11
[244] CIIS, *"The CIIS Blue Book on International Situation and China's Foreign Affairs"* (2010/2011), page 508
[245] For further information, please see the chapter "Wielding Soft Power."
[246] Hongyi, Lai and Yiyi Lu (e.d.), *"China's soft power and international Relations,"* chapter 1
[247] Mingjiang, Li (e.d.), *"Soft Power,"* chapter 2
[248] Ibid: chapter 2
[249] Youling, Liu, *"External Communication As A Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power"* page 24
[250] Shen, Yamei, *"The Evolution of Western Media Depictions of China,"* page 141

overall planning and promoting communication and exchanges with relevant institutions. It constituted a significant development, as it designated how China's public diplomacy had greatly been raised in status in China's overall diplomacy.[251] However, there also seems to be a rather wide consensus among pundits, that the institutional construction of China's public diplomacy remains a consistent prominent issue for China, in regards to coordinate and integrate the relevant work of various government agencies in a better manner.[252]

In July 2010, the Politburo held the twenty-second group session. President Hu reiterated the importance of culture for comprehensive national power, stressing the party's decision to deepen the reform of the cultural institutions, in order to develop a thriving culture, enhancing China's cultural soft power. In October 2010, the Central Committee of the CCP promulgated its proposal for the 12th five year plan, from 2011 to 2015. Article nine of said proposal concerned culture, calling for "the development of culture and an increase in national soft power," through inhering quintessential elements of traditional culture, domestic innovation, exports of cultural products and external media initiatives.[253] Soft power, and the strategic importance of soft power construction, seemed to have become an inalienable component of China's diplomatic efforts in the 12th five year plan, aimed at constructing a peaceful, progressive and cooperative national image of China.[254]

The sixth plenary session of the 17th CCP Central Committee was held in 2011. During the conference, a so-called "resolution" was approved by the senior CCP leaders, boosting the reform of China's cultural system and promoting the development of the cultural industry both domestically and internationally. It was the first time that cultural issues were discussed so intensively in the party's plenary session. The "resolution" noted that culture had increasingly become a major factor sustaining national unity, a key element of the country's comprehensive competitiveness, an important source demonstrating national creative power, and as well a critical support for the country's economic and social development. The CCP leaders, pledged to work not merely to devote more public services to enrich China's citizen cultural life, but also more resources to enhance China's cultural influence abroad.[255] The CCP propaganda chief, Li Changchun noted that the "resolution" marked the beginning of a new stage of the country's cultural sector. Youling Liu adds that the "resolution" demonstrated how "cultural construction" is regarded by policy

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[251] CIIS, "*The CIIS Blue Book on International Situation and China's Foreign Affairs*" (2010/2011), page 509
[252] Ibid: 510
[253] Xinhua Net News, "*China to enhance cultural soft power in next five years,*" http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/27/c_13578414.htm, retrieved 24.4.2013
[254] Shen, Yamei, "*The Evolution of Western Media Depictions of China,*" page 141
[255] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power*" page 243

makers as an alternative solution for the country's domestic and international issues, demonstrating the leaderships deep understanding of protecting "cultural security" and its high awareness in advancing its international influence.[256]

At the 18th CPC Congress in November 2012, President Hu, in his final report, summarised that the country's cultural soft power should be improved significantly, that core socialist values should take roots among people, laying a solid foundation for developing a strong socialist China. He also emphasised that the cultural sector should become a "pillar" of the economy.[257] Following the inauguration of the new President Xi Jinping in March, 2013, President Xi likewise emphasized the role of cultural exchange in building a harmonious world,[258] as well as highlighting the importance of soft power in exporting Chinese culture overseas.[259]

Youling Liu, contends that Chinese policy makers have formulated a strategy of expanding China's cultural strength with a hierarchical series of goals: (1) Concerning China's short-term strategy, its cultural policies seems to aim towards transforming its traditional cultural resources into effective soft power – fostering more universal awareness and appreciation of Chinese culture. It is aimed at re-thinking and self-examining Chinese traditional culture – exploring the elements in traditional culture that are valuable for the current society, attempting to fuse these elements with modern cultural expression. (2) In a medium-term, China's strategy focuses on reinforcing the interaction between cultural resources and the economic, diplomatic and political strategies of the China – thus seeking to expand China's comprehensive national power, safeguarding its national interests. (3) On a long-term, China's cultural strategy seeks to remake its culture into being one of the most influential in the world – playing a significant role in the global cultural system. In line with these goals, Chinese policy makers have outlined three major approaches, namely: (1) boosting exchanges between Chinese culture and other cultures, promoting the influence of Chinese culture and civilization (2) building a favourable cultural image of China on the global stage and (3) seeking to improve China's capacity to express its cultural power.[260]

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[256] Ibid: 244
[257] Beijing Review, "*18th CPC Congress, Major points of Hu Jintao's Report*," page 11
[258] Xinhua English News "*Profile: Xi Jinping: Man of the people, Statesman of Vision,*" http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-12/23/c_132058866_6.htm, retrieved 24.4.2013

[259] CCTV, "*Vice President Xi Jinping Continues visit to Germany,*" http://english.cctv.com/20091013/101330.shtml, retrieved 24.4.2013

[260] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 28

5.0 Beijing's Soft Power in the 21st Century

The two previous chapters investigated how soft power has been defined and applied in China. This chapter will further investigate the use of soft power in China's foreign policies, focussing on initiatives and projects that are seemingly more unique to the Chinese understanding and use of soft power than that of Nye's original conceptualisation. Its point of departure will be that of China's public diplomacy, constituting a major element in China's domestic and international behavioural soft power. "Harmonious world" and "peaceful rise" are included as more "unique" Chinese soft power initiatives. Furthermore, a short case study of the Confucius Institutes is included – providing a brief overview of one of the largest soft power strategies implemented by Beijing.

China's Public Diplomacy

As countries increasingly seem to attach importance to their national images and public diplomacy, they likewise give priority to branding and enhancing their national soft power, for example China's competence in explaining itself, i.e. how it is telling its story to the world, becomes part of its soft power, in the form of method that it co-opts the receivers. [261] China should be regarded as a latecomer into the field of public diplomacy, both in regards to its institutional adaptions[262] as well as its theoretical framework.[263] The discussion of public diplomacy in China has been defined by a theoretical discussion between Yu Xintian, holding that a theoretical framework should be developed from the perspectives of such theories as guidance, communication and values and Zhou Qing'an, a research fellow at Tsinghua University, maintaining its theoretical building should draw support from areas such as soft power studies, international communication, public relations and cultural studies.[264]

The participating actors in China's public diplomacy, in general, constitute a "stereoscopic system," covering governmental agencies, media, private groups and diplomatic and consular missions abroad.[265] China's public diplomacy's mission aims to help foreigners learn more about China's national conditions, development strategies and relevant policies – essentially seeking to increase

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[261] Shen, Yamei, "*The Evolution of Western Media Depictions of China,*" page 137

[262] For example, its first office for public diplomacy was first opened in 2004, as noted in the section "Soft Power's role."

[263] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 175

[264] CIIS, "*The CIIS Blue Book on International Situation and China's Foreign Affairs*" (2010/2011), page 506

[265] Ibid: 515

understanding of Chinese thought and culture, upgrading its cultural attractiveness and policy effectiveness. Thus, in this regards, it is also a method for Beijing to enhance its soft power, using it as a tool to reduce unnecessary troubles to its foreign relations.[266] In 2011, the Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and Dr. Qiu Yuanping deputy director of the Foreign Affairs office of the Central Committee of the CPC, each published articles - explaining China's public diplomacy. In general, they argued that the target of China's public diplomacy was to construct a relaxed and friendly world opinion, in order to support its peaceful development. Thus, China should not only pay attention to its GDP growth and world ranking, but also enhance its soft power in the aspects of its spirit and culture, promoting the coordinated development of its soft power and hard power.[267] It can be derived that China's public diplomacy, according to China's foreign minister and deputy director, was closely related to countering the "China threat theories."

Youling Liu, adds that, China's new public diplomacy, sought to allay international doubts regarding China's increasing political, economic and military power, while fostering a favourable international opinion. Thus, he contends that its external communication is oriented towards four principle goals: (1) to tell China's story to the world, publishing Chinese government policies and perspectives and promoting Chinese culture abroad, (2) to counter what is perceived as hostile propaganda, e.g. "China threat theories," (3) to counter Taiwan's struggle for independence and promote national unification and (4) to promote China's foreign policy.[268]

Harmonious World and Peaceful Rise

The "Peaceful Rise" and "Harmonious World" concepts represent important manifestations of the use of soft power in China's foreign and domestic policies. Peaceful rise was defined as a central policy by the previous administrations policy makers, intended to guide related aspects such as foreign policy and domestic development. It was, officially, first brought up by Premier Wen in December 2003, and later, in the same year, reaffirmed by President Hu, as a development goal.[269]

Zheng Bijan, a long time influential advisor to the Chinese leadership, and normally recognized as the "architect" behind the peaceful rise concept, identified it as four approaches: (1) to integrate

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[266] Ibid: 516
[267] Ibid: 555
[268] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 172

[269] Li, Jingzhi and Pu Ping, "*The Choice of China,*" page 18

China's traditional legacy into current reforms and innovation, (2) adapt China's actualities and pragmatics to the worlds desired cultural values, (3) incorporate natural sciences into social sciences and humanities and (4) associate China's external peace with its domestic harmony. [270] The reception of "peaceful rise" soon proved, that the "audience" seemed to heavily emphasise "rise." Subsequently, President Hu in late 2004 adapted the "peaceful rise" into the "peaceful development" concept, though essentially maintaining the four principles mentioned above. [271] The concept, especially, prioritized that "development" should not simply be equated with the pursuit of economic growth rates, but referring to a process for a big country to achieve rapid growth of its overall national strength - cultivating its soft power.[272]

In April, 2005, President Hu proposed for the first time to "construct a harmonious world," principally advocating the push of amicable coexistence, equal-footed dialogue, common development and prosperity among different civilizations, resembling the traditional philosophical idea of "harmony within diversity."[273] In President Hu's definition, peace and development were the main characteristics of a harmonious world. Thus, to promote "harmony" in China's foreign policy, China intended to counter the global suspicious triggered by the "china threat" theories – by communicating and advocating win-win IR, rather than seeking the benefits at the expense of other countries. [274] Internally in China, under this guidance, a series of domestic policies have been promoted aimed at closing the nation's wealth divide, balancing regional economic development and expressing increased concern for social justice, fairness, safety while easing the growing social tensions. [275] It should be noted that the "harmonious world" slogan, arguably, symbolizes an idealistic strategy – and that the contemporary Chinese society has far from evolved into a "harmonious society." There is still a long road from "talking" about constructing a harmonious society, and to successfully implement policies to create such a society.

The principles of peaceful development and promotion of a harmonious world are propagated by some Chinese scholars, [276] as the accumulation of China's diplomatic thoughts and philosophy through its history - epitomizing the important principles and values of China's diplomacy in a new era.[277] Chinese scholars seem to have become quite interested in developing "Chinese style IR" as

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[270] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 209
[271] Li, Jingzhi and Pu Ping, "*The Choice of China,*" page 19
[272] Ibid: 24
[273] Ibid: 21
[274] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle For Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 209
[275] Ibid: 31
[276] For example Li Jingzhi and Pu Ping (Renmin University)
[277] Li, Jingzhi and Pu Ping, "*The Choice of China,*" page 16

seen in the popularity of the "harmonious world" concept. William A. Callahan, searching in the China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database, reveals how prior to 2005, only three articles had discussed "harmonious world" – while in the period 2005-2009 more than 750 articles and five PhD's on the subject were published.[278]

On a theoretical level, the two new concepts represent China's philosophical development in the post-cold war period developing new Chinese style IR terminology.[279] Thus, "peaceful development" and "harmonious world" represent examples of original Chinese concepts, instead of for example a sinizied versions of American concepts such as Nye's "soft power." On a more practical level, the concepts seem to have been intended to counter the "China threat theories." Additionally, the two concepts were also conducive to the growth of China's soft power, as for example "harmonious world," represented the attractiveness of Chinese values, while embodying the Chinese diplomatic tradition of "preference for harmony."[280] However, as noted by one survey, "Soft Power in Asia,"[281] noted, only a small minority, 9-25 per cent, of respondents outside China had heard at least "somewhat" of the "harmonious world" concept.[282] In connection with the scope of this project, "peaceful development" and "harmonious world," are of theoretical and practical significance, as they, as stipulated by Yin Xintian, are closely related with the values of Chinese culture, constituting a guiding principle with China's domestic politics and external strategies, while establishing China's goals and orientation.[283]

Confucius Institutes

While the political and economic influence of China has grown rapidly in the previous three decades, its soft power has remained relatively weak.[284] Chinese traditional culture, including elements such as the language, philosophy and norms, are perhaps the most significant resource of China's soft power, as the previous discussion of soft power in China stressed. The Chinese

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[278] Callahan, William A, Elana Barabantseva (e.d.), "*China Orders the World*" page 257
[279] Li, Jingzhi and Pu Ping, "*The Choice of China*," page 30
[280] Ibid: 32
[281] The survey's result is from a 2008 multinational survey of Public opinion, originating from Chicago Council on foreign affairs (2008)
[282] Brown, Kerry, "*China 2020*," page 223
[283] Yu, Xintian, "*Harmonious World and China's Road of Peaceful Development*,"page 11
[284] EUNIC, "*Europe-China Cultural Compass,*" page 201

government has embarked on a series of great efforts, in order to express these cultural elements abroad, making them attractive and perceivable to foreigners. One of the most prominent examples of such efforts made by the Chinese government is the worldwide establishment of Confucius Institutes.[285]

Confucius, as mentioned previously,[286] was one of the most important thinkers in Chinese history. Although, Confucianism, like most of China's traditional culture, was heavily criticized and "purged" during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), it has in the last few decades undergone a significant revival. Beijing has begun to employ many ideas from Confucius, for example emphasising the role of "harmony." The use of the name "Confucius Institute" is interesting in the context of it showing a deliberate attempt for avoiding the perception of official propaganda combined with an attempt at exploiting the appeal of traditional Chinese culture.[287] Moving forward from its previous "panda diplomacy,[288]" China has followed the example of the "British Council," "Goethe Institute" and "Danish Cultural Institutes" – launching its own Confucius Institutes on a world wide scale, subsequently constituting an important part of China's public diplomacy and peaceful rise strategy as well as China's comprehensive soft power.[289]

While cultural institutes of other countries are usually independent organisations under the direct administration of their own governments, Confucius Institutes are set up and run as joint ventures between Chinese and foreign institutions.[290] The official introduction from Confucius Institutes Online states:*"…through establishing* <u>*non-profit public institutions*</u> *which aim to promote Chinese language and culture in foreign countries…* [underline added.]"*[291] Though, it claims to be a non-profit public institution, the Confucius Institutes, are all under the guidance of the Office of Chinese language of Council International, known by its abbreviation Hanban, which also provides financing and supervision. Hanban is a government organization, administered by a group made up of members from state ministries and other organizations.[292] It was formed in 1987 with officials from twelve ministries and agencies, including the State Council Office, the Ministry of Education,

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[285] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 130
[286] Please see the chapter on "the Soft Power Idea in Ancient China"
[287] Hickey, Dennis and Baogang Guo (e.d.), "*Dancing with the Dragon,*" page 40
[288] Panda Diplomacy is China's use of giant panda's as diplomatic gifts to other countries. The practice can be traced as far back as to the Tang dynasty, and was revived under the PRC in the 1950s.
[289] Ibid: 40
[290] EUNIC, "*Europe-China Cultural Compass,*" page 201
[291] http://college.chinese.cn/en/article/2009-08/29/content_22308.htm - last acessed: 22.4.2013
[292] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 160

the Ministry of Culture and the Foreign Affairs Ministry.[293] Some pundits, claim that the CCPPD's External Propaganda Department is the director and funding provider of Hanban.[294]

Beijing has treated the Confucius Institutes as a political priority, though it is rather uncertain what means the policy makers in Beijing have to influence or control the network. The institutes seems to be based on trust, where Hanban lets the individual institutes decide on what they do, how they work, their priorities and whom they employ, with Hanban merely providing supervision and guidance. One way of exercising control is through the deployment of Chinese vice-directors. The Chinese partners deploy a vice-director to every institute, most of whom do not make decision, though influencing them and informing Hanban about the program.[295]

Typically, distinction can be drawn between two models of overseas Confucius institutes; some being free-standing entitles, while others are embedded within universities or other cultural affairs organisations. In most cases, a Confucius Institute is created through a partnership between two academic institutions, one foreign and one Chinese, whereupon the start-up money will be provided by Hanban.[296] The Confucius Institutes nominally aim to, as written in its constitution: *"to enhance understanding of the Chinese language and culture, to strengthen educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other countries, to deepen friendly relationship and to help in the construction of a harmonious world."* [297]

Since the launch of the first Confucius Institute in Seoul, Korea, in November 2004, more than 170 institutes in over fifty countries had been established by the middle of 2007.[298] In the following years, Confucian Institutes have opened up in Asia,

Distribution of Confucius Institutes worldwide

Continents	Number of Institutes	Countries/Regions with the most institutes
Europe	105	France (14)
America	103	U.S. (73)
Asia	81	Korea (17)
Africa	21	South Africa (4)
Oseania	12	Australia (10)

Africa, North America, the Middle East, Europe and Oceania. As can be seen in the table (1.6)[299] in October 2010, a total of 322 Confucius Institutes had been opened, added by another 369 Confucius classrooms in 96 countries. It is rather widely believed among pundits, that the Confucius Institute

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[293] Hickey, Dennis and Baogang Guo (e.d.), *"Dancing with the Dragon,"* page 40
[294] Youling, Liu, *"External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power,"* page 160
[295] EUNIC, *"Europe-China Cultural Compass,"* page 203
[296] Youling, Liu, *"External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power,"* page 162
[297] http://college.chinese.cn/en/article/2009-08/29/content_22323.htm, Last revised; 22.4.2013

[298] Hickey, Dennis and Baogang Guo (e.d.), *"Dancing with the Dragon,"* page 40
[299] The table is based on the work of Youling Liu, in *"External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power,"* page 162

project is still in its first phase of development, primarily focussing on quantity. The subsequent phase will most likely focus on quality and selection, instead of as now where the focus seems to remain on establishing as many institutes as possible without much quality control.[300]

The table 1.6 depicts the distribution of Confucius Institutes showing how the United States and Europe, followed by Asia, are the major locations for the establishment of Confucius Institutes; one could also derive how these locations likewise constitute important targets of China's diplomatic relations. As mentioned previously, following China's economic rise post 1978 and that of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, China found itself facing an increasing facing an increasing hostile international environment – particularly of that in the West. [301] According to Hanban official homepage, by December 2011, 358 Confucius institutes had been inaugurated, and the Ministry of Education has estimated that approximately 100 million non-Chinese are learning Chinese as a foreign language. According to the official plan, by 2015 a total of 500 Confucius Institutes should have been established.[302]

The Confucius Institute project is still a very new and very much a work in progress, however it must be acknowledged that its development so forth has been very rapid. Its fast spread has made an evident contribution to the transmission of China's language and culture abroad, while also playing an important role in terms of contributing to economic, political and academic fields. They have played a substantial part in the role of promoting China's soft power, and considering the potential large foreign markets, it could also become a significant tool for also furthering China's domestic cultural industry.[303]

Since the beginning of the 21st century, external communication has regained an important priority for China's foreign policy. However, it should be acknowledged that most of the actual policies have yet to reveal how effectively Beijing has been in its commitment to wield soft power. The CIIS report from 2011, noted that China's new media strategy remains in its "infancy" - remaining a major bottleneck in China's public diplomacy. [304] China's foreign policy is still centred on

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[300] EUNIC, "*Europe-China Cultural Compass,*" page 203
[301] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 162
[302] http://www.cidenmark.com/about.php, last revised 22.4.2013
[303] Youling, Liu, "*External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power,*" page 164
[304] CIIS, "*The CIIS Blue Book on International Situation and China's Foreign Affairs*" (2011), page 567

fostering its continued economic growth, though progressive "softer" aspects have gained in prominence. Centred around Nye's concept of "soft power," Chinese scholars and officials alike has conformed "soft power" into an Chinese context, effectively adapting it to the Chinese situation and purpose. Soft power, with Chinese characteristics, has gained country wide popularity, influencing both prominent academics and policy-makers. Beijing has essentially embraced Nye's 21st century of soft power, yet also borrowing from ancient Chinese notions. Yongnian Zheng, Chi Zhang and Hongyi Lai summarises the toolkits in China's soft power diplomacy to: (1) Its reassuring political discourse. (2) Its diplomatic conduct including self-restraint over controversial issues. (3) Trade and assistance. (4) Cultural and public diplomacy.[305] However, as documented in this chapter, most of the institutionalized strategies such as China's public diplomacy and Confucius Institutes remain rather similar to that of the Western world's soft power behaviour. Though, political slogans such as "peaceful development" and "harmonious world" are characterised as original Chinese concepts – it does not seem as they have been institutionalised into China's policy making, and thus seemingly also are far more likely to retain a prominent role in China's foreign or domestic policies in the 21st century.

6.0 Summary

China has since the opium wars had gone through social unrest, destructive division, domestic political violence, civil wars, ideological governance as well as numerous external wars and conflicts, subsequently destroying its society and economy. Following 1978, Beijing's leadership under Deng Xiaoping, focussed on getting rid of China's material poverty, propelling China's successful economic modernization. In the 1990s, and increasingly since the beginning of the 21st century under Hu Jintao, Beijing's leadership has progressively focussed on developing its comprehensive national strength – modernizing and integrating its intangible resources, and incorporating its use of China's so-called soft power resources and behaviour into its overall foreign and domestic policies, progressively prioritizing a soft power behaviour, while attempting to progressively modernize its soft power resources.

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[305] Hongyi, Lai and Yiyi Lu (e.d.), "*China's soft power and international Relations,*" page 2

As publicized by Wang Gungwus' research, the early Ming dynasty seems to have been greatly influenced by the Yuan's collapse. Contemporary academic and policy-makers perceived its collapse to derive from a deficiency in regards to its development and use of soft power. However, they likewise acknowledged that the Mongol's conquest had been made possible due to the Tang and Song dynasties rather exclusive focus on soft power. Thus, Wang contended that the Ming's foreign policy was characterised by "an iron fist covered by a glove," effectively combining elements of hard and soft power behaviour. Wang's research underlined how contemporary changes in the political situation influenced Chinese thinking and policy making, and that as the neo-gramscian approach likewise highlights –all theories have an perspective that derive from a position in political and social space.

The Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 seemed to likewise deeply influenced the understanding and use of soft power for China in the post-cold war. The judgement, it seems, was that the Soviet state had only failed not due to an economic breakdown – but also because of its deficiency in regards to its development and use of soft power. Thus, the West's soft power of culture eroded the country's spirit and moral from within, effectively defeating the belief in the Communist government. The contemporary student movements and demonstrations at the end of the 1980's in China, further underlined the importance of cultivating and integrating soft power into China's defence against the West's "smokeless war," exemplified in Deng's spiritual campaigns throughout the 1990s. Thus, soft power's popularization, conceptualisation and application in China throughout the 1990s seems to have been the result of and influenced by the contemporary international political situation – that of the post-cold war period, where China faced an increasingly hostile liberal capitalistic international system.

Drawing a perspective to China's rich history revealed that the idea of soft power could be traced back to the Zhou dynasty (1122-256 BC.) The Zhou seemed to adhere to a belief in that the key to survival of the state, rested not on that of brute force but a rule based on virtue. Likewise, the use of soft power was highlighted in Confucianism, epitomized in its concepts of "rule by virtue" and "kingly way." Furthermore, it was characterised in the application and important role of soft power in ancient China's foreign relations. Soft power, over that of hard power, was integrated as a fundamental tool in the Middle Kingdoms' domestic and foreign relations, for example in the "Tributary System." Womack contended, that due to ancient China's inability to directly conquer its

neighbours, particular that of its Northern nomadic neighbours, the ancient Chinese rulers adopted a system of ruling by soft power. Thus, the use of soft power was one created out of necessity.

Following the end of the 20th century, the international system, due to globalization and development of the information society, has changed the distribution of power in the modern world. Nye, like numerous other prominent scholars and policy-makers, contend that while hard power resources and behaviour are effective in the military and economic spheres, only soft power is truly effective at the transnational. Investigating the policy-makers in Beijing revealed progressive calls for the cultivation of China's soft power resources as well as reforms and projects aimed at gradually applying soft power behaviour in China's domestic and foreign policies. Arguably, as revealed in the discussion among policy-makers and academics alike, soft power has become an inevitable tool for China, essential for fostering a more positive international environment, as well ensuring continued stability at the home front. Thus, in the 21st century, integrating soft power into China's overall foreign and domestic policies has become a necessity, complementing the previous more inclusive use of hard power resources and behaviour. For example, the numerous "China threat theories" effectively pushed Beijing to change its external communication. In this regard, soft power was introduced and popularised as a tool that, among other things, could be applied in areas where hard power behaviour was deemed inefficient – such as for fostering a more benign international opinion towards China's rise.

Traditionally, Confucianism assumed a large foundation of economic and military power. Its uniqueness derived from after achieving self-sufficiency in relying on virtue and rituals in its rule rather than resorting to the use of force, prioritizing the power of attraction, both in its foreign and domestic policies. Arguably, soft power in the 21st century likewise is relying on great underpinning of economic power, and the use of soft power similarly is resting on China's continuous economic development. Thus, the foundation of the Beijing's overall national strength, both in relation to the perception of realism theory and for the policy makers in Beijing, is still established on hard power, e.g. economic and military strength. However, like realism theory, Beijing has acknowledged the power of soft power, and the limitations of that of hard power behaviour.

Soft power, in the post-cold war period, was typically associated with notions such as "national morale" and "spiritual force", useful as a defensive tool. Investigating contemporary policy makers in the 21st century revealed that this notion of soft power still prevails. Thus, President Hu stated that soft power's purpose was to enhance national cohesion, and to meet the spiritual demands of

people. Li Jie among other things defined soft power as spiritual pursuit and moral strength. Likewise, it seems, policy-makers often tie the use of soft power to combat the "China threat theories" – essentially useful in creating a more positive international environment for China, which otherwise could hinder China's continued development, as well as a useful tool to stabilize and fend of the West's "smokeless war," which was deemed highly damaging following the student movements and demonstrations at the end of the 1980s. Furthermore, policy makers such as Li Jie and President Hu continuously called for the development and internationalisation of China's domestic cultural sector, epitomized in the world wide propagation of the Confucius Institutes. Investigating, the contemporary academic discussion, prominent pundits such as Yan Xuetong seems to a larger degree to relate to that of Joseph Nye's original definition and use of soft power. Yu Xintian, arguably, takes a wider and more comprehensive scope, contending that culture is the "nucleus" of soft power. Numerous Chinese scholars, highlights China's historic extensive use of soft power as one of the main reasons why soft power so extensively has been (re) popularised and integrated into the Chinese society in the 21st century.

The soft power discussion in China has been defined by its wider scope, arguably encompassing everything that potentially could enhance China's comprehensive national power. Thus, it has been argued that everything from China's development model to its ancient culture to its new media strategy in 2001 was part of China's soft power. Realism contends that this is a logical as a state would seek power as a means to other ends, or as an object in itself, which seems to illuminate how the Chinese discussion seems to have included everything that potentially could benefit China. Neo-gramscianism, argues that theory is always for someone and for some purpose, which in this case would establish that soft power was for the purpose of enhancing China's comprehensive power, in a way that does not alienate the international community as well as a defensive tool against the West's soft power.

In the 21st century soft power has become a significant and effective means to achieve ones national goals. Although culture, politics and foreign policy are common examples of soft power, to a smaller degree China has according to its own historical, economic, cultural and political situation, emphasised its individual approach in conceptualising and applying soft power. "Peaceful Rise/Development" and "Harmonious World" constitutes original discourses based on China's historical and cultural use of soft power, arguably re-propagating it into the modern 21st century. In

general the Chinese discussion of soft power has focussed on (1) foreign policy, including its good neighbour policy, international peacekeeping and foreign aid, (2) domestic values and policies, especially its development model and (3) China's traditional culture, particularly the Confucius institutes. The toolkits, in China's soft power diplomacy can be summarised to: (1) Its reassuring political discourse, (2), its diplomatic conduct including self-restraint over controversial issues, (3) trade and assistance and (4) cultural and public diplomacy.

China's use of soft power is still at its "infant" level. Beijing only officially began discussing and institutionalising its public diplomacy in 2004. Likewise, the first Confucius Institutes only opened in Seoul in 2004 and its new media strategy was launched in 2001. President Hu has repeatedly called for the development of China's culture, among other things to make the domestic Chinese culture competitive against the hegemonic Western culture. It has for example been highlighted by the establishment of Confucius Institutes world wide – intended to teach especially Chinese language and culture to especially the Western world. Numerous obstacles from bureaucratic coordination ranging from how to form a cohesive and well-coordinated foreign policy between an increasingly wide-ranging agencies and actors to effectively implement long-term qualified projects and initiatives continue to characterise Beijing's institutionalisation of soft power. Though, numerous Western scholars, policy-makers, observers and journalists have hyped China's soft power, it seems clear that China has been a latecomer in the cultivation and integration of soft power and that the institutionalization of soft power remains a rather weak element in Beijing's utilization of China's soft power.

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