

**Exploring China's Soft Power:
Manifestations of the Chinese Dream in
Contemporary Practices of Cultural
Diplomacy**

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Abstract

This thesis offers two contributions to the literature on Chinese soft power and practices of cultural diplomacy. Firstly, it clarifies the relationship between soft power and cultural diplomacy, situating 'attraction' and 'persuasion' as important mechanisms through which cultural diplomacy builds soft power. To gain analytic traction over the topic of cultural diplomacy, a three-dimensional framework is introduced that explores manifestations through the spheres of media, education, and cultural exchange. Secondly, the thesis develops a comparative review of Chinese cultural diplomacy with three significant global and regional powers, namely Japan, Russia, and the United States. This comparison explores the correspondence between contemporary practices and the 'Chinese Dream' framework that purportedly guides foreign policy action. Overall, the thesis argues that the practices of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan, Russia and the United States broadly correspond with Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream. Practice and paradigm both demonstrate a broad commitment to more confident leadership and projection of Chinese leadership within international politics. However, instead of adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, both the narratives of the Chinese Dream and the practices of China's cultural diplomacy vary in different cases depending on the targeted country's culture, political values, and the unique cultural and diplomatic relations with China. This shows the importance of disaggregated case study analysis to reveal the nuances of Chinese cultural diplomacy.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Introduction

This thesis provides an exploration of soft power theory and China's cultural diplomacy. The thesis develops a framework for analysing important constituent activities that exist under the umbrella of 'cultural diplomacy', and by exploring China's practices in Japan, Russia, and the United States assesses the extent to which contemporary practices reflect the recently-articulated 'Chinese Dream'. By doing so, the thesis extends scholarship on the relationship between ideas (the Chinese Dream), practice (contemporary cultural diplomacy activities), and soft power. This introduction provides an overview of the thesis and its contribution to existing literature.

Soft power and cultural diplomacy in China

Throughout recent decades, the term soft power has become increasingly popular amongst Chinese officials and academic circles. Cultural diplomacy represents an example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power, and by focusing on these practices we can shed light on soft power promotion in particular countries.

Soft power, or “the ability to get what a country wants through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment”, is not a new concept in International Relations (Nye, 2004, p.256). It has been widely used since it was first coined by American scholar Joseph Nye in 1990. According to Nye, wielding soft power, which “involves framing the agenda, persuasion, and positive attraction” would possibly contribute to a friendlier cooperative relationship between countries (2011, p.19). Nevertheless, while the concepts and mechanisms of soft power remain contested in the context of the ongoing transformations within international society, this idea continues to “play a crucial role in influencing the outcomes of inter-state relationships, as the use of hard power by state actors has been increasingly reduced” (Gallarotti, 2011, p.26).

Nye's initial theoretical framework of soft power was developed in the context of America's foreign diplomacy. However, it is noticeable that soft power has become a buzzword amongst Chinese officials and academic circles especially over the past decade. Despite having been mentioned by Chinese leaders several times in speeches and interviews, soft power was officially launched as a policy aim in 2007 at the 17th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China National Congress. In president Hu Jintao's work-report, he addressed that “China must enhance the country's cultural soft power” (Hu, 2007, p.17). Since that statement in 2007, the term 'soft power' has

received increased attention within Chinese political and academic spheres (e.g. Men, 2007; Yu, 2008; Zhao, 2012; Yan, 2014). Chinese academics have repeatedly emphasized the important role that soft power could play in promoting a more favorable global image of China and thus enhancing the external legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Yu Xintian, director emeritus of the Shanghai Institute of International Studies, pointed out that “the more fashionable the ideology is, the more people will accept it and the greater the possibility to build the country’s soft power” (Yu, 2008, p.57). As one of the members of a Chinese think tank, Wang Huning also stated that “if a country has an admirable culture and ideological system, other countries will tend to follow it... It does not have to use its hard power which is expensive and less efficient” (Wang, 1993, p.11).

In contrast to literature aiming to promote or support the promotion of Chinese soft power, this thesis aims to explore the relationship between ideas, practice, and soft power. A central focus of this thesis is the translation of soft power from theory to practice. It seeks to explore whether, and if so how, the idea of soft power has been interpreted and manifested in the implementation of China’s cultural diplomacy. Since the emergence of soft power theory in the 1990s, cultural diplomacy, defined as “the application of a state’s cultural policy abroad through the exchange of ideas, information, culture and the arts” (Cummings, 2001, p.1), has become widely analysed among scholars of International Relations (IR). However, little work has specifically analysed China’s cultural diplomacy under the framework of soft power theory. This thesis argues that cultural diplomacy represents an example of China’s attempts to cultivate soft power, and by focusing on these practices we can shed light on soft power promotion in particular countries. The concepts and associated literature allow us to have a better grasp of the links between culture and soft power, and how that relationship works within the context of Chinese foreign policy. To gain analytic traction over the topic of cultural diplomacy, a three-dimensional framework is introduced that draws from and builds on existing literature, which explores cultural diplomacy in the spheres of media, education, and cultural exchange. This relationship between the framework for analysis and existing literature is explored in Chapter One.

Introducing Xi Jinping’s Chinese Dream

After a brief overview of China’s cultural diplomacy, this section introduces the ideational core that is ‘the Chinese Dream’, which indicates the transformation of China’s foreign policy within Xi Jinping’s presidency. A central focus of this thesis is the extent to which contemporary practices reflect the recently-articulated ‘Chinese Dream’, and on points of similarity and difference in operationalization through the case study relationships.

Cultural diplomacy and cultural policy are highly contentious aspects of Chinese politics. As one of the worst incidents in CCP's history, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution during the Chairman Mao era not only led to strong discontent against state-controlled cultural policy inside China but also left China with a blemished national and international reputation, "appearing as the various needs and demands of propaganda required" (Daubier, 1974, p.3). After the economic system reform was officially launched by the second generation of the Chinese leadership, led by Deng Xiaoping, in 1979, China shifted from a centrally planned economy to a market-based economy and experienced rapid domestic economic and social development. However, after the Tiananmen Square Protest in 1989, the CCP was confronted by a legitimacy crisis and widely condemned within international society for the use of force against the protesters (Kluver, 2010, p.71).

At the beginning of the 21st century, China officially joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) after a 15-year struggle, turning it into one of the world's largest economies. Meanwhile, with the development of Nye's soft power theory amongst Chinese officials, soft power became valued and adopted in practice, which has led to an intangible transformation happening in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy. A large number of research centers and cultural exchange programs emerged due to cultural diplomacy, which is widely viewed by Chinese analysts and government officials as the means of improving Chinese soft power. For instance, the Chinese Cultural Soft Power Research Centre was first established in Hunan University, later on, with 32 universities and government departments including Peking University and Renmin University setting up soft power research centres in collaboration with it.¹ Over the last decade, a sequence of cultural reforms and policies have been made, with increased funding for a number of cultural initiatives and activities. Behind the success of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and Shanghai EXPO, a large sum of money was spent despite criticism from the public for their wastefulness. With the rapid expansion of Confucius Institutes in more than 120 countries, there is increasing financial support from the Chinese government for educational exchanges.

Noticeably, since the current President, Xi Jinping, first proposed the political appeal of the "Chinese Dream" in his speech during a visit to the "Road to Revival" exhibition in 2012, debates regarding this notion have been initiated among international mainstream news media outlets and Chinese domestic public social media platforms. Between 2012 and 2016, Xi addressed the Chinese Dream in more than 15 important speeches and documents. Recently, Xi announced again that, "we should increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's messages to the world".² This presented the strong confidence and determination of China's new leadership in modernizing China's soft power strategy. More importantly, it demonstrates that after pointing to China's lack of soft power, Nye's notion of the important transition of power from 'hard' to 'soft' has been much accepted by the

fifth generation of the Chinese leadership. Chinese new policymakers have embraced the term 'soft power' in the post-Cold War era. Within Hu Jintao's presidency, "China has deployed power resources strategically... the charm offensive was based on a sophisticated appreciation for the full range of instruments of national power" (Wilson, 2008, pp.111-112). The recent proposal of the Chinese Dream could be a good example to observe how the fifth generation of the Chinese leadership interprets and adopts the concept of soft power into the context of China.

What are the definitions of soft power and cultural diplomacy? What is the relationship between 'soft power' and cultural diplomacy? What are the key pillars of the 'Chinese Dream' ideology? How has Xi Jinping pursued soft power through the overarching ideological guidance of the Chinese Dream? How has the idea of the Chinese Dream been manifested within the practices of cultural diplomacy toward distinctive countries? To what extent is there coherence between contemporary practices of cultural diplomacy and the Chinese Dream ideology, and; to what extent do we see variation in practices of cultural diplomacy across China's targeted countries? A range of broader areas for reflection follow-on from these questions will be explored in this thesis.

This thesis clarifies the relationship between soft power and cultural diplomacy, situating 'attraction' and 'persuasion' as important mechanisms through which cultural diplomacy builds soft power. Furthermore, it develops a comparative review of Chinese cultural diplomacy with three significant global and regional powers, namely Japan, Russia, and the US. This comparison seeks to explore the correspondence between contemporary practices, and the 'Chinese Dream' framework that purportedly guides foreign policy action. Overall, the thesis argues that the practices of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan, Russia, and the United States broadly correspond with Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream. However, instead of adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, both the narratives of the Chinese Dream and the practices of China's cultural diplomacy vary in different cases depending on the targeted country's culture, political values, and the unique cultural and diplomatic relations with China. This finding shows the importance of disaggregated case study analysis when studying Chinese cultural diplomacy, in that such study allows for nuance and variation to be uncovered.

Structure and overview

This section presents the outline of this thesis that consists of the overview of three

parts and six chapters.

This thesis sets out to explore the role of cultural diplomacy as a mechanism of soft power in the context of China. Accordingly, it will begin by elucidating the mechanism of soft power and the interaction between soft power and cultural diplomacy. It will then focus on the evolution of China's cultural diplomacy, moving from ancient times to the previous four generations of the Chinese leadership after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Furthermore, the ideology of the "Chinese Dream", recently proposed by Xi Jinping, will be explored within its historical context as well as the contemporary foreign policy context. Finally, the thesis will examine how the idea of the 'Chinese rejuvenation' has been manifested in the practices of China's cultural diplomacy in relation to three particular countries, namely Japan, Russia, and the United States. In order to do so, this thesis is organized into three parts and six chapters as follows.

The first part of this thesis will explore the ideas of soft power and cultural diplomacy. Additionally, the link between soft power and cultural diplomacy will be clarified. The second part will proceed by exploring the evolution of China's cultural diplomacy from ancient times to the contemporary period. Accordingly, it will focus on exploring the historical background of the Chinese Dream and identifying Xi's Chinese Dream within the contemporary foreign policy context. The last part will look at how "China's rejuvenation" is reflected within the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy toward the three case study countries. The analytic approach and comparison between the cases demonstrate the extent to which practices of cultural diplomacy echo central pillars of the Chinese Dream, with important differences across cases.

Chapter 1

After broadly summarizing the distinctive understandings of power within the discipline of IR, this chapter will explore the emergence and development of soft power. In order to do so, the main statements and developments of Nye's soft power theory, as well as alternative perspectives, will be explored. A three-dimensional framework for studying cultural diplomacy will be established, and through this chapter the relationship between this framework and existing literature will be explored. By focusing on the three realms of China's cultural diplomacy of media, education, and cultural exchange, it aims to engage with and extend the increasingly large volume of research within the field of IR on China's soft power. It contributes to the overall aim of the thesis of exploring cross-national variation in practices of cultural diplomacy by analysing three distinctive global players: Japan, Russia, and the United States.

Chapter 2

This chapter traces the rise and development of China's cultural diplomacy from ancient times to the beginning of the 21st century. Drawing upon a historical analysis, this chapter will first explore the classic Chinese political schools of thought and their impacts on distinctive regimes. Furthermore, it will look at how Chinese cultural exchanges have developed over the period from ancient times to the twenty-first century. In order to do so, it will explore the evolution of China's cultural diplomacy in three distinctive periods. Firstly, it will analyse early cultural exchanges in ancient times to trace the original thoughts in shaping the ideas of China's contemporary cultural diplomacy. Secondly, it will provide an overview of the previous four generations of Chinese leadership since the establishment of the PRC (1949-2012). Finally, it will look at the organizational structure of China's cultural diplomacy. The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize the contemporary practices and to present material that allows elements of continuity and change over the long term to be established.

Chapter 3

This chapter will explore the idea of the 'Chinese Dream' as the conceptual guidance presently orienting China's soft power promotion. In order to do this, three sections are included. First, a literature review is provided on the notion of the Chinese Dream. Second, the foundations of the Chinese Dream are identified, with insights from historical-cultural interpretations and various relevant speeches and statements being synthesized to provide a detailed review. Finally, a sketch of China's cultural diplomacy within the context of foreign policy during Xi's presidency for the further analysis of the case studies is specified.

Chapters 4,5, and 6

The last three chapters offer assessments of the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy and the manifestation of the Chinese Dream in the practices of cultural diplomacy toward the three case study countries. The purpose is to understand the extent to which practices of cultural diplomacy echo central pillars of the Chinese Dream and whether this varies across cases. These chapters highlight the importance of disaggregated case study analysis when studying Chinese cultural diplomacy, in that such study allows for nuance to be uncovered.

The case studies of this thesis develop a comparative review of Chinese cultural diplomacy with three significant global and regional powers, namely Japan, Russia, and the U.S. Each chapter begins by analysing the evolution of each country's cultural relations and contemporary diplomatic relationship with China, therefore providing the background for understanding the history and development of cultural diplomacy. Thereafter, more specific cultural policies, initiatives, and activities will be analysed,

with the focus being on three aspects: the media, such as the film industry, internet, television, and broadcast journalism; education, such as higher education programs, language institutes and other international academic exchanges; and other cultural exchange initiatives or activities in arts, sport, tourism and so on. Each case-study concludes by identifying the key features and limitations of China's cultural diplomacy and its correspondence with the Chinese Dream within soft power theory.

Chapter 1: Soft power and cultural diplomacy

Introduction

This chapter draws on existing literature to clarify the relationship between soft power and cultural diplomacy. From Nye's work, it situates 'attraction' and 'persuasion' as important mechanisms through which cultural diplomacy builds soft power. It argues that cultural diplomacy represents an example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power. It establishes a three-dimensional analytic framework of cultural diplomacy to analyse the mechanism of soft power, which allows for a holistic and structured analysis within a field where the focus of much literature is either under-defined or somewhat narrow. It discusses that the case study develops a comparative review of Chinese cultural diplomacy with three significant global and regional powers, namely Japan, Russia, and the United States. This comparison specifically seeks to explore the correspondence between contemporary practices by focusing on three pillars of China's cultural diplomacy (education, cultural exchange, and media), and the 'Chinese Dream' framework that purportedly guides foreign policy action.

The first section presents a literature review of soft power theory surrounding its two core elements: attraction and persuasion. Through this section, the meaning and use of the concepts of 'attraction' and 'persuasion' are particularly explored. It argues that attraction fundamentally relies on certain cultural resources of soft power, which are inherently attractive, influential, and alluring in nature. Furthermore, given the diversity of the audiences, observing 'persuasion' requires us to distinguish different targets in specific contexts. The second section aims to provide a broad review of cultural diplomacy and a clarification of the relationship between soft power and cultural diplomacy. It argues that cultural diplomacy represents an example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power, and by focusing on these practices we can shed light on soft power promotion in particular targeted countries. The third section explores the existing literature on soft power and cultural diplomacy within the context of China. It points out that elements such as traditional Chinese culture and Chinese political values have remained largely neglected or under-explored in contemporary research. Furthermore, little work has specifically distinguished China's cultural diplomacy toward different targets under the framework of soft power. Therefore, to better understand China's cultural diplomacy and soft power, a clarification of its foreign policy based on a comprehensive understanding of Chinese history, traditional Chinese culture and political values as well as a systematic analysis in the practice of China's cultural diplomacy toward targeted countries is required. In the last section, it

introduces the criteria for case study selection and the methodology based on a three-dimensional analytic framework.

1.1 The foundations of soft power

This section presents a literature review of soft power theory through its two core elements: attraction and persuasion. It highlights that 'attraction' fundamentally relies on certain cultural resources of soft power, which are inherently attractive, influential, and alluring in nature. In addition, it argues that observing 'persuasion' requires us to distinguish different targets in specific contexts, which brings out the significance of case study research.

Attraction

To understand how soft power has been articulated in different contexts, it is instructive to scrutinize Joseph Nye's original explanation of the concept. As Joseph Nye argued (2004, p.11), "soft power is the ability to obtain preferred outcomes through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payments". Considerable debates have taken place regarding the two elements of soft power, namely attraction and persuasion. The debates regarding 'attraction' primarily focus on exploring the resources of soft power (e.g. Mattern, 2005; Li, 2009; Gallarotti, 2011; Rothman, 2011). Such as whether soft power exists in the nature of certain resources or not? What kinds of resources could generate attraction? Does attraction rely on certain values or is it just a political rhetoric? Are there any universal values that could resonate with the audience?

Nye devotes substantial attention to exploring the central significance of attraction within the broader framework of soft power. In his initial account, the main resources of soft power are culture, ideology, and institutions (Nye, J. 1990). In 2004, Nye (p. 11) demonstrated more explicitly that "a country's soft power can come from three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)". According to Nye, "soft power often includes intangible factors like institutions, ideas, norms, values, culture, and perceived legitimacy of policies" (2011, p.19). A premise of attraction that could mobilize soft power is that these elements are supposed to be seen as legitimate, credible, and attractive by the audience.

Nye (2008, p.14) also believes that some cultural qualities and values, like benevolence, benignity, inspiration, morality, and charisma are privileged in producing affections. In addition, legitimacy, reputation, self-criticism consistency, and credibility are becoming more important in generating attraction. On the other hand, however, some qualities like violence, arrogance, and non-humanitarianism generate little attraction even with extensive persuasion or other un-coercive approaches. That is to say, if the

content of a country's culture, values, and policies are not attractive, persuasion might lead to negative outcomes due to the inability to generate soft power (Nye, 2008, p.14). In brief, Nye has clearly demonstrated that soft power works on preferences and affections. Such a conclusion is evidently based on the assumption that some resources of soft power are inherently attractive, influential, and alluring in nature.

Existing scholarship has extended Nye's discourse of 'attraction', which can help us better understand soft power from a synthetic approach (Gallarotti, 2011; Kearn, 2011). For instance, Giulio Gallarotti (2011, p.28) defines soft power as a form of meta-power, which "describes situations in which power relations themselves are embedded within some greater constellation of social relations that influence those relations and thereby influence final outcomes that derive from the interactions among actors". According to Gallarotti, the foundation of soft power comes from international sources such as respect for international laws, international treaties and commitments, liberal foreign economic policies and willingness to sacrifice short-run national interests in order to contribute toward the collective good. Moreover, it also comes from domestic sources such as culture and political institutions (2011, p.28).

Nonetheless, the complexity of attraction seems to be the key deficiency that has led to soft power being contested. Even Nye acknowledges that attraction "is more complex than it first appears because it can refer to drawing attention — whether positive or negative — as well as creating alluring or positive magnetic effects." (2011, pp. 91–92). Li Mingjiang (2009, p.3) argues that "soft power does not exist in the nature of certain resources of power but rather it has to be nurtured through a soft use of power". According to Li, "the sources of soft power do not always produce attraction, persuasion, appeal, and emulation... Culture, ideology, values, and norms also often result in resentment, repulsion, hostility, and even conflict" (Li, 2009, p.16). Janice Mattern (2005, p. 583) also offered an alternative framework of thinking about attraction in IR by introducing the idea of 'representational force'. From her point of view, representational force is a "nonphysical but nevertheless coercive form of power that is exercised through language", therefore the attraction of soft power is more sociolinguistically structured. She rejects Nye's definition that soft power inherently rests on attractions that could be cultivated from some natural qualities. On the contrary, she argues that the symptomatic problem with Nye's account of attraction is that he neglects to answer why universal values are the 'right' ones or how one acquires such values" (Mattern,2005, p.588). That is to say, since attraction is a subjective experience, it is difficult to define what makes these values appealing to some and not to others. From Mattern's point of view, attraction is not something natural in any culture or values. Drawing on the work of Jurgen Habermas, Mattern argues that it is more likely constructed socially through communicative exchanges, thus leading to the conclusion that soft power is mainly based upon identity and language. Accordingly, she argues that "soft power should not be understood in juxtaposition to hard power but as a continuation of it by different means" (Mattern,2005, p. 583).

There is, therefore, always a strong, even if sometimes ambiguous, relationship between soft and hard power. Put simply, the struggle is between discursive and material power resources. For scholars who deny that soft power exists in the nature of certain resources, the division between soft and hard resources makes little sense in achieving the ideal outcomes empirically (Mattern, 2005; Li, 2009). As Li Mingjiang puts it, “if culture, ideology, and values can be used for coercion, and military and economic strength can be used for attraction and appeal, a better approach to soft power is how the resources of power are used rather than associating sources of power as soft or hard” (2009, p. 16). Therefore, resources can be used either in a soft or coercive way as long as it leads to preferred outcomes (Li, 2009). More specifically, both hard power and soft power can generate attraction and both tangible and intangible resources can be used in a coercive way. As Craig Hayden stated, “we find soft power resources being used in decidedly coercive ways (e.g., rhetoric signaling the impending War on Terror), and hard power resources embodying intangibles that attract and coopt” (2012, p. 135).

Without a doubt, outcomes are important for assessing the effectiveness of power. However, confusing the two approaches of mobilizing soft power would overlook the essential part of Nye’s soft power theory: ‘coercive and pay’ means to force while, although it might lead to the same result, ‘persuade and attract’ means to follow. As Nye (2008, p. 95) insists, “soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though that is an important part of it. It is also the ability to entice and attract”. In order to entice and attract, certain qualities are required inherently before mobilizing resources for effective outcomes. Soft power fundamentally relies on certain cultures, values, and policies, which are inherently attractive, influential, and alluring in nature. For example, as Shaun Breslin (2011, p.8) states, “in order to unpack soft power into its different constituent elements, the first step is to strip out economic bases of power”. Therefore, it is important to understand that soft power is not merely anything non-military, such as economic sanctions – since sanctions are clearly intended to coerce, and thus a form of hard power (Barr, 2011, p.16). Gallarotti gives further explanation to soft power through his analysis looking at the fundamental distinctions between itself and hard power. As he writes, “hard power extracts compliance principally through reliance on tangible power resources – more direct and often coercive methods (either their symbolic use through threat or actual use), soft power cultivates it through a variety of policies, qualities, and actions that endear nations to other nations – more indirect and non-coercive methods” (2011, p. 28). Gallarotti’s explanation distinguishes the different roles tangible and intangible resources play in understanding soft power. Actually, both Nye and Gallarotti have made clear-cut distinctions between how soft and hard power are used in different ways.

Nye himself has enriched his soft power theory by developing the notion of “smart power”, which is elaborated as “the combination of the hard power of coercion and payment with the soft power of persuasion and attraction” (2008, p. 4). He states that “hard and soft power sometimes reinforce and sometimes undercut each other, and

good contextual intelligence is important in distinguishing how they interact in different situations. Smart power suggests it is best to have both” (Nye, 2008, p. 24). Obviously, Nye does not deny the importance of combining soft power and hard power in different contexts towards different targets. However, Nye implies the existence of certain inherent resources that are able to generate attraction naturally. He has made a more explicit explanation: “even the best advertising cannot sell an unpopular product. Policies that appear as narrowly self-serving or arrogantly presented are likely to prohibit rather than produce soft power” (Nye, 2008, p. 103). “People who ignore the significance of soft power are like people who do not understand the power of seduction...it is a mistake to think of information campaigns in terms that misunderstand the essence of soft power” (Nye, 2008, p. 96).

To sum up, although soft power requires linguistic rhetoric, it is essential to highlight that attraction fundamentally relies on certain values or qualities, which are inherently attractive, influential, and alluring in nature.

Persuasion

The other important feature of soft power that Nye has consistently emphasized is persuasion. The debates surrounding ‘persuasion’ underline the procedure of transforming resources into favorable outcomes instead of the attributes of resources in soft power. Consequently, the central questions are more concerned with the mechanism or implementation of soft power from theory to practice: how soft power works in practical scenarios, how to wield soft power to get the desired outcomes, and how certain resources are utilized for generating soft power.

Nye states clearly that soft power not only rests on resources, but also on the specific approach to achieving the outcomes. In his words, “there is no exaggeration to say that even the best of diplomatic policies may fail if it neglects the task of interpretation and persuasion” (Nye, 1990, p. 101). In Nye’s recent article, he further developed the concept of soft power by formulating a spectrum of power behaviors as represented below (2011, p. 19):

Hard Power	Soft Power
Command > Coerce, Threat, Pay, Sanction, Frame, Persuade, Attract < Co-opt	

Nye views the process by which policymakers engage in soft power as one of the “conversion—getting from resources to behavioral outcomes” (Nye, 2008, p.8). Regarding this, Nye contends that “if one can use ideas and institutions to frame the agenda for action in a way that makes others’ preferences seem irrelevant or out of bounds, then it may never be necessary to push or shove them...A policy-maker should consider preference formation and agenda framing as a means of shaping the environment before turning to the first or command face of power” (2008, p. 24). The

spectrum shows that the conversion of soft power from resources to outcomes is a progressive procedure. In term of 'persuasion', how to convert resources to outcomes has been put forward as the central question of soft power framework.

As stated above, soft power rests on the ability of framing and persuading agendas to influence the preference of targets. Instead of thinking of persuasion as a single-tracked information interaction, this thesis suggests that it is essential to consider soft power as a two-way process of communication that involves interpreting information for different selected targets. As Nye has noted (1990, p. 16), "all power depends on context-who relates to whom under what circumstances- but soft power depends more than hard power upon the existence of willing interpreters and receivers". First of all, the perception from audiences is a crucial component particularly in assessing the outcome of soft power. As Breslin (2011, p.9) has put it, "soft power emerges from how outsiders perceive a country's values and systems". By doing so, policymakers become better able to adjust particular policies in order to increase their chances of achieving the desired outcomes. Furthermore, given the diversity of the audiences, it is essential to understand the differences between specific targets before putting forward any message or policy when observing soft power. The same cultural resource can have different impacts within distinctive contexts and thus be seen by some as a propagandistic move and others as a friendly gesture. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish different targets in specific contexts when observing the process of 'persuasion' in practice.

In brief, soft power rests on the ability of framing and persuasion as a means by which to generate particular perceptions within its audiences. Given the diversity of the audiences, it is necessary to strategically understand the differences between specific targets before putting forward any message or policy. Therefore, observing 'persuasion' requires us to distinguish different targets in specific contexts, which brings out the significance of case study research as will be argued later in this chapter.

1.2 Cultural diplomacy: the means of mobilizing soft power

This section aims to provide a broad literature review of both soft power and cultural diplomacy, with a clarification of the relationship between the two. It argues that cultural diplomacy refers to a broad set of practices that overlap substantially with working understandings of soft power, which represents an example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power. As such, practices of cultural diplomacy and associated scholarship on cultural diplomacy provide a useful focus through which to explore soft power.

Since soft power is such a broad idea to grasp, understanding how soft power works in the contemporary political milieu requires us to observe it in a more tangible context. Persuasion and framing are both embedded with the practice of agenda-setting and thus the implementation of foreign policy. Therefore, a central feature in the

translation of soft power from theory to practice is how this idea has been manifested into the implementation of foreign policy. Some studies have explored soft power through the lens of public diplomacy (e.g. Wang, 2011; Hayden, 2012; D'Hooghe, 2015). Hayden (2012, pp.12-14) argues that, "soft power's currency is most readily observable in the spread of 'public diplomacy' initiatives and similar policies". However, little attention has been paid to the observation of soft power in the context of cultural diplomacy or the relationship between the two. As argued in the previous section, since soft power fundamentally relies on certain cultures, values, and foreign policies, setting out to explore how soft power has been promoted by the states requires a more specific context. Accordingly, this thesis argues that cultural diplomacy represents a useful example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power.

Cultural diplomacy, which refers to a wide range of "governmental initiatives, programs, and discourses designed to promote the country's culture, tradition, language, or art" (Otmazgin, 2012, p.37), is not a new concept in IR. The book entitled *Cultural Approach: Another Way in International Relations* (McMurry and Lee, 1948) presents an early effort to combine foreign policy and cultural relations by exploring the distinctive characteristics of cultural activities performed by major powers, such as France, Japan, and the U.S. in the 1940s. So far, although the definitions and mechanisms of cultural diplomacy are often ambiguous, with different perspectives and overlapping concepts being used by scholars and policymakers, there are three main schools of thought.

Milton Cummings (2003, p.1) defines cultural diplomacy as "the application of a state's cultural policy abroad through the exchange of ideas, values, systems, traditions, arts, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding", which highlights the purpose of cultural diplomacy in fostering mutual understanding through the exchange of cultural activities. This school of thought suggests that the key function of cultural diplomacy is cultural communication, which aims at cultivating mutual understanding. It argues that cultural diplomacy is characterized by its focus on two-way exchanges and mutual understanding; culture exchanges constitute a key element in cultural diplomacy (Hu, 2007; Schneider, 2009).

The second school of thought inspects cultural diplomacy from a political state-centered perspective. Wai-Chung Ho's explanation highlights the distinction between cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy. He points out that the main purpose of cultural diplomacy is to promote the nation's culture, promote public opinions of counterparts, and to build integrity and credibility through cultural exchanges (Ho, 2018, p.58). It argues that international cultural exchange cannot be separated from national interests. Similar to propaganda, cultural policy is a politically motivated set of initiatives and actions designed to influence mass opinion by appealing to emotions rather than rational thinking (Kushner, 2006, p.4). This school of thought considers cultural diplomacy to be a "unilateral process of projecting a national image and pursuing national interests through cultural activities" (Higham, 2001, p138). In this way, the central purpose of cultural diplomacy is for the people of a foreign nation to

develop an understanding of the home nation's ideals and institutions in an effort to build broad support for economic and political goals (Maack, 2001).

The third school of thought does not deny cultural diplomacy as a political instrument but addresses the importance of distinguishing cultural diplomacy from propaganda (Mulcahy, 1999). J. Mitchell defends the term 'cultural diplomacy', seeing cultural propaganda "at one end of a scale that passes through cultural diplomacy to cultural relations at the other" (1986, p. 28). This school of thought views cultural diplomacy as politically charged but distinguishes it from the coercive strategies used by dominant aggressive states. For this school of thought, cultural diplomacy is often viewed as an essential part of public diplomacy, encompassing a series of cultural exchange activities relevant to education, language, sports music, and art. Ben O'Loughlin' underlines the audience of cultural diplomacy and its connection between public diplomacy, as he said, "cultural diplomacy is a more specific term insofar as diplomacy is usually associated with states. States' public diplomacy is states liaising with publics in other states, so cultural diplomacy being states liaising with other states or their peoples through the medium of culture" (O'Loughlin, personal communication, cited in Rivera 2015, p.10).

Cultural diplomacy has been closely linked with public diplomacy. To a great extent, cultural and public diplomacy are the same, due to the number of similarities they share. As first noted by former U.S. diplomat Edmund Gullion in 1965, public diplomacy was developed partly to distance overseas governmental information activities from the term propaganda, which had acquired pejorative connotations (USCCPD, 2006: paragraph 3). Different from traditional diplomacy, which is mainly deployed between governments at the highest level, both cultural and public diplomacy focus on the ways in which a country communicates with citizens. In such an era where information technology has been rapidly developing, the engagement of the public in soft power means diplomacy is no longer exclusive to political elites (Melissen,2005; D'Hooghe,2015). However, considering the content as the main difference between cultural and public diplomacy seems to make more sense in the observation of soft power. Cultural diplomacy, "the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented"(Sharp, 2012, p.23) tends to focus specifically on the cultural dimension which manifests through a series of cultural exchanges, media communication, and educational exchanges, rather than the dimension of hard power such as economic or military elements.

However, it is worth noting that some issues are still missing within the literature review. First of all, as argued before, little attention has been paid to the observation of soft power in the context of cultural diplomacy or the relationship between the two. Obviously, Nye's soft power theory is tightly linked with cultural diplomacy as culture, political values, and foreign policy are formed from the main resources of soft power. Nonetheless, there is often a distinct lack of clarification in existing literature when it comes to the definition of cultural diplomacy and how it relates to the concept of soft

power. Since culture and foreign policy are the main resources of soft power, setting out to explore how soft power has been manifested in cultural diplomacy contributes to a better understanding of soft power within specific contexts. By clarifying the existing debates of soft power and cultural diplomacy, this thesis argues that the bottom line for understanding the relationship between the two is that cultural diplomacy can be deployed as a means of mobilizing soft power by the governments. Here 'mobilizing' means both generating and wielding soft power. More specifically, generating soft power involves the integration of soft power resources that a country possesses and the strategy of framing an agenda to maximize the possibility of wielding soft power. Whereas wielding soft power includes the process of persuading and influencing either other states or the citizens of those states in order to achieve one's foreign policy goals.

On the one hand, cultural diplomacy can be more explicitly related to issues of security and foreign policy. The United States Department of State, for example, notes a commitment to "enhancing national security by informing and influencing foreign publics and by expanding and strengthening the relationship between the people and the government and citizens of the rest of the world".³ On the other, cultural diplomacy also strives to build commonalities by interpreting the resources of culture, values, and institutions inside the home. Leonard, Stead, and Smewing (2002, pp.10-11). identify three alternative purposes, or sphere of public diplomacy: political/military, economic and societal/cultural. The latter particularly demonstrated that cultural diplomacy plays an important role in acting as the means by which a country can promote its soft power (Wastnidge, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to consider cultural diplomacy as an example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power, and by focusing on these practices we can shed light on soft power promotion in particular targeted countries.

In sum, cultural diplomacy refers to a broad set of practices that overlap substantially with working understandings of soft power. Cultural diplomacy represents an example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power, and by focusing on these practices we can shed light on soft power promotion in particular targeted countries

1.3 Soft power and cultural diplomacy in the context of China

The following paragraphs explore the literature on soft power and cultural diplomacy within the context of China. Firstly, it argues elements such as traditional Chinese culture, Chinese history, and Chinese political values have been largely neglected or unclarified in the existing literature. Secondly, little work has specifically distinguished China's cultural diplomacy as a means for mobilizing soft power toward different targets. Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing a holistic analysis of China's cultural diplomacy in cross-culture and cross-country studies within soft power theory, based on a deep understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture.

It is difficult to overstate the speed with which soft power has diffused from academia to practical and political discussions. Early practical research mainly concentrated on the United States' foreign policy, where the theory is primarily developed in practice (e.g. Nye, 1990; Nye, 2002; Nye, 2003; Nye, 2004; Kurlantzick, 2005). With the increasing attention and development of soft power theory over the past decade, a large number of international political scholars embarked to move beyond the context of the U.S. to astutely explore soft power theory in a broader setting. Scholars and officials have discussed soft power in a diverse range of countries, including Russia (Yulia, 2015), the United Kingdom (Nisbett, 2015), Germany (William, 2008), Saudi Arabia (Gallarotti, 2015), Australia (Broinowski, 2012), Iran (Edward, 2015) and Greece (Zartaloudis, 2013). The focus of analysis in studies of soft power also varies from social media to public policy (Rawnsley, 2015; Creemers, 2015), employment policy to higher education (Artaloudis, 2013; Lee, 2015; Metzgar, 2015), and energy security to cultural relations (Goldthau and Sitter, 2015; Meissner, 2002).

Nowadays, the usage of cultural policy and cultural diplomacy has developed considerably with most countries displaying their culture abroad as part of their international conduct. In the field of practical research, studies of cultural diplomacy in developed countries have drawn the most attention. Those case studies mainly focus on the US, the UK, France, Russia, Japan, and other developed countries (e.g. Krenn, 2017; Pamment, 2016; Lane, 2013; Simons, 2018; Akagawa, 2014). For example, Topic and Rodin (2012) analyse cultural diplomacy imperialism from a European perspective. At the same time, they clarify certain definitions as there is some overlapping confusion between cultural and public diplomacy. Their book draws a well-organized outline of the application of cultural diplomacy in European countries (2012). In addition, the book *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy* also provides valuable insights for analysing the evolution of cultural diplomacy in the global context (Gienow-Hecht and Donfried, 2010).

Strategy begins the analysis of China's soft power foreign policy in security or economic affairs and has been offered mostly within a realist framework, however, often fail in providing a comprehensive explanation of China's behaviors towards cultural diplomatic policy (e.g. Passin, 1963; Ratliff, 1968, Murray, 1976). Some scholars researched China's cultural diplomacy during the period from the 1950s to the 1990s. In the book *China's Cultural Diplomacy*, Hebert Passin (1963) analyses China's cultural diplomacy toward selected countries in Asia, Australia, and Western Europe from 1949 to 1960, emphasizing each country's slightly different range of practices. William Ratliff (1968) on the other hand examines the process of China's cultural diplomacy in Latin America, focusing on cultural exchange activities between the government and non-government entities/individuals/corporations/persons. However, as Murray (1976, p.28) states, China's cultural diplomacy during that time (between the 1950s and the 1980s) is "difficult to be removed entirely from politics". Passin (1963, p.1) also found it is difficult to keep up with the fast flow of events during

the periods of rapid political upheaval, such as the Sino-Soviet conflict in the 1960s. Overall, research in both the implementation and the policy-making process of China's cultural diplomacy was deeply constrained by China's political relations and the associated ideological tension, which fairly limited the depth of academic exploration towards this topic.

It is noteworthy that the international structure has been greatly transformed since the end of the Cold War. Impacted by the information revolution and globalization, cultural diplomacy has become a rapidly evolving field of research. Since soft power theory was first introduced to China in the 1990s, much more work has been done on the development of China's soft power and cultural diplomacy in political science journals and the academic sphere in the 21st century (e.g. Callahan, 2005; Yan, 2007; Kurlantzick, 2007, Ding, 2008; Wilson; 2008, Barr, 2011; Breslin, 2013; Hartig, 2015; Edney, 2015; Rawnsley, 2015, Wang, 2015; D'Hooghe, 2015). Some work has discussed China's soft power and cultural diplomacy from a relatively "cheerleading" perspective; often assuming that interventions have effectively expanded China's soft power and providing details of contemporary activities. It argues that the implementation of China's foreign policy has contributed to the enhancement of China's soft power and allowed for the efficient wielding of its soft power in constructing a desired international order. As Ernest Wilson (2008, p.18) argued, "China's soft power strategy was based on a sophisticated appreciation for the full range of instruments of national power". Sheng Ding (2008) examined China's recent success of mobilizing soft power in Africa and Latin America, with the examination aiming to provide a more complete understanding of China's national power and the modernization process. Joshua Kurlantzick (2007) stated that China's diplomacy has become increasingly sophisticated, and its growing trade and aid promote a benign view of China that allows it to push its hard goals. Drawing on years of experience tracking China's policies in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa, Kurlantzick reveals how China has wooed the world with a "charm offensive" that has largely escaped the attention of American policy makers. In a provocative conclusion, he considered a future in which China may be the first nation since the Soviet Union to rival the United States in international influence. (Kurlantzick, 2007).

In contrast, other literature is from a more "critical" perspective, seeking to identify tensions, contradictions, and hypocrisy in current practices. Nye himself argued that China "needs to match words and deeds in its policies, be self-critical, and unleash the full talents of the civil societies".⁴ Kingsley Edney alluded to the practice of hard power through "the use of propaganda has deliberately restricted the development of such transnational civil society coalitions" (2015, p.188). William Callahan stated that "soft power works in a different way in China which is negative rather than positive" (2005, p. 217). He also pointed out that some problems, such as China's censorship and the overseas development of Confucius Institutes, have been seen as a setback rather than the positive strategy of spreading Chinese civilization as "it is employed as a tool in domestic policy more than in foreign affairs" (Callahan, 2005, p. 226). Similarly, Falk Hartig (2015) argued that Confucius Institutes, as one of the instruments of China's

cultural diplomacy, have failed in increasing China's soft power due to practical issues and credibility problems. Rogier Creemers also pointed out that, "China's top-down, state-driven approach to communication that pays little attention to market demand or audience concern, enjoys little credibility and conflicts with other sources of information to which audiences have access" (2015, p.317). As Gary Rawnsley noted, "more communication does not necessarily mean better or more readily accepted communication... China is still struggling with converting its soft power resources into tangible changes in international opinion" (2015, p.284).

Since the popularization and adoption of soft power by the Chinese government, a large number of articles and books discussing this topic and cultural diplomacy have emerged amongst Chinese academics, particularly over the past decade. Yiwei Wang (2015) explores the Chinese approach to soft power and pointed out that China's public diplomacy carries the burden of a huge language and cultural gap in communicating with the world (p.266). Zhi Li, who studied cultural diplomacy from a communication studies approach, stated that "it has been a common phenomenon that nations seek for political purposes through cultural diplomacy. Nonetheless, how to take advantage of this approach, for what kind of political purpose, mainly depends on a country's political ideology, social development level, and foreign policies" (2005, p.1). Some Chinese analysts moved beyond Joseph Nye's original theoretical framework for soft power to develop the core value of China's soft power in Chinese academic circles and scholarship. The majority of Chinese research points out that culture or cultural values are at the core of soft power (Yu, 2011; Wang, 1993). These works argue that the concept of appropriately defining China's cultural soft power has the potential to serve as a vital integrative factor for creating a positive global image of China. Those analysts have paid considerable attention to seeking what is China's soft power, what kind of resources are available for wielding its soft power and the interpretation of China's soft power. Some scholars have also argued that enhancing China's soft power needs to be enriched with more Chinese characteristics (Men, 2007). Xuetong Yan (2007, pp 4-5) stated that China should pay more attention to improving its political power since starting with politics is not the same thing as starting with culture.

Recent literature on China's soft power and cultural diplomacy has placed a greater focus on comparing China's soft power with other countries (Rawnsley, 2015; Wilson, 2015; Hayden, 2012). For instance, Rawnsley (2015) compared how China and Russia have increased their international broadcasting capacity as a particular vehicle for public diplomacy in quite distinctive ways. He argues that China tends to use it as a means of rectifying 'perceived distortions in the global flow of news about China', whereas Russia focused on reporting events that negatively affect the image of the US (Rawnsley, 2015, p.273). Furthermore, case studies mainly focus on the regions of Asia and Africa (Meissner, 2002; Kurlantzick, 2007; Li, 2009; King, 2013; Zhang, Wasserman and Mano, 2016). It is noteworthy that in D'hooghe's book *China's Public Diplomacy*, she provided a systematic analysis of the concept of public diplomacy in the context of China. She examined how the development and conduct of China's public diplomacy

over the last two decades should be understood in relation to recent developments, particularly in Asia and Africa (D'hooghe, 2015, p.353). Some studies also explored China's soft power by paying particular attention to certain initiatives, such as the development of the Confucius Institutes and the recent Belt & Road initiatives (e.g. Wang, 2011; Hughes, 2014; Hartig, 2015; Lahtinen, 2015; Gil, 2017).

However, existing literature does not go far enough in what comes to capturing the dynamics of China's cultural diplomacy, in particular against the background of soft power theory. First of all, because culture, political values and foreign policy are formed from the key resources of soft power, it is essential to consider the three factors when observing soft power. Barr's work (2011) sheds light on the mutual perception and understanding regarding the rise of China from the perspective of a western observer. It reveals how traditional Chinese values and historical events such as *Tianxia* and the *ZhengHe Voyages* were adopted as the resources for promoting China's soft power, as well as observing how it is intertwined with hard power (Barr, 2011). Nevertheless, elements such as traditional Chinese culture, Chinese history, and Chinese political values have still been largely neglected or unclarified in the existing literature surrounding China's soft power and cultural diplomacy. In order to understand how ideology works in the Chinese social context and how it is reflected in practice, a more systematic clarification of the Chinese mentality based on a deep understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture is necessary.

Furthermore, few authors have specifically distinguished China's cultural diplomacy as a means for mobilizing soft power toward different targets (Ding, 2008; D'Hooghe, 2015; Hartig, 2016). As argued in the first section, soft power rests on the ability of framing and persuasion as a means by which to generate particular perceptions within its target audiences. It is important to consider it as a two-way process of communication involving significant amounts of interpreted information for different selected targets rather than a single-tracked information interaction. As Breslin (2013, p.628) states, "it is notable that China has a number of different relationships with neighbors rather than a single overarching and all-encompassing regional agenda". "Categorical judgments about Chinese soft power worldwide should be made with due caution and take into account every imaginable angle of policy" (Creemers, 2015, p.317). For those works that simply highlight the importance of Chinese culture as the resource of China's soft power or draw a focus on "promoting ancient cultural icons whom it thinks might have global appeal"⁵, it would be inadequate without paying attention to the diversity of the receiving audiences. Because perceptions differ across distinctive policies among different audiences, analysing how soft power has been manifested into cultural diplomacy requires distinguishing its targets in the specific processes and the contextual factors that generate particular outcomes.

In sum, to better understand China's cultural diplomacy and soft power, a clarification of its foreign policy based on a comprehensive understanding of Chinese history, traditional Chinese culture and political values is required. Drawing from a historical

and cultural perspective, this thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing a holistic analysis of Chinese foreign policies in cross-culture and cross-country studies, looking both at Chinese and English-language literature. Furthermore, a greater focus on the processes by which policies are adapted to specific contexts toward selected targets would also allow us to tackle some of the current limitations of China's soft power research.

1.4 Case study selection and methodology

This section introduces the criteria for case study selection and the methodology based on a three-dimensional analytic framework.

The case studies of this thesis develop a comparative review of Chinese cultural diplomacy toward three significant global and regional powers, namely Japan, Russia, and the United States. There are two key criteria for determining the case study selection. First of all, selected countries are great powers in the international arena who play crucial roles in China's foreign policy-making process. They represent some of the strongest international players whose significance within Chinese politics has become increasingly salient in recent years. The practice of cultural diplomacy toward those great powers reflects the Chinese government's soft power ambition and indicates China's strategy in the international theatre. Furthermore, the case studies have been chosen because of their unique cultural characteristics and cultural relationships with China. By discovering distinctive cultural relationships between China and the case study countries, the thesis explores how the Chinese Dream is reflected in each empirical practice of China's cultural diplomacy and what the potential constraints in promoting its soft power within the case study countries may be. Accordingly, the development of cultural exchange between China and these three countries is understood to have a key role in future developments within the global order, both economically and culturally.

China's neighboring country Japan, the world's third-largest economy, shares a number of cultural similarities when it comes to traditional culture and philosophical values. The cultural relationship between China and Japan has lasted for nearly 2,000 years, and the influences of that connection are still evident. As the older of the two civilizations, Chinese culture, especially traditional culture popularized in the Ming dynasty, had a massive influence on Japan, which can be found in areas such as language, philosophy, religion, and art. Interestingly, this historical-cultural affinity seems to be challenged regularly by historical disputes and territorial conflicts, which has given rise to a great deal of public concern. Japan is often depicted as a regional contender whose historical relationship with China has been troubled. Both countries tend to forge their historical narratives in ways that frame them as their historical 'Other'. Therefore, exploring how China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan has been deployed in this specific cultural and political context can bring more significance in

understanding how soft power works in a specific context.

The case of Russia is particularly relevant in that both China and Russia have historically represented the dominant powers within their respective regional spheres. What is more, both see themselves as representing alternative development models to that promoted by the West, and thus both end up contesting the Western narratives of globalization (Lavrov, 2008; Rawnsley, 2015). And like China, the Russian Federation has also devoted a significant amount of resources towards the development of non-military instruments of foreign policy in recent years. Nonetheless, recent studies have suggested that these countries tend to use different strategies when it comes to the role of culture in their broader strategies of soft power (Rawnsley, 2015; Wilson, 2015; Simons, 2015). Moreover, Russia and China have also been seen as emerging powers whose shared interests and growing international importance has led to the constitution of multilateral institutions. The BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) reflect how their shared interests go well beyond the economy and include broader concerns related to border and energy security. Indeed, it can be argued that these topics have represented the bulk of the literature concerned with the relationship between China and the Russian Federation. Both countries also tend to be more pragmatic than strategic in regard to their acceptance of other cultures in their territory and, indeed, their overall foreign policy. In other words, both Russia and China are often depicted as being resistant to the incorporation of alternative cultural values within their society. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore how China has been deploying cultural diplomacy toward Russia as a means of enhancing its soft power within the Chinese Dream era.

The comparative study of soft power and cultural diplomacy between China and the United States has been the central topic in international relations literature (Nye, 2012, 2015; Kurlantzick, 2007; Dynon, 2013; Zhang, 2010). The Sino-American relationship is becoming increasingly renowned as the world's most influential bilateral relationship. However, at the same time it has been regularly challenged by major conflicts and crises. "Strip away the ostensibly benign surface of public diplomacy, cultural exchanges, and language instruction, and it becomes clear that the U.S. and China are engaged in a soft power conflagration – a protracted cultural cold war" (Dynon, 2013, para.2). On the one hand, soft power theory originated in the context of the United States. On the other hand, it has been popularized in an emerging developing power, both among Chinese academic circles and officials over the last decade. Given the distinctive differences in their political values, cultural background and their foreign policy goals as great powers within international society, it is worth exploring China's cultural diplomacy and its correspondence with the Chinese Dream in the case of the United States.

This thesis specifically seeks to explore the correspondence between the ideas embedded in the 'Chinese Dream' that purportedly guide Xi's foreign policy and

practices of cultural diplomacy in these three cases. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, analysis of the evolution of cultural relations provides the background for understanding the history and development of cultural diplomacy toward the three countries. On the basis of this historical study, the analysis of current practices of cultural diplomacy is based on a three-dimensional framework, structured along three realms: the media (e.g. film, book and publishing, internet, television, and broadcast), education (e.g. education exchange programmes, language institutes), and cultural exchange (e.g. culture, music, art, sport exchange initiatives and activities).

Media plays a key role in shaping people's perception and thereby the implementation of cultural diplomacy. As Barr (2011, p.45) noted, "in order to expand the reach and impact of its state-run media and improve the effectiveness of mass communication as a means of state soft power, China has committed U.S. \$6.5 billion for the overseas expansion of its main media organizations". While traditional media, such as television and newspapers, has historically played a central role in the implementation of cultural diplomacy, it has been gradually replaced by the internet as a key tool for mobilizing soft power (Li, 2003). In the new digital era, the emergence of new media has considerably influenced the approach that cultural diplomacy takes. The introduction of the Internet to China in 1994 paved the way for two decades of rapid media transformation up until 2014. In 2011 the number of mobile Internet users in China had reached 356 million, and by 2017 this number had more than doubled to 724 million.⁶ Given the importance of new media and China's dramatic media investment, it is necessary to consider the media as a research point in observing the formulation of China's cultural diplomacy.

Educational exchange is another approach to consider when looking at the dynamic of China's cultural diplomacy. Over the last decade, large numbers of educational institutes such as Confucius Institutes, cultural studies centres, and hubs have emerged towards international audiences both inside and outside of China. Since the first Confucius Institute opened in Korea in 2004, there have been more than 500 Confucius Institutes and Classes set up around the world. Furthermore, according to data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), more than 700,000 Chinese students were studying abroad in 2015 (UNESCO 2016), while fewer than 400,000 foreign students were enrolled in Chinese universities in 2014 (Institute of International Education 2014) (Bislev, 2017, P.82). Between 2016 and 2017 there was an 11.74% increase in the number of Chinese students studying overseas; this was the first time the number had exceeded 600,000, reaching 608,400. In the policy instruction on how to strengthen patriotic education in the Chinese educational system, it suggests the creation of a network that integrates domestic and foreign students and experts to promote the Chinese Dream, thus encouraging all Chinese overseas students to play the role of potential ambassador among the people.⁷ This clearly illustrates the government's increasing interest in using educational exchanges in its cultural diplomacy to project a favorable image of China that eradicates any potential misunderstandings.

Cultural exchanges such as culture, music, art, sport exchange initiatives and activities has been a central research topic in traditional cultural diplomacy and cultural relations (Passin, 1968; Ratliff, 1969; Taylor, 1978). Exchanges of official delegates, non-governmental organization (NGO) workers, artists, musicians, actors and athletes between countries promote diversity by helping participants and the individuals in their host countries learn about other cultures. In this case, cultural exchanges comprise a variety of events and initiatives, such as cultural festivals, heritage protection cooperation, governmental and international organization-led delegation visits, and other various cultural exchange in sports, music, dance, handicrafts, tourism, and so on.

While all the documents, speeches, and videos made by states leaders and policymakers are usually available online, the task for each chapter is to systematically investigate the evolving pattern in official discourses and how they frame the relationship between China and each particular country. The sources are mainly taken from policy documents within the Ministry of Foreign affairs of PRC and the Ministry of Culture of PRC, the Chinese leadership's speeches and reports on important international events and party congresses, and the conversations or interviews between spokesmen of the Ministry of Foreign affairs and world mainstream media. The timeline mainly focuses on the period from the establishment of the PRC in 1949 to now, especially on the fifth generation of Chinese leadership. Broad reviews of earlier events and dynamics are incorporated to provide a sense of continuity and change, and to allow for reflection on whether the articulation of the Chinese Dream has been followed by a significant change in practices of cultural diplomacy. Furthermore, it also includes comprehensive readings of relative literature on soft power analysis, Chinese culture studies and Chinese foreign policy studies, including scholarly articles and books, media reports, and various texts both in Chinese and English. In addition, school textbooks, feature documentaries, films and television programs will also be analysed. As will be argued in Chapter 2, the administrative structure of China's cultural diplomacy is a top-down administration with various branches and offices undertaking relevant responsibilities. Although non-governmental organizations play an essential role in cultural exchanges, both the scale and the number of those Chinese non-governmental organizations seem insufficient and less developed in terms of quality and experience. Therefore, the case study in this thesis would mainly focus on the government-led or states-organized events and initiatives.

Conclusion

This thesis aims to answer the central research question of: what are the key pillars of the 'Chinese Dream' ideology; to what extent is there coherence between contemporary practices of cultural diplomacy and the Chinese Dream ideology, and; to what extent do we see variation in practices of cultural diplomacy across China's targeted countries? Guided by these research questions, it will offer a reflection of the ways in which soft power has been mobilized through the overarching ideological guidance of the Chinese Dream and the practice of cultural diplomacy toward the case study countries of Japan, Russia, and the United States. In addition, a few sub-research questions that are closely linked to the central question will also be answered: What is the relationship between soft power and cultural diplomacy? How do we identify the Chinese Dream within Xi's presidency? How has the idea of the Chinese Dream been reflected in the practice of cultural diplomacy and in the promotion of soft power in relation with three specific countries? What cultural resources have been adopted to project a particular image of China toward each country? What image does the Chinese government intend to cultivate through cultural diplomacy?

In short, this thesis represents an effort to fill the gap in the dynamics between China's soft power and cultural diplomacy, particularly in the era of the Chinese Dream. It provides a critical examination of how soft power is mobilized in the formulation of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan, Russia and the United States. Each case represents a distinctive aspect of how soft power has been mobilized through the overarching ideological guidance of the Chinese Dream and the implementation of China's increasingly sophisticated cultural diplomacy during Xi's presidency. Overall, the analytic approach and comparison demonstrates that the extent to which practices of cultural diplomacy echo central pillars of the Chinese Dream varies across cases.

Chapter 2: The evolution of China's cultural diplomacy

Introduction

This chapter traces the inception of China's cultural diplomacy in ancient times and follows its development through to 2012. It highlights the importance of traditional Chinese schools of thought, particularly Confucianism, in understanding a broader pattern of continuity within the CCP's ideology. It provides an overview of China's cultural diplomacy within the previous four generations of Chinese leadership and argues that cultural diplomacy has been playing an increasingly salient part in the CCP's foreign policy practice. It also explores the dynamics of the key actors in China's cultural diplomacy, particularly within the three case study countries. It argues that China's cultural diplomacy is predominately performed by governmental departments and organizations, featuring a top-down administrative structure. Overall, traditional Chinese schools of thought, particularly Confucianism, play an essential role in understanding a broader pattern of continuity within the CCP's ideology. Chinese cultural diplomacy, featuring a top-down administrative structure, has been a key tool in China's continuous foreign policy within the CCP regime.

The first section explores the three main classic schools of Chinese political thought and China's early cultural exchange activities. It argues that traditional Chinese political values, particularly Confucianism, provide a significant philosophical backdrop against which to understand a broader pattern of continuity within the CCP's political narrative. Early explorations as historical anchorages provide the background for understanding how the Chinese envisage the position of China in international society and the political priority with a sense of continuity in the CCP's broader political narrative. The second section focuses on contemporary China's cultural diplomacy within the periods of the previous four generations of Chinese leadership. It argues that cultural diplomacy has been playing an increasingly salient part in the CCP's foreign policy. It provides an overview of China's cultural diplomacy within the previous four generations of the CCP's leadership, thereby setting the stage for the investigation of the dynamic between cultural diplomacy and soft power under the fifth generation of Chinese leadership. The last section clarifies the key organizations of China's cultural diplomacy, examining how they function within its own field in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy. It argues that China's cultural diplomacy is predominately conducted by governmental departments and organizations, featuring a top-down administrative structure. Both the scale and number of Chinese non-governmental organizations seem insufficient and less developed in terms of quality and experience.

2.1 The seeds of China's cultural diplomacy

This first section seeks to shed light on the seeds of China's cultural diplomacy through the examination of the three mainstream traditional Chinese schools of thought and early cultural exchanges. The purpose is to highlight their significance in providing valuable insights into China's contemporary practices of cultural diplomacy. It argues that traditional Chinese political values, particularly Confucianism, provide a significant philosophical backdrop against which to understand a broader pattern of continuity within the CCP's political narrative. Furthermore, early explorations as historical anchorages also provide the background for understanding how the Chinese envisage the position of China in international society and the political priority with a sense of continuity in the CCP's broader political narrative.

2.1.1 Traditional Chinese political schools of thought

The following paragraphs introduce the three mainstream traditional Chinese political schools of thought as a way of providing a foundation of the Chinese ideology for understanding the contemporary context of Chinese cultural diplomacy. It argues that it provides China with a vast range of cultural and historical resources that can be mobilized to promote cultural diplomacy in accordance with its soft power strategy. In particular, Confucianism provides the philosophical backdrop against which to understand a broader pattern of continuity within the CCP's political narrative.

Chinese political philosophy has guided each regime over the past thousand years, providing a certain guidance in the process of decision making, and designing national strategy as a state governing guidance for distinctive dynasties. Before exploring how soft power theory has been interpreted and adopted into China's foreign policy, it is essential to look at the role of Chinese political original schools of thought within the government of distinct regimes. Certain questions arise, such as what is the cultural foundation of Chinese political authority? What is the relationship between laws and morals? How do the ruling class and common people understand the goal of human society? Known as the "Hundred Schools of Thought", Chinese philosophy dates back to the Spring and Autumn period and Warring States (771 to 476 BCE) (Ebrey, 1996, p.42). Broadly, this label refers to any of the several schools of philosophical thought in Chinese tradition and is divided into five streams: Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism, Buddhism, and Mohism and so on. The three major schools of thought that emerged were Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism, with each of these philosophies had a major influence on Chinese culture and politics (Hue, 2007; Chen and Lee, 2008; Zhao, 2015).

Legalism is one of the oldest schools of thought and was first coined by Han Feizi (BCE 280–BCE 233), which emphasizes the importance of strong laws and penalties in state

governance. It contends that moral concerns should always give way to pragmatic considerations when it comes to national interest. Radical political changes started after Shang Yang (BCE 390–BCE 338) came to power as an adviser of the Qin emperor (BCE 259–BCE 210). Often noted as his most relevant contribution, Shang Yang put forward a series of governmental and political reforms and advised Qin to increase his military power while becoming more assertive towards other states (Zhang, 1983, p.23; Zhang, 1988, p.1). This in turn led to the implementation of a strict set of rules and the definition of a clear political philosophy. “Such ideas tended to have special sway in times of war and chaos... The ruthless king of Qin drew on Han Fei’s advice to conquer and rule all of China under the title of First Emperor of the Qin dynasty” (Bell, 2015, p.34). After more than one hundred years of wars fought between the ‘Spring and Autumn’ and the ‘Warring States’ periods, China eventually emerged as a highly authoritarian nation. In order to unify the different fragmented states, the Chinese leaders imposed a series of draconian punishments and laws, setting up a legal framework clearly articulated upon the Legalist tradition.

The contribution of Legalism to the Chinese political schools of thought was noted in two particular ways. Firstly, one of the most important ideas advanced through Legalism was the standardization of the institutional system, thus laying institutional foundations for later empires. According to Legalism, subservience to the ruling court was the foremost law. Meanwhile, the idea of Legalism provided equal treatment for everyone under a fixed set of laws; everyone must receive equal punishment for breaking the laws (Ma and Tsui, 2014. p.18). To some extent, equality can be seen as a key component of this traditional thought since it envisioned a legal system that defended the equal treatment of every person regardless of class. Secondly, the centralization of power has also been a key component of Legalism. The Legalism philosophy of Qin with strict rules intended to enhance the emperors’ capacity to govern the state and its overall authority over its people. Under the Legalist tradition, political opposition was not to be tolerated and the role of morals in state governance should always give way to the pragmatic interests of the state. “Top leaders alone must hold the power, especially of reward and punishment” (Ma and Tsui, 2014, p.18).

However, despite possessing a strong military, the Qin dynasty was to be remembered as the shortest in China’s history, collapsing after only 15 years in BCE 206. Through a series of military battles and the subsequent territorial expansions, as well as the guidance of Legalist-inspired state policies, the Qin emperor established the largest territory of China until that date. Yet, the persecution of dissidents and the strong centralization of power through the imposition of a strong legal framework also led to growing dissatisfaction among the Chinese people. Dissidents faced serious punishments such as torture, enslavement, or even execution. Meanwhile, inside the ruling court, the desire for absolute power and the increasingly authoritarian system led to an increase in corruption and conflicts of interests within the elites, ultimately leading to a series of violent rebellions and eventual fall of the Qin dynasty (Fields, 1989. p.1). Noticeably, once Legalism was adopted by the leading class as the official

philosophy, other schools of thought came to be dramatically destroyed. The event known as ‘the burning of books and burying of scholars’ (Fen Shu Keng Ru) is widely regarded as one of the greatest losses of Chinese cultural and philosophical heritage. It led to the disappearance of various treatises from other traditions that are part of the Hundred Schools of Thought (Shi, 1973; Sun, 1980; Zhang, 1991). In particular, during this period the philosophies of Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism came under substantive attack by the ruling class, leading to the persecution of some of their most important scholars and philosophers.

Replaced by the Han Empire, one of the longest-lasting empires in Chinese history, the new ruling class abandoned legalism as the state’s official philosophy. In its place, Daoism emerged as the philosophical anchorage of a new era in Chinese civilization. Daoism was created by Laozi, who supported the preservation of life and advocated the avoidance of injury and non-interventionism, or what is also called “Wuwei” and can be translated as doing nothing other than facilitating people (Kohn, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi and Ivanhoe, 1999; Michael, 2015). In direct opposition to Legalism, Daoism rule is literally separated small anarchies. Differing from contemporary political constructivists, the Daoist rule aimed to achieve non-governance by allowing natural order to take over and have people to flow naturally within this order, rather than trying to structure and control the world to people’s own needs and desires. Without the desire of winning and/or dominating others, as well as the fear of being beaten or harmed by others, Daoism can be said to achieve a status of anarchism.

The main contribution of Daoism in that context was that it alleviated the control over the people by the ruling court in a period still shaped by the recent loss of a significant portion of the population. Under the guidance of Daoism, the legal system was to be radically altered: taxation was lowered, and extremely torturous punishments came to be abolished by the Emperor. Unlike the Qin emperor, early Western Han emperors granted a greater degree of freedom to the population and decreased the highly centralized and authoritative nature of the state seen in previous eras. During the period that lasts from the Emperors Han Wen to Han Wu (BCE180-BCE141), China was considered to be at a particularly prosperous economic level and a culturally advanced civilization. This particular period is also known as Wen Jing Zhi Zhi, or the rule of the emperors Wen and Jing. However, since emperor Han Wu (BCE141-BCE87) took power, Confucianism started to become increasingly accepted by the ruling class as the official state doctrine. Yet, the Daoist tradition continued to be highly influential as a folk religion among lower classes.

First proposed by Confucius (BCE551- BCE479), Confucianism has been considered China’s dominant ideology at both the religious and political level. It was developed continuously by later dynasties after Han Wu first launched the initiative BaChu BaiJia, expelling the hundred (non-Confucian) schools of philosophy. (Shi, 1980; Li, 1988; Wang, 1990). Distinct from the previous schools of thought, Confucianism upholds a hierarchical “top-down” dynamic of state governance, based on principles, morals and

interpersonal relationships. On the one hand, Confucianism emphasizes the importance of conventional discipline, principles and social rules in state governance. On the other hand, it also addresses the important role that benevolence and morals played between the ruling class and common people. As Yiwei Wang (2015, p.8) pointed out that, “traditional Chinese thinking about power is that power comes from morality and morality comes from nature.” Confucianism believes that “human nature is essentially good, the moral life is the full realization of our moral nature” (Tang Chun, 1959, p.28). Therefore, “morality and law could form the basis for relations among states; and peaceful and cooperative relations among states were possible” (Ding, 2008, p.196). Overall, similar to Nye’s point of view, Confucianism doesn't dismiss the rule of law so long as the law is established upon a particular moral code. Benevolence, benignity, and other moral values are to be privileged in state governance.

Mencius (372-289 BCE), a student of Confucius who first developed the idea of just and unjust war from a Confucian perspective, advocates that rulers have an obligation to promote the peaceful unification of the world. As he stated, “there is a way to gain the world, it is to gain the people, and having gained them one gains the whole world. There is a way to gain the people, gain their hearts and minds and then you gain them” (Barr, 2011, pp.25-26). This is closely related to the core statement of Nye’s soft power, by gaining one’s heart through inherent attraction rather than coercive power. As seen here, “the idea of soft power is not new to China, or at least to Chinese philosophy. Human nature was not considered to be inherently evil, and thus states could operate as a community rather than merely as autonomous self-interested agents” (Barr, 2011, p.26). “Confucianism veers towards the other extreme of utopian cosmopolitanism. Confucians defended the ideal of Tian Xia (the world under the heaven), a harmonious political order without state boundaries and governed by a sage by means of virtue, without any coercive power at all” (Bell, 2015). Although Nye does not clearly describe an ideal status of human society, such principles are somewhat similar to the features of soft power, emphasizing co-operative power rather than coercive power and political persuasion.

In short, classic Chinese political schools of thought represent important cultural resources that could potentially be mobilized into the official narrative of the state, both in the context of domestic and foreign cultural policy. There is also a strong connection between the dominant guiding ideology of Confucianism and Nye’s soft power theory. More importantly though, Confucianism provides the philosophical backdrop against which to understand a broader pattern of continuity within the CCP’s political narrative. On the other hand, this may also help us to explain why the notion of soft power has gained so much approval among the CCP and its leading intellectuals.

2.2.2 Early cultural exchange in Chinese history

The proceeding paragraphs aim to reveal the origins of China’s cultural diplomacy through presenting the cases of renowned cultural exchange activities carried out by

distinctive regimes in Chinese history. Consequently, it argues that these earlier activities represent cultural resources that could potentially be adopted and interrelated as a means of achieving the goal of cultural diplomacy. At the same time, these early explorations as historical anchorages also provide the background to understanding political priority with a sense of continuity in the CCP's broader political narrative.

Cultural diplomacy is relatively new as a concept introduced to international politics. However, practices of cultural exchange between different civilizations can be traced back to more than two thousand years ago. Within the Chinese context, interactions with foreign cultures date from the Han dynasty (BCE 202- AD 9), with numerous activities of cultural exchange having been recorded since then. Well-known stories of early cultural exchanges such as the Expedition of ZhangQian, the Voyages of ZhengHe, and Matteo Ricci Missionary Work continue to have an essential impact on contemporary Chinese culture and identity.

The Western Han Empire (BCE 202- AD 9) was the first large and long-surviving empire in the region. Communication between the central government and the outside of China had not started until emperor Han Wu adopted Confucianism instead of Daoism, as the previous emperors had. It should be noted that underlying earlier cultural exchanges was a clear concern with the development and prosperity of the Western Han dynasty, as well as with the security of its territory. Accordingly, the Expedition of ZhangQian to central Asia set out to open one of the most important and well-known exchange routes in human history. The ancient Silk Road worked both as a major hub for trade and commerce, and, more broadly, as a bridge between Chinese civilization and foreign societies (Wang, 1977; Zhang, 1986; Wang, 1988). Today, the Silk Road continues to play a central role in Chinese foreign policy, as well as the narrative of ZhangQian in projecting the role of China in the governance and development of the Eurasian space.

The story of ZhanQian is complex, but clearly shows the diversity of cultures reached by the Chinese explorer. To resist the invasion of northern nomadic enemies called Xiongnu, ZhangQian was dispatched by the Han emperor Wudi twice as the representative of the Han Empire, seeking political collaboration against the threat posed by Xiongnu. However, ZhanQian's first expedition was immobilized by the Dayuezhi, an Indo-European tribal group residing in Central Asia. After being detained for 10 years, ZhanQian finally reached Dayuezhi and returned to central China. But the quest of ZhanQian and the Han Empire into the steppes of Central Asia had only just begun. During his second exploration, ZhanQian reached the Wusun, another Indo-European tribe living near the Ili River, north of the Tarim Basin. In this second attempt, ZhanQian and his team reached Fergana (now part of Uzbekistan), Bactria (now part of Afghanistan), and Sogdiana (now part of Uzbekistan) (Wang, 1988, pp.117-118).

Although both explorations failed to achieve their intended political purposes,

ZhangQian's explorations played an important part in the establishment of cultural relations between China and the outside world. These explorations not only broadened the existing knowledge about geography within China, but also brought a large amount of reliable information about Western regions and their cultures. Accordingly, ZhangQian's mission not only brought the Chinese into contact with the Hellenism and the empire of Alexander the Great, but also opened the way for the exchange of envoys between these Central Asian states and the Han (Wang, 1988). More importantly though, this early exploration into Central Asia opened up the ancient Silk Road and significantly boosted cultural exchanges between China and the West. Throughout the Silk Road, Chinese silk, metallurgy and water conservancy technology spread to Central Asia, Korea, Japan and Europe. Ivory, spices, stones, and a variety of plants were introduced into China. Meanwhile, the Silk Road also allowed for a dissemination of Chinese culture, from Central Asia to Europe. Moreover, this early attempt also signaled the pivotal role that this region would continue to have for future Chinese leaders. To be more specific, it promoted Chinese economic prosperity via trade and commerce and, equally important, in protecting the mainland from foreign invasion.

In the Tang (AD 681- AD 907), Song (AD 960- AD 1279) and Yuan (AD 1271-AD 1368) dynasties, cultural exchanges and communication between China and foreign countries became more frequent. Examples can be seen in the diffusion of Chinese techniques of papermaking, textile technology, poetry, Chinese characters, printing, the compass, and the well-known spread of gunpowder to regions such as Korea, Japan, India, North Africa and Europe. At the same time, knowledge about astronomy, medicine, music, dance, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism were introduced into Chinese civilization. As Chang (1988, p. 374) neatly puts it, "the expanding Sino-Arab trade during the 14th century had gradually expanded Chinese knowledge of the world: 'universal' maps that previously only displayed China and its surrounding seas began to expand further and further into the southwest with much more accurate depictions of the extent of Arabia and Africa".

From 1405 to 1433, the Ming government sponsored seven voyages to explore further regions outside of China. These also played a remarkable role in the evolution of China's cultural relations. Often known as the 'Treasure Voyages' (ZhengHe XiaXiYang), these expeditions were led by Zheng He and reached the Southeast of Asia, Arabia, India and East Africa (Zheng, 1983; Tian, 1983; Fan, 1984; Fang, 2019). As a Muslim, Zheng He developed China's cultural relations with Islam Southeast Asia, and his journeys constituted a crucial part in the history of cultural exchange between China and Southeast Asia. Furthermore, envoys from more than 30 countries were brought by Zheng He into mainland China. This placed foreign countries in direct contact with China's tributary system, something particularly essential in the establishment of official relations between Chinese civilization and the outside world. During the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties, with the dissemination of European science and technological knowledge, cultural exchange continued to play a salient role in

developing the relations between China and the West. A seminal example is the Italian Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci who dedicated nearly 30 years of his life to the cultural exchange between China and Europe (1582-1610) (Wang, 1981; Lin, 1983). He was a pioneer of Catholicism in China and the first western scholar to read Chinese literature and study Chinese classics. His work introduced the findings of European explorations to East Asia for the first time. These early explorations, cultural exchanges and activities continued to shape Chinese understandings of both self-evaluation and perceptions of the relationship between China and other countries.

The dissemination of Chinese culture through cultural exchanges and activities is noteworthy due to it being different from the contemporary systems of the time in other parts of the world. As Bell pointed out, “one feature of imperial China was that it did not expand in ways comparable to Western imperial powers, even when it may have had the technical ability to do so.” (2015, p.36) Through early business trades and cultural exchanges, a “top-down” tributary system was established. Interestingly, this cultural diplomatic relationship is premised on the consensus that China is considered as the cultural center of the world while other civilizations are less important. “In this system, the tributary ruler or his representative had to go to China to pay homage in ritual acknowledgment of his vassal status.” On the other hand, the cultural consensus is based on generous economic supports. “China guaranteed security and provided economic benefits, while using moral power to spread Confucian norms and allowing traditional ways of life to flourish” (Bell, 2015, p.36). The tributary system has remained the primary instrument of diplomatic exchange since the Han dynasty. Although it facilitated economic and cultural exchanges in ancient times, the hierarchical dynamic of the imperial Chinese tributary system was based on an unbalanced economic and cultural relationship that eventually caused a substantial financial deficit to the regime. Consequently, the ‘Closed Door policy’ (Bi Guan Suo Guo) came to be adopted during the period of Chinese contemporary history (Guo, 1982; Huang, 1986). Since the ‘Sea ban policy’ (Hai Jin), which aimed at restricting private maritime trading and coastal settlement was adopted by the Ming dynasty, China was both economically and culturally isolated within the international system. From the beginning of the First Opium War in 1840 to the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1945, China had experienced one hundred years of foreign invasions, extreme poverty and a dramatic decline in both economics and culture. This period is called by the Chinese the *Hundred Year Humiliation of the Chinese Nation* (Bai Nian Guo Chi).

Arguably, understanding these earlier interactions is of particular salience as they represent the cultural resources that could potentially be mobilized into the state’s official narrative toward both domestic and foreign cultural policy. More importantly, they play a pivotal role in the shaping and reshaping of China’s self-understanding as a distinctive civilization, as well as how China portrays itself to the world and how this idea has been manifested into the implementation of cultural diplomacy. However, how specifically Chinese traditional philosophy and early cultural exchanges had an influence on guiding contemporary policy-making processes in Chinese cultural

diplomacy? Is it in some ways being deliberately used by President Xi to justify the present? Or is there something about what was done in the past that has some connection to what is done today?

Marked by significant cultural and intellectual developments, these historical thoughts and early cultural exchanges have a substantial influence on the contemporary Chinese articulations of soft power as well as China's cultural diplomacy. "Recognizing culture as an effective instrument of soft power and modern statecraft is an example of the pragmatism characterizing contemporary Chinese foreign policies." ⁸ Such cultural resources were deliberately selected and used for creating a positive national image of China in order to gain attraction from other countries in the international society. For instance, the Zheng He Voyages is often seen a peaceful symbol of China's peaceful rise in the Chinese official narratives. Some historians argued that Zheng He missions suggests that coercion must have been an important element of the voyage in order to obtain political and economic control. As Geoff Wade (2005, p.51) noted: "the maritime forces sent abroad in the first third of the fifteenth century were intended to achieve the recognition of Ming dominance of (or perhaps suzerainty over) all the polities of the known maritime world. To achieve this, they used force, or the threat thereof".

However, within the official narratives of the CCP, those examples are often introduced as foundational moments in the development of China's cultural diplomacy. "In sharp contrast to the Western navigators' exploration, conquest and colonialist plunder, Zheng He Voyage reveals China's traditional good-neighbour foreign policy and ideas" (Xiao, 2005, p.17). Similarly, such rhetoric narratives are also manifested in China's cultural diplomacy within Xi's Chinese Dream era. For example, the transition from the ancient Silk Road to the contemporary Belt and Road grand design, and the adoption of various Chinese old proverbs and traditional Chinese philosophy in the official speeches, documents and reports. Such cultural resources represent the long history of inter-civilizational contact between China and foreign cultures, more importantly, they fit in China's pursuit of soft power as well as the mutually beneficial types of relationships that China seeks to develop with its international partners.

2.2 The PRC and cultural diplomacy: from 1949 to 2012

This section provides an overview of China's contemporary cultural diplomacy within the previous four generations of leadership. Accordingly, it argues that cultural diplomacy has played an increasingly salient part in the CCP's foreign policy. Tracing the evolution of Chinese cultural diplomacy and its interactions with Nye's soft power theory within the previous four generations of Chinese leadership builds up the foundation for the investigation of the dynamic between cultural diplomacy and soft power under the fifth generation of Chinese leadership.

2.2.1. Mao Zedong and the first generation of Chinese leadership: from the establishment of PRC to the Cultural Revolution (1949-1976)

After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the CCP became increasingly engaged in the practice of cultural diplomacy. Traditional areas of cultural diplomacy often involved sectors such as education, science and technology, arts, and sports. As Passin noted, in this earlier period, “more than 400 groups of Chinese delegates have participated in international sports meetings, drama and film festivals, musical contests, exhibitions, and activities commemorating famous people in the cultural world” (Passin, 1963, p. 1). As a new regime took power, the overall purpose of cultural diplomacy came to be that of promoting China’s international position and the legitimacy of the CCP abroad. This was especially vital at this stage if we take into consideration the adverse international environment at that time, and the widespread practice of non-recognition by several of its most important players.

Despite the increasing number of cultural exchanges between China and the outside world, every interaction was carefully planned and controlled, as well as designed to achieve a specific purpose. For example, taking part in cultural exchanges in the post-revolutionary period was restricted to certain groups, such as students, government officials and the Party’s delegations. Moreover, activities were prepared in great detail and had the overarching purpose of altering any unfavorable impressions about China and the CCP abroad. As Passin wrote, “he (the delegate) will have been guided, albeit with great skill, in accordance with his susceptibilities and dispositions, over a carefully-prepared stage” (1963, p.10). Clearly, these earlier practices of cultural exchange were also constrained by the international environment in this period. In the first ten-years of the CCP (1949-1959), the patterns of cultural exchange were strictly limited to improving the relations between Communist countries. This reflected China’s *lean on one side*⁹ foreign policy as a means of fortifying its alliance with the Soviet Union and counterbalancing the growing weight of the U.S. in the international sphere.

In Mao’s second decade of leadership, diplomatic relations between China and other countries gradually came to be more and more reliant on cultural diplomacy. In the 1950s, the Chinese government established official relations with Asian countries such as India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Burma, Afghanistan, and Nepal. This number increased from 10 countries to more than 40 in 1965. In Africa, China established diplomatic ties with more than 20 countries, including Egypt, Syria, and Yemen (Masannat, 1966, p.216). In 1964, France and the PRC had re-established diplomatic relations and momentarily opened up cultural exchanges between China and the West: a French classical ballet group, a French pianist, and a basketball delegation visited China after a group of Chinese artists, acrobats, basketball and table tennis players went to France. In the same year, 36 delegations (including representatives and experts) were sent to France in order to study science and technology and take part in international academic conferences (Wang, 1998, p.379).

However, in the following period, cultural diplomacy between China and communist countries experienced a substantive decline due to the Sino-Soviet conflicts in the 1960s. Accordingly, the deterioration of diplomatic relations between China and socialist countries led the number of cultural exchange programs and projects to decrease substantially. As an example, a large group of Soviet experts who had made significant contributions to the development of China's nuclear research was commanded to return to the Soviet Union due to the deterioration of the relations between the two nations (Yang, 1989). Meanwhile, cultural diplomacy was facing other challenges that reflected older problems, such as the highly state-controlled environment within China's cultural institutions. Unsurprisingly, these programs had a limited impact in achieving their goal, as the carefully planned visits often appeared unattractive to foreign audiences.

During Mao's third decade in power, the political and social chaos generated by the 'Cultural Revolution' (1966-1976) led to a stall in China's cultural diplomacy (MacFarquhar, 1974; Jin, 1996). In 1966, Mao Zedong launched the 'Cultural Revolution' as a way of reinforcing his power and legitimacy within the country and CCP. Outside of China, political tension came with millions of Soviet troops deployed on the north Sino-soviet border. Down to the south, the United States started deploying military personnel in Vietnam, thereby threatening the stability of China's southwest regions. Furthermore, the instability in diplomatic relationships seriously impeded the implementation of any kind of cultural diplomacy. As one of the most well-known incidents in the CCP's history, the 'Cultural Revolution' not only led to strong discontent among the population towards state-controlled cultural policy within China, it also left China with a fragile reputation within international society. (Lu, 2004; Dikötter, 2016). A series of diplomatic disputes seriously damaged China's international image and impeded cultural diplomacy to a substantive extent.

During the "Cultural Revolution", both Western and Chinese traditional culture were seriously damaged. Cultural diplomacy during this period was considered an "international struggle in the field of ideology" and cultural exchange was viewed as the "dangerous risk of poisoning people spirits" (Zheng and Zhang, 2003, p.329). As a result, those in charge of foreign affairs departments came to be increasingly criticized, the cultural diplomatic agenda was disrupted, and foreign institutions were dismantled. As a ten-year tragedy in Chinese contemporary history, the Cultural Revolution led China's cultural diplomacy into an extreme crisis. Despite the achievements made during the Cultural Revolution, such as China's seat in the Security Council and the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and the US, China's cultural diplomacy continued to be relegated to a lower position in China's international agenda during this period.

In short, China's cultural diplomacy in the period of first-generation Mao suffered a huge impact from the combination of domestic and international factors, such as the

internal unrest during the Cultural Revolution and the growing tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, some foundations of current Chinese cultural diplomacy were formed during this period. In the decades following Mao's leadership, cultural diplomacy came to play an increasingly salient part in China's international strategy and foreign policy.

2.2.2. Deng Xiaoping and the second generation of Chinese leadership: From the Reform and Opening-up to the Tiananmen Protest (1978- 1992)

When the second generation of the Chinese leadership came to power in 1978, China adopted a remarkably different model of economic development. Known as the *Reform and Opening-up* (GaiGeKaiFang), this strategy represented a radical change from the previous period and led to several modifications in the structure and political priorities of the CCP. Advanced by the leader of the CCP Deng Xiaoping, the *Reform and Opening-up* policy sought to improve the level of economic development across the country while at the same time reinforcing the domestic legitimacy of the party (Deng, 1986). In sharp contrast with the previous generation, this strategy sought to achieve these goals by focusing on economic growth rather than the ideological control of the population. This strategy also had an enormous impact on the foreign policy of the CCP in line with the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*. It was originally conceived by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and China's first premier, Zhou Enlai, in 1954. The principles rose to fame at the Bandung Conference in 1955, which set the stage for the Non-Aligned Movement. as stated by the Panchsheel Treaty, signed on April 29, 1954, are: Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Mutual non-aggression. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit. Peaceful co-existence.¹⁰ Following these principles, China started to establish diplomatic relations with countries beyond the socialist spectrum, with substantive effort on strengthening the diplomatic ties with developed countries.

Remarkably, cultural diplomacy came to assume a crucial role in China's broader international strategy during this period. Deng not only acknowledged the potential of Chinese traditional culture in the implementation of cultural diplomacy, but also appealed to a greater integration between traditional Chinese culture and western culture at the domestic level. As a result, cultural diplomacy has kept pace with China's significant economic growth since the second generation of Chinese leadership came to power. An increasing amount of cultural politics, initiatives, and activities have been carried out since 1979. For example, China Daily, one of the most effective tools of Chinese contemporary cultural diplomacy and the largest English-language newspaper in China, was established in 1981.¹¹ In 1985, People's Daily, the biggest newspaper group owned by the CCP, also announced its overseas edition both in Chinese and the English language.¹² Furthermore, a great variety of cultural activities, initiatives, and agreements to improve the communication between the public inside and outside China were launched during this period. The range of initiatives varied from local art

to academic exchange, from sports to traditional culture. By the end of 1989, there were 172 international multilateral treaties that China had been engaged (Xie, 1997, p.451). The CCP placed a substantive emphasis on China's organization and participation in multilateral cultural diplomacy activities which not only benefited from, but also accelerated, the broader process of economic development.

However, China's cultural diplomacy faced more challenges after the 'Tiananmen Square Protest' in 1989 whereby the Party was widely condemned by the international community for its use of force against the protesters (Hersiikovit, 1993; Wasserstrom, 2018). In the early 1990s, the Chinese leadership was being confronted by an adverse international environment and an unstable domestic situation. At the domestic level, the challenge to the CCP's legitimacy came from the broader public and led to increasing tensions among the different factions with the CCP. More crucially, the substantive change in the domestic order resulting from the end of the Cold War as well as the widespread criticism of the CCP's actions regarding Tiananmen left the party in a delicate position, especially concerning its diplomatic relations with democratic countries such as the United States. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the radical change of Eastern Europe also placed considerable pressure on the CCP.

Speaking about the predicaments faced by China at that time, Deng (1989, p.96) pointed out that, "in terms of current the international situation, it can be summarized up to three phrases: first of all, observe it calmly; Secondly, stay calm; Last but not least, deal with it calmly. Just keep calm and working hard, focusing on one thing at a time". Following on from that, the policy of *TaoGuang YangHui* translated as "hide the brightness, cultivate the mind" was adopted by the CCP. As laid out by Deng in the early 1990s, the ideas underlying this strategy were deeply rooted in ancient Chinese political culture. The words Taoguang and Yanghui were attributed to an old Chinese saying that was first used by Zheng Guanying in the late Qin dynasty. As Shen pointed out, "when Deng outlined his foreign policy principles based on the above ideas, the most intriguing addition to the recipe was Daoism" (2007, p.1). Similar to what Daoism advocates, Deng's strategy mainly focused on "cultivating the mind" by first improving the living standard pragmatically for the people and then "hiding the brightness" which meant being humble by keeping a low profile in world affairs.

In sum, Deng's strategy can be said to represent a pivotal change in Chinese politics and, to a certain extent, have paved the way to one of the most successful periods in China's history, becoming one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Deng's policy demonstrated how China's foreign policy has become more pragmatic through the gradual removal of the previous ideological barriers. As a result, cultural exchanges with other countries entered a new stage where communication became less constrained and a renewed emphasis was placed on cultural diplomacy during this period.

2.2.3. Jiang Zemin and the third generation of the Chinese leadership (1993-2003)

Despite the rapid growth at the economic level under the direction of Jiang Zemin, China's soft power in the international sphere remained limited due to the long-lasting effects of the Tiananmen Protests. In response, Jiang Zemin, the leader of the third generation of leadership, started to place an increasing amount of effort into cultural diplomacy to reshape the image of China abroad following the negative consequences of the Tiananmen Protest. First, a more sophisticated network of institutions focusing on cultural diplomacy was established. Inside the government, a top-level coordinating body, the *Central Foreign Propaganda Group* (ZhongYang DuiWai XuanChuan Zu), first established in 1980, was reestablished as the Leading Group for Propaganda and Ideology Work (ZhongYang XuanChuan SiXiang GongZuo LingDao XiaoZu).¹³ In 1991, "under the guidance of the Leading Group for Propaganda and Ideology Work, the State Council Information Office (SCIO) (GuoWuYuan XinWen BanGongShi) was established" (Shaw, 2004, pp.16–17). More specifically, "it actually acts as 'one body with two plaques' because it is also the CCP Central Foreign Propaganda Office (ZhongGong ZhongYang DuiWai XuanChuan BanGongShi), which is under the charge of the Central Propaganda Department (ZhongYang XuanChuan Bu)" (Creemer R, 2015, p.308).

Furthermore, beyond the broader reform of the cultural administrative system, the Chinese leadership came to realize the crucial role that the media could have in communicating with international audiences and influencing public opinion both inside and outside China. Therefore, the strategies pursued by the traditional media (such as state-owned newspaper and television) had the underlying purpose of creating a favorable international environment for the CCP and, in doing so, countering the negative discourse hindering the development of China's soft power abroad. As a consequence, news outlets such as China Radio International (CRI), China Central Television (CCTV), China News Service (CNS) and Xinhua News receive increasing support from the CCP during this period and assumed a greater salience in the CCP's domestic and international strategies.

In addition, a series of cultural exchanges, events, and activities were implemented to support the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture abroad. By the end of the 20th century, the Ministry of Culture of the PRC had held three culturally themed years: "Chinese International Year of the Symphony" in 1996, "Chinese International Year of Opera and Drama" in 1997, and the "Chinese International Art Year" in 1998 (Guangming, 1998). These events substantially improved Chinese people's knowledge of world culture and enhanced the communication between China and broader international audiences. In addition to the numerous cultural festivals promoted by the CCP abroad, several international cultural activities were launched. From 1990 to 2000, the number of cultural exchange activities between China and other countries nearly doubled, increasing from 733 to 1433 (Chinese Cultural Relics Statistics 2005, p.63).

In sum, following the essential core values of Deng's Reform and Opening-up policy, the third generation of the Chinese leadership demonstrated a greater willingness to reintegrate China into international society through a series of cultural diplomacy activities and events. Despite the drawbacks generated by the Tiananmen Protest, China rapidly reestablished itself as a major power through its economic rise in the international sphere.

2.2.4. Hu Jintao and the fourth generation of the Chinese leadership (2003-2012): harmonious world and peaceful rise

At the beginning of the 21st century, after a negotiation period that took fifteen years, China officially joined the WTO. At the same time, the idea known as "Culture Going Out" (Wenhua Zouchuqu) was being proposed as a response to the Western idea of soft power (Ye, 2010). Introduced within Chinese academic circles in 1993 by Wang Huning, this notion adapted Nye's soft power theory into the Chinese context and gradually achieved great prominence within China's intellectual circles and the CCP. By the mid-2000s, the CCP had largely adopted soft power as a key component of the country's broader international strategy, with cultural diplomacy seen as the privileged mechanism for its promotion (Barr, 2011). Following from that, the term "China's soft power" has been used frequently in official speeches, interviews, policies, reports, and academic works.

Based on both ancient Chinese political thoughts and contemporary soft power theory, the fourth generation of the Chinese leadership adjusted its diplomatic strategy to achieve the goal of creating a more cooperative international environment. "At the heart of China's foreign policy lies the 'democratization of international relations', an aim that turns on dialogue and multilateralism, not coercion" (Wijk, 2015, p.155). The ideological guidance *Harmonious World* was first proposed in 2005 by Hu Jintao at the United Nations Summit, becoming one of the most symbolic narratives for explaining China's behavior during the nation's rise in the global economic order. The idea of "harmony" derives from Confucius philosophy discussed in the *Analects*. Confucians define the ideal of *Tian Xia (the world under heaven)* as a harmonious political order without state boundaries and governed by a sage by means of virtue, without any coercive power at all (Bell, 2015). In the same year, the *white paper* on "China's Peaceful Development" was also issued. China's commitment to a peaceful international environment was seen as being essential to the development of cultural diplomacy. Hu pointed out in the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries Conference that: "we should not only present different cultures from other countries to Chinese people, but also introduce Chinese culture to people from all over the world, therefore to promote the Chinese people and the people of all countries to learn from each other through cultural exchange, to promote Chinese culture and other cultures to learn from each other." ¹⁴

During this period, the number of foreign policies intending to enhance China's soft power increased, and many research centers and programs focusing on cultural diplomacy were established as a result. By the end of 2005, China had signed contracts for cultural exchanges and initiatives with more than 145 countries, with more than 750 cultural exchange proposals being advanced. China also established official relations with more than one thousand international culture organizations (Meng, 2005). These policies and proposals demonstrated that the fourth generation of the Chinese leadership has gained a deeper understanding regarding the essential role of cultural diplomacy in promoting the national image and enhancing the country's soft power. Accordingly, a series of international cultural activities and events were held to promote foreign audiences' perceptions of China. For example, "A Close Look at China" (Zou Jin Zhong Guo), which was the largest series of cultural events ever, was first held in the United States by the Ministry of Culture of the PRC and the State Council of Information in 2001 (Guangming, 2002). In October 2005, the month-long "Festival of Chinese Culture" (Zhong Guo Wen Hua Jie) was jointly presented in Washington DC by the Chinese Ministry of Culture and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The festival included more than 30 cultural performances and exhibitions, attracting more than 400,000 people.¹⁵ Furthermore, cultural exchange activities, such as the Culture Year, were held in countries such as Russia, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Italy and India. These efforts were made to ensure that the cultural diversity and vitality of China was highlighted side by side with China's ancient history and customs, which contributed to a broader cultural exchange and better understanding between China and foreign audiences.

In addition to the above, greater attention was paid by the CCP to the role of education and academic exchanges in their broader strategy of soft power promotion. Given the importance of engagement with international conferences, China showed a greater willingness to engage with academic audiences and initiated a number of initiatives in that direction. In 2004, the 7th Conference of the International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP) was held in Shanghai, which aimed to strengthen the awareness of protecting traditional culture.¹⁶ This informal international event sees national ministers responsible for culture explore and exchange views on new and emerging cultural policy issues, allowing them to develop strategies to promote cultural diversity.¹⁷ Additionally, language education has become a salient tool in the promotion of China's soft power. Since the establishment of the first Confucius Institute in Seoul in 2004, the number of CIs had increased to 200 by the end of 2007. CIs have become a place where foreign audiences can learn the Chinese language and Chinese traditional culture. "CIs are increasingly successful in introducing knowledge about Chinese language and culture to the world, as the ever-growing number of institutes and students indicates" (Hartig, 2015, p.255).

In brief, the diplomatic strategy of China was adjusted in order to create a friendly and cooperative international environment within the fourth generation of the Chinese leadership. China's cultural diplomacy entered a new stage where cultural exchanges were carried out through multiple approaches and at different levels within Hu's

presidency.

2.3 The organizations of China's cultural diplomacy

This section clarifies the key administrative organizations responsible for China's cultural diplomacy, examining how they function within their own field to implement China's cultural diplomacy, particularly within the three case study countries. It argues that there is a top-down administrative structure to China's cultural diplomacy, with various branches and offices undertaking different responsibilities in the three case study countries. Although the non-governmental organizations play an essential role in cultural exchanges, both the scale and the number of those Chinese non-governmental organizations seem insufficient and less developed in terms of quality and experience.

2.3.1 Official Governmental organizations and government-led organizations

The State Council Information Office of China (SCIO) can be seen as the central official organ of China's cultural diplomacy. Established in 1991, the major function of the SCIO is to propel domestic media further along the path of introducing China's history, technology, education, culture, domestic and foreign policies, and the Chinese economy and society to the international community. The SCIO also holds press conferences regarding major national policies and provides books, magazines, films, television programs and other means of communication to introduce China to the world. Further to these, the SCIO also carries out exchanges with governments and media outlets from across the globe.¹⁸ The SCIO has played a strategic role in China's use of cultural diplomacy to promote a favourable image of China to countries around the world. The Bureau for External Cultural Relations Ministry of China is another governmental organ of China's cultural diplomacy. On the one hand, as the subordinate of China's Ministry of Culture¹⁹, its main function is to guide and manage foreign cultural exchanges and draft relevant laws and regulations. On the other hand, as one of the executive bodies of the Ministry of Foreign affairs, the Chinese embassies take responsibility for conducting and organizing those cultural exchange activities and events in different countries. In addition, the Cultural Office and the Educational Office are also set up in individual embassy to facilitate relevant cultural, educational exchange work, particularly in those countries that have frequent cultural and educational exchange with China. In the three case study countries, both the Cultural Office and the Educational Office have been set up within the embassies. The responsibilities of the Cultural Office of Embassy of China include assisting the domestic organizers of cultural exchange activities and events, engaging directly with the signing up of cultural cooperation agreements, making the agreement of annual project plans and so on. Furthermore, it also communicates relevant information and materials to the government in order to promote the implementation of the cultural cooperation and exchange programs. In addition, another responsibility of the Cultural

Office is to assist in the arrangements of culture and art exchanges, i.e. supporting visits of the tourists, artists, scholars, professionals, and giving guidance and help to people from both countries.²⁰ The responsibilities of the Educational Office mainly include regulating and supporting overseas students from both countries, providing study guidance, scholarship guidance and so on. It also assists the Confucius Institutes Headquarter (Han ban) in conducting Chinese teaching activities and other Chinese promotional events in the case study countries.

Another governmental organ is the Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges (DICE). As a subordinate of China's Ministry of Education, DICE is responsible for the overall regulation of educational exchange, student exchange, education support, and culture aid. DICE also plans and guides the work of teaching Chinese as a foreign language and other relevant business.²¹ In addition, there are two more governmental organizations that are generally involved in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy. The first being the International Cooperation Office of National Radio and Television Administration of China (ICONRTA), which is responsible for the overall international exchanges and cooperation in publishing, radio, film and television and copyright.²² Furthermore, ICONTRA makes international cultural agreements and undertakes relevant projects. The second organization is the China International Publishing Group (CIPG), also known as the China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration, which is the largest foreign-language publishing organization in China.²³ It has developed into a global media corporation that provides up-to-date information about China to readers worldwide. The CIPG has produced books and magazines since its establishment in 1949, later utilising the internet after its introduction to China.

Government-led organizations include organizations and institutes that are directly affiliated to the governmental organizations, such as the State Council, China's Ministry of Education, and China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Affiliated to China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the China and Foreign Countries Cultural Exchange Centre's responsibilities include organizing international conferences, international academic exchanges, performances of arts groups and exhibitions in China and abroad.²⁴ It holds various official and folk culture and art exchange activities and undertakes media advertising and public promotion of large-scale cultural activities abroad. Hanban /Confucius Institute Headquarters is another public institution affiliated with China's Ministry of Education. It is committed to providing Chinese language and cultural teaching resources and services worldwide.²⁵ As a non-profit public educational organization used for promoting cultural diplomacy, Confucius Institutes engage in activities aimed at contributing to local societies and promoting international exchange and mutual understanding between China and the rest of the world. They organize a variety of programmes and activities in the fields of Chinese language education and Chinese traditional culture. The first Confucius Institute was established in November 2004 in Seoul, South Korea. In addition to training teachers and teaching the Chinese language, Hanban also holds cultural exchange projects that

are concerned with promoting Chinese culture. These projects include such things as Festival-themed activities, the “Chinese bridge summer camp in China”, “Chinese bridge competition”, and “Confucius Institute Day”.

In terms of broadcasting and television, the biggest and most influential publisher is the Xinhua agency. It is a central publicity agency that has been conducting work under the direct leadership of the Party Central Committee and State Council since it was established by the CCP in 1931. It covers a number of themes, such as politics, economics, society, culture, diplomatic relationships, education, and other areas of everyday life. The Xinhua North American headquarters was established in October 2008. The year after, the Eurasian headquarters was set up in Moscow.²⁶ More recently, Yasuo Fukuda, the former Japanese prime minister, addressed the launching ceremony of the Xinhua News Agency's Japanese News Service in Tokyo in Jan 2018. This marks the fact that China's Xinhua News Agency is now able to provide news services in the Japanese language, as well as English, Spanish, Russian, German, French, Portuguese, Arabic, and Korean.²⁷

In addition, China News Service, CCTV, China Radio International, and People's Daily, are the main media organizations working towards the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy. Launched in 1941, the purpose of China Radio International is “to show the world to China, to introduce China to the world, to report the world to the world, to enhance the understanding and friendship between Chinese people and people from all over the world.”²⁸ Co-organized by China Central Television and the Japanese Daifu Firm in Japan in 1998, CCTV Daifu is one of the earliest channels built on cooperation between China and Japan.²⁹ It began bilingual broadcasting in both Chinese and Japanese in 2012. In the same year, CGTN America, the Washington News Bureau CCTV, started to offer multi-language news channels internationally, including a 24-hour English-language news channel that is broadcast to over 100 English-speaking countries, including the United States.³⁰ The Russian-language channel was launched earlier in 2009, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Beijing and Moscow.³¹

Overall, from the SCIO to the Cultural Office, from the Confucius Institutes to the Xinhua News Agency, it can be seen that there is a top-down administrative structure to China's cultural diplomacy, with various overlapping branches and offices undertaking relevant responsibilities.

2.3.2 Non-governmental associations and societies

There are various societies and associations engaging in China's cultural diplomacy. Among them, the four most renowned organizations are the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) (established in 1954), the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) (established in 1949), the China International Culture Association (CICA) (established in 1986), and the International

Culture Exchange Centre CICEC (established in 1984). These groups carry out cultural and educational exchanges with scholars, politicians, artists, students and local people. They aim to enhance mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese people and the people of other countries, promoting the establishment and development of friendly relations and cooperation while contributing to peace and development in the world.

For example, CPIFA is engaged in compiling and publishing documents on foreign affairs and international studies, holding seminars and lectures on international and regional issues in the political, economic, cultural, security and other fields.³² It has contributed to China's cultural diplomacy through establishing bilateral ties and academic exchanges with countries and regions such as the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.³³ Take Japan as an example, CPAFFC's Department of Japanese Affairs is one of the most important non-governmental associations between China and Japan. This department is responsible for receiving the visiting delegations, organizing and sending delegations to Japan, and coordinating and promoting the establishment of friendship cities with the local Japanese authorities.³⁴ Besides, there are also a number of small-sized associations and societies which are dedicated to China's cultural exchanges. For example, the China-Japan Student Conference was first established in 1986. It organizes annual conferences for top university students from both countries to conduct academic and cultural exchanges. In recent years, more subjects regarding the rise of China as a major power in Asia have been discussed through bilateral forums. Moreover, societies have been set up in universities by students, such as the Association of China-Japanese Communication (ACJC) at the Beijing University and the YingLong Society from Xiamen University.

Non-governmental organizations play an essential role in carrying out the exchange of personnel and promoting the long-term, steady cultural relations between China and other countries. They make positive contributions in promoting the communication of ideas about economy, politics, culture, sports, science and technology, developing good relations between countries. Compared to governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations were confronted with less opposition and doubts when implementing cultural diplomacy, which makes its role irreplaceable in the implementation of cultural diplomacy. However, it is worth pointing out that most of China's non-governmental organizations are small, informally constituted, marginalized, and much less developed in terms of quality and experience when compared to other developed countries such as Japan and the U.S. (Yang & Alpermann, 2014, p.311). Therefore, the case study in this thesis would mainly focus on the government-led or states-organized events and initiatives.

To conclude, there is a top-down official administrative structure to China's cultural diplomacy, with various overlapping branches and offices undertaking relevant responsibilities. Although non-governmental organizations play an essential role in cultural exchanges, both the scale and the number in China seem insufficient and less

developed in terms of quality and experience.

Conclusion

This chapter traced the inception of China's cultural diplomacy in ancient times and follows its development through to 2012. It argued that early explorations as historical anchorages provided the background for understanding how the Chinese envisage the position of China in international society and the political priority with a sense of continuity in the CCP's broader political narrative. This chapter also explored the dynamic of the key actors in China's cultural diplomacy, particularly within the three case study countries. It argued that China's cultural diplomacy is predominately performed by governmental departments and organizations, featuring a top-down administrative structure. Both the scale and number of Chinese non-governmental organizations seem insufficient and less developed in terms of quality and experience. Overall, traditional Chinese schools of thought, particularly Confucianism, has been playing an essential role in understanding a broader pattern of continuity within the CCP's ideology. Chinese cultural diplomacy, featuring a top-down administrative structure, has been a key tool in China's continuous foreign policy within the CCP regime.

Chapter 3: Identifying the Chinese Dream

Introduction

The concept of the Chinese Dream has become a central principle around which China's foreign policy in general and cultural diplomacy specifically is, in theory, oriented. To assess the correspondence between the ideological framework and the contemporary operationalization of soft power and cultural diplomacy in later chapters, it is essential to clarify the meaning of the Chinese Dream. Drawing upon historical analysis and discourse analysis, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive clarification of the Chinese Dream through exploring the content and the mechanism of the Chinese Dream and China's cultural diplomacy within the context of Xi's foreign policy. To conclude, Xi's Chinese Dream patriotically emphasizes the bond between the development of every individual and the prosperity of the nation, which is based on a traditional collective top-down relationship between the state and the individual. More importantly, by using the word 'rejuvenation', it demonstrates that there is a process of self-acknowledgement and self-awakening based on the understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture in Xi's Chinese Dream. Therefore, ancient cultural exchanges and historical narratives are embraced as the resources of soft power used for the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy within Xi's presidency.

In order to do this, three sections are included in this chapter. First, a literature review regarding the research of the Chinese Dream is provided. Second, the foundations of the Chinese Dream are identified, with insights from historical-cultural interpretations and various relevant speeches and statements that are synthesized to provide a detailed review. Finally, a sketch of China's cultural diplomacy within the context of foreign policy during Xi's presidency is specified, which suggests that the goal of cultural diplomacy is to provide a stable case study chapters build out from this initial point of entry.

The first section provides a review of existing literature on discourse about the Chinese Dream. It argues that a historical approach based on a comprehensive understanding of traditional Chinese values is often under-appreciated in existing literature, particularly when it comes to looking at how the Chinese Dream ideology corresponds with the practice of cultural diplomacy within different countries. To assess in later chapters the correspondence between the ideological framework and the contemporary operationalization of soft power and cultural diplomacy, it is essential to clarify the meaning of the Chinese Dream with a solid understanding of its cultural foundation and historical context.

The second section explores the foundations of the Chinese Dream, with insights from historic cultural interpretations and various relevant speeches and statements being synthesized. It points out that the ancient interpretation of the 'Chinese Dream' is usually considered an ideal status of Chinese society. Top-down paternalistic governance and unity consensus play important roles in understanding this concept. In contemporary contexts, the Chinese Dream discourse fundamentally focuses on improving the lives of common people and the nation's prosperity through the state's modernization and industrialization. Xi's Chinese Dream patriotically emphasizes the bond between the development of every individual and the prosperity of the nation, which is based on a traditional collective top-down relationship between the state and the individual. More importantly, by using the word 'rejuvenation', it demonstrates that there is a process of self-acknowledgement and self-awakening based on the understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture in Xi's Chinese Dream.

The last section will delve into the developing practice of China's cultural diplomacy, which corresponds with Xi's foreign policy to provide a stepping-stone for further case studies. It argues that instead of keeping a low profile, China's foreign policy within Xi's presidency started to take the initiative by seeking leadership opportunities and influencing ongoing international dynamics. The broader foreign policy context of cultural diplomacy highlights the continuity of China's peaceful development approach, as well as its ambition to rebuild a new international order on behalf of China's voice. Furthermore, ancient cultural exchanges and traditional Chinese culture are embraced as the key resources of soft power implemented into China's cultural diplomacy within Xi's presidency. The Chinese Dream provides a broad ideological guidance in orienting China's cultural diplomacy to enhance its soft power, whilst the main purpose of cultural diplomacy is to create a stable, peaceful, and favorable international environment to propel the achievement of the Chinese Dream.

3.1 The Chinese Dream: states of the art of existing literature

This section provides a review of existing literature on the Chinese Dream discourse. It argues that a historical approach based on a comprehensive understanding of traditional Chinese values is often under-appreciated in existing literature, particularly when it comes to looking at how the Chinese Dream ideology corresponds with the practice of cultural diplomacy within different countries. To assess, in later chapters, the correspondence between the ideological framework and the contemporary operationalization of soft power and cultural diplomacy, it is essential to clarify the meaning of the Chinese Dream with a solid understanding of its cultural foundation and historical context.

The concept of soft power was officially launched in October 2007 by Hu Jintao, stating in his work-report that "China must enhance the country's cultural soft power" (Hu, 2007, p.17). Likewise, Xi emphasized again that "enhancing China's soft power matters

through the achievement of the Two 100 Years goals and the Chinese Dream”³⁵ in a speech at an internal CCP conference in 2013 (Two 100 Years: the goal of becoming a “moderately well-off society” by 2020, the Party’s centennial, and the goal of China becoming a fully developed nation by 2049, the PRC’s centennial). As stated in the introduction, the term ‘soft power’ has become more prevalent within Chinese political and academic spheres since it was first introduced to China in the 1990s. In other words, Nye’s appeal of the important transition of power from ‘hard’ to ‘soft’ has been welcomed by Chinese officials. Having realized the importance of soft power in international society and China’s weakness in its use, the CCP demonstrated its ambition in enhancing China’s soft power by first putting it into the national agenda.

The Chinese Dream was first proposed in Xi’s visit to the National History Museum in November of 2012. Since then, considerable efforts have been made to publicize China’s new thoughts about world affairs and how they are centered on the idea of the Chinese Dream. The phrase “Chinese Dream” has been frequently emphasized in the speeches and documents of policymakers and leadership. Between 2012 and 2016, Xi has stated the Chinese Dream discourse in more than 15 important speeches and documents, both inside of the party and abroad. A great deal of attention has been drawn to the Chinese Dream, particularly within IR academia (Mohanty, 2013; Link, 2015; Liu, 2015; Zhao and Gan, 2015; Kerr, 2015; Barr, 2015; Callahan, 2017; Ho, 2018). It has also captured much attention among Chinese academics. According to the CNKI, a Chinese mainstream academic research database, within the four years between 2012 and 2016, more than 66,000 articles with the keywords “the Chinese Dream” (Zhong Guo Meng) in their titles had been published within Chinese academics.³⁶

Zhao and Gao examine how the system of Chinese diplomacy has changed within Xi’s Chinese Dream era since the 18th CCP’s National Congress by looking into Xi’s key statements and strategic ideas. They argue that there have been three major changes to China’s diplomatic system since the 18th CCP’s National Congress: top-level design, strategic coordination, and multi-dimensional diplomacy (Zhao and Gao, 2015, p.43). Kent Deng explores China’s economic rejuvenation and its consequences by focusing on China’s long path towards modern growth and development (Deng, 2015, p.43). Kerr explores China’s development of a modern civil society in terms of internal and international dynamics and its consequences. He argues that the Chinese state’s unwillingness to share political and legal authority with a civil society is the largest single barrier to achieving the goal of good governance on which the goal of national rejuvenation will depend (Kerr, 2015, p.5). Shiping Zheng compares China with three neighbouring countries: Japan, Russia and India. He looked at the systems of performance assessment which cover the areas of government effectiveness, economic confidence, foreign direct investment confidence, intentional homicide, gender gap, international tourism, and global competitiveness, therefore exploring the dynamic of the Chinese Dream and national identity (2013). William Callahan (2017) compares the Chinese Dream with the American Dream from a poststructuralist approach. He points out that such “national dream is national perfection rather than

the universal emancipation of humanity”, therefore “it shows the normative politics of national belonging differs from cosmopolitan evocations of solidarity that prescribe universal belonging” (p.253). Furthermore, assessment is another focus of relevant Chinese Dream study: some researchers argue that slogans like the Chinese Dream can be problematic as they don’t resonate with the broader public (Servaes, 2016; Callahan, 2017). Barr argues that there is little prospect of bringing back traditional Chinese values to everyday life due to China’s people becoming part of the modern world, and therefore the promotion of Chinese traditional values is more to do with managing the manifold problems and dislocations of Chinese modernity (2015, p.7).

However, little work has been done to systematically examine the comparison of how the Chinese Dream ideology corresponds with the practice of cultural diplomacy, particularly within different countries. Ho examines how music and songs can be instruments of power and dreams in their own rights, stating how the Chinese Dream has been reflected in music education in mainland China (Ho, 2018). However, “soft power is not limited to international image building, its deployment is as critical at home within the country as it is abroad” (Barr, 2011, p.28). Rather than simply observing it within a domestic scope, the analysis of the Chinese Dream in correspondence with cultural diplomacy toward distinctive countries would shed light on existing research regarding this notion. Furthermore, a historical approach based on a comprehensive understanding of traditional Chinese values is often underappreciated in the existing literature. The idea of the Chinese Dream is not something new, as Wang pointed out; it is like old wine in a new bottle.³⁷ However, existing literature provides a low level of analysis of a historical exploration regarding the Chinese Dream discourse. Various interpretations surrounding this notion were made by early schools of thought within different periods and circumstances throughout Chinese history. The Chinese Dream is perceived as being a manifestation of Chinese soft power across the globe and is the key guideline of China’s foreign policy within Xi’s presidency.

In short, to assess in later chapters the correspondence between the ideological framework and the contemporary operationalization of soft power and cultural diplomacy, it is essential to clarify the meaning of the Chinese Dream, especially with a solid understanding of its cultural foundation and historical context. Drawing upon historical analysis and discourse analysis, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Chinese Dream by exploring the content and the mechanism of the Chinese Dream and China’s cultural diplomacy within Xi’s foreign policy context.

3.2 Identifying the Chinese Dream

Drawing upon historical and discourse analysis, this section explores the foundations of the Chinese Dream from ancient to contemporary interpretations. It points out that the ancient interpretation of the ‘Chinese dream’ is usually considered as an ideal

status of the Chinese society. Paternalistic governance and unity consensus play important roles in understanding this concept. In the contemporary context, the Chinese Dream discourse fundamentally focuses on improving the lives of common people and the nation's prosperity through the state's modernization and industrialization. The key characteristic of Xi's Chinese Dream is that it emphasizes the bonds between developing every individual and the prosperity of the nation, which is based on a traditional collective Chinese political relationship between the state and individuals. More importantly, it indicates that the word 'rejuvenation' demonstrates the ambitious goal of bringing China back to the top of many aspects within international society, similar to how it used to be in ancient times.

3.2.1 The seeds of the Chinese Dream: the content and the mechanism

The following section sheds light on the content and the mechanism of the Chinese Dream by exploring ancient interpretations and the mechanism between the Chinese government and Chinese society. It argues that the Chinese Dream is generally interpreted as an ideal status of the society and the relationship between the ruling class and the common people in China is understood as a paternalistic relationship, in which unity consensus often enjoys priority.

The content of the Chinese Dream: Commonwealth of Great Unity

After the establishment of the Qin dynasty in 221BCE, China became one of the most economically and culturally prosperous feudal countries in the world. The views of Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism had a dominating influence on the feudal system of a decentralized social structure. For example, Taoism is known for the intriguing prose depiction of a place called Peach Blossom Spring, hidden from the outside world (Taoyuanming, 421). In the description of this utopian society, people lead an ideal existence in harmony with nature on a peaceful land, an ideal society without exploitation, oppression or wars. As noted in Chapter 2, both Confucianism and Nye's soft power theory suggest that culture and values could potentially generate a state's influence and power in a co-optive way. As the most influential traditional Chinese political schools of thought, Confucians envisage the ideal status of Chinese society as Great Harmony of the World or Commonwealth of Great Unity (Tianxia Datong); this is an economically strong, culturally attractive, and harmonious society worthy of neighboring states emulating its culture and values. This ideal society was clearly explained in the book Liji-Liyun at the end of the Warring and States period.

大道之行也，天下为公。选贤与能，讲信修睦。故人不独亲其亲，不独子其子，使老有所终，壮有所用，幼有所长，矜寡孤独废疾者，皆有所养。男有分，女有归。货恶其弃于地也，不必藏于己；力恶其不出于身也，不必为己。是故谋闭而不兴，盗窃乱贼而不作。故外户而不闭，是谓大同。

While the perfect order called the Great Dao prevails, the world belongs to the public. Virtuous and worthy people should be elected to public office while capable people hold posts and contribute to employment in the society. Integrity and trust should be highly valued by the society, which contribute to social peace and harmony. Therefore, everyone loves and respects his or her own parents and children, as well as the parents and children of others. There is caring and protection for the old until their last days; there is appropriate employment for the able-bodied; and there is nourishment and education for the children and youth. There is kindness and sympathy for the widows and widowers, for the orphans, for the childless and for all who find themselves alone in the world, as well as for the disabled and sick. Every man/woman has an appropriate role to play in the family and society. Although nobody likes to see natural resources and wealth wasted on the land (people don't like wealth to be wasted), no one necessarily needs to keep them for oneself. Although nobody likes wealth, which is not the creation of one's own labour (all people want to contribute), no one does things just to benefit oneself. A devotion to public service leaves no room for idleness; intrigues, and connivances for ill gain are unknown. Villains such as thieves, robbers, rogues and rebels no more exist. The door of every house needs not to be locked and bolted during day and night. ³⁸

This narrative of an ideal society may be interpreted as a form of utopianism. However, the idea of *Datong* that represents the spiritual aspiration of Chinese people has brought historical significance to the development of how China conceives the ideal status of itself. More broadly, classical Chinese philosophy, particularly Confucianism, has set a solid foundation for the further development of political values and thoughts (Fang, 2011). This can be seen from the subsequent social mainstream ideologies from throughout the history of Chinese civilization. In brief, the ancient interpretation regarding the Chinese Dream can be seen as an ideal status of Chinese society.

The mechanism of the Chinese Dream: the relationship between the state and the society

Since the Chinese Dream is such a cultural discourse, which has been deeply rooted in Chinese history and Chinese identity, observers who know little about this cultural background or do not necessarily link the historical paths with current affairs might be confronted by misunderstandings. How do we understand the Chinese Dream discourse in a cultural context? How have China's self-perception as a great power and its changing role within the international system, at a broad level, interacted with domestic and foreign audiences? In order to reveal these questions, we first need to understand the dynamics between the state and the society in China. From the perspective of the Chinese ruling class, as discussed in Chapter 2, most of the regimes derived strong influence from Confucian doctrine, which offers a type of moral guide and prescription, including hierarchy, group orientation, and respect for age and tradition. Confucians' principles regarding morality and ethics, with 'goodness' as the core and 'rites' as the norm, served as the dominant traditional Chinese political

school of thought. As Sin argued in his book, “early Confucians not only stressed the importance of strong families for strong government but also advocated a patriarchal theory of government” (Sin, 2011, p.109). In fact, with the influence of Confucianism, the relationship between the ruling class and the common people in China is understood as a paternalistic relationship.

Therefore, as it is in a family, both the rulers and the common people should follow a paternalistic hierarchical model, with the government as the authority on one side and the people as the acquiescence on the other. This could be seen from the term Xi Dada (Uncle Xi), which refers to the fifth generation of Chinese leadership Xi Jinping.³⁹ This term is used in Xi’s hometown to show respect and admiration for a male, especially a father on an uncle, who plays a supportive and important role in a family.⁴⁰ In this case, the president is not just a leader of the country or a party, but more like an important family member who is obligated to support and take care of the whole family. Simply put, the Chinese leadership must adopt the role of protector or guardian as a spiritual symbol of the civilization due to thousands of years of feudal heritage. “A ruler had absolute authority over his subjects but was morally bound to treat them properly. If he did not, they could flee or rebel, and the ruler might lose his ‘heavenly mandate’ to rule” (Link, 2015, p.25).

Another factor that we need to understand is that unity has been the most important political priority in Chinese history, both for the state and the society (Jacques, 2009, p.95; Bislev and Li, 2014, p.24). There has been a strong demand from the society for a powerful government that can unite the people together and bring prosperity to the society. “China’s frequent experience of disunity and its baleful consequences have served to reinforce its commitment to unity, a tradition that began with Confucius” (Martin Jacques, 2009, p.95). A powerful regime wins people’s hearts through demonstrating their ability to solve fundamental problems that are of the biggest concern to society, such as food, health and education. More importantly, the suffering of the *A Hundred Year Humiliation of the Chinese Nation* has made Chinese society desire a peaceful environment to live in more than anything else. This history is not just told by the media or the government, but also through the experiences and stories told by the older generations who are the most respected in a family. People are convinced that wars and infighting within the country would only lead to a poor and backward Chinese nation. Furthermore, “there is often a genuine concern, based upon recent historical memory with colonialism and imperialism, that opening up China to interference by foreigners will open a Pandora’s box, with China plunging into civil war, poverty and chaos” (Bell, 2009, p.21). In this case, national stability is the highest priority in terms of policymaking. This means that people would give way or sacrifice other interests if it contradicts with the wider picture, such as factors deemed potentially hazardous against the unity of the country and society.

In brief, the ancient interpretation regarding the Chinese Dream can be seen as an ideal status of the society. With the influence of Confucianism, the relationship between the ruling class and the common people in China is understood as a

paternalistic relationship. Unity is a consensus between the government and the society, which functions as a cornerstone for understanding the Chinese Dream discourse.

3.2.2 Modern interpretations of the Chinese Dream

This part will explore contemporary narratives of the Chinese Dream discourse interpreted by early modernizers Kang Youwei, Sun Yat-sen and the previous four generations of Chinese leadership. It argues that the Chinese Dream discourse focuses on improving the lives of common people and the nation's prosperity through the state's modernization and industrialization in the contemporary context.

With the beginning of the First Opium war in 1840, the Chinese social system gradually became a combination of colonial and feudal social structure, which led to dramatic social and ideological transformations. As noted in the previous section, the Chinese dream symbolizes the goal of achieving an ideal status within Chinese society. Over the past one hundred years of contemporary Chinese history, there have been a few outstanding modernizers, such as Kang Youwei and Sun Yat-sen, who proposed their own interpretations regarding the Chinese Dream.

Kang insisted that Confucianism is the soul of the nation and believed that Confucianism as the national religion could unite the Chinese people as one nation and instill morality and national spirit in them (Tay, 2010, p.105). In Kang's best-known book, *The Book of Great Harmony (Datongshu, 1919)*, Confucianism's *Datong society* has been adopted as a prototype for the state, as well as modified for contemporary China. Kang described an ideal Chinese nation, *Datong* as a utopian future world, economically based on a public ownership system and democratically ruled by a central government (Kang and Jiang and Zhang; 2007). Although adopting an unaggressive internal reforming approach has proved his Chinese Dream to be a fantasy, Kang's political view of a Chinese dream *Datong* played an important role in promoting Chinese traditional political heritage and influencing the perception of the Chinese dream from the society (Li, 1955; Zhu, 1999; Tang, 2000).

Similarly, As the continuation of Confucianism, Sun combined both Western and traditional Chinese political values into his blueprint for the future of the Chinese nation (Lin, 1974; Bedeski, 1977, Gregor, 1981). Sun's idea of a Chinese dream can be reflected in the proposal of *Three Principles (Sanmin Zhuyi)* of Nationalism, Democracy, and Livelihood. He stated that the foremost goal of the Chinese nation at that time was to oppose imperialist aggression against China in order to gain state independence and sovereignty. The slogan *Revitalization of China (ZhenXing ZhongHua)* was first proposed when Sun Yat-sen formed a small bourgeois revolutionary organization in Honolulu, called the *Xingzhonghui* (Society for China's Regeneration) in 1884. Meanwhile, Sun put traditional Chinese moral concepts to the service of China's nationalism. "When Sun appealed to the Chinese to 'regain their national spirit' he advocated not only some of the substance of Confucianism but also a reawakening of

‘the moral ideals’ which Confucian China once possessed” (Gregor, 1981, p.58). Interestingly, “for Sun, the natural communities of family and the nation had a moral priority over the individual” (Gregor, 1981, p.65). This is consistent with the mechanism of the Chinese Dream as discussed in the previous section: the relationship between the ruling class and the common people in China is understood as a paternalistic relationship.

However, with the failure of their bourgeois revolutions, neither Kang nor Sun’s ‘Chinese Dream’ led China to the ideal destination depicted in their conceptions. During the New Democratic Revolution Period (1919-1949), when the CCP gradually became a dominant party in China, the realization of socialism and communism had become the focus of political agenda. Under Mao’s leadership, Chinese national history, especially the national humiliation narrative, was not particularly addressed as a major ideological tool or source of legitimacy. Instead, Mao used the class struggle theory to explain the Chinese revolution, the foreign imperialism, and the civil wars (Wang, 2013). Influenced by Marxism and Leninism, Mao announced that the goal for the Chinese nation in this period was to be independent from internal feudalism, as well as external imperialism and capitalism through political revolutions. Economically, *Four Modernisation (Sige Xiandaihua)* was also set forth to strengthen China’s economic power in the areas of agriculture, industry, national defense and finally science and technology. Mao also put forward ten *Five-year Plan (Wunianjihua)*, which aimed to boost a backward China to a highly industrialized modern socialist country at the beginning of the 21st century (Zeng, 2002; Sha, 2007). The outcome of the Chinese dream under the first generation of Chinese leadership has clearly pointed out the direction of China’s future.

By setting *Invigoration of China (ZhenXing ZhongHua)* as the slogan orienting the development of China, the second generation of Chinese leadership switched the priority of development from political to economic. Noticeably, socialism with Chinese characteristics has become a popular term, which targeting the legitimacy of the CCP to modify and develop Marxism according to the domestic and international situation. As a result, *Four Modernisation* was formally enacted during the Reform and Opening policy, which dramatically boosted China’s economy. In contrast with the first generation, the second generation has paid much attention to absorbing ideas from classic Chinese political values. Inheriting the legacy of traditional Confucianism and contemporary modernizers, Deng stated that the goal for the Chinese nation was to achieve a *XiaoKang Society (XiaoKang SheHui)*, a moderately prosperous society at the end of 20th century and become a moderately developed country (Deng, 1994). Originally from the Confucianist book named *Liji*, *XiaoKang* refers to a lower developing stage of the ideal *Datong* status, as mentioned in previous paragraphs. It can be loosely understood as a “well-off society” in which most people are able to live a comfortable life (Zhang and Zhang, 1998; Lu, 2000; Lu, 2002; Li, 2003). Different from the first generation of Chinese leadership, Deng went back to traditional Chinese political classics to design and legitimize the vision for the future of China. Consequently, it has influenced the development of ideological guidance within the

later generations of leadership to a great extent.

The Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation was first proposed by the third generation of Chinese leadership as a continuation of the *Invigoration of China* narrative proposed in one of Jiang Zemin's speeches in 1998. Jiang stated that: "our goal is to achieve modernization and make China into a powerful, democratic, and civilized socialist country. By that time, China will enter the range of moderately developed countries in the world, the Chinese people will achieve modernization on the basis of common prosperity, China will realize the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese nation". On the one hand, Jiang's Chinese Dream still focuses on improving the lives of Chinese people and the nation's prosperity through the state's modernization and industrialization. On the other hand, As Wang (2013, p.6) pointed out, "the mission of the Party was no longer the realization of communism, having deviated to a more nationalistic objective". Noticeably, this laid the foundation for the interpretation of Xi's Chinese Dream, which will be analysed in the following section.

The legacy of the fourth generation of the Chinese leadership is *Harmonious Society (Hexie Shehui)*, which also dates back to Confucius classics. The concept of harmony came from Confucians' understanding of music, which is powerful in creating balance within nature, individuals and society as a whole (Li, 2006; Ji, 2008). Given the increasing uncertainty, this proposal is also viewed as a response to balancing social problems such as the wealth gap, social injustice and environmental pollution after the dramatic increase in China's economy. "Hu would be inclined towards a more humanistic centralism and would help alleviate some of the tensions that had risen during Jiang's tenure... It would be the role of the populist Hu to salve the wounds, to rebuild China's welfare system and where possible, promote social justice" (Mahoney, 2013, pp.22-24).

In sum, it can be concluded that early political schools of thought and the historical path of contemporary China have left a rich legacy that has influenced the design processes of the Chinese Dream for the contemporary generations of Chinese leadership. In the contemporary context, the Chinese Dream discourse focuses on improving the lives of common people and the nation's prosperity through the state's modernization and industrialization in the contemporary context.

3.2.3 Clarifying Xi's Chinese Dream

The following paragraphs explore the content and features of Xi's Chinese Dream. It argues that Xi's Chinese Dream has a patriotic emphasis on the bonds between the development of every individual and the prosperity of the nation, which is based on traditional a collective top-down relationship between the state and the individual. More importantly, by using the word 'rejuvenation', it demonstrates that there is a process of self-acknowledgement and self-awakening based on the understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture in Xi's Chinese Dream.

In Xi's 8 minute speech at the National History Museum, he clearly stated that: "the greatest Chinese Dream of Chinese people in the modern-day is to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, which has been a long-cherished dream for many Chinese generations".⁴¹ In the long run, the core of the Chinese Dream is to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In order to achieve the Chinese Dream, the CCP made two milestone goals for the Chinese dream – a "double anniversary" (Two 100 years). According to statements from Chinese officials, the key idea of the Chinese Dream is to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation by accomplishing the 'Double Anniversary' goals. More specifically, the short-term goal of the Chinese Dream is to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2021, while in the long run, it is to build a strong, civilized and harmonious modern socialist country by 2049. To understand in simple terms, the main content of the Chinese Dream is to build a moderately prosperous society and eventually accomplish national rejuvenation.

Since the "socialism with Chinese characteristics" was first noted by Deng Xiaoping, the term has been adopted and frequently addressed in the CCP's political guiding principle. However, its complex content didn't make it a popular and well-known phrase.⁴² Unlike the complex political concepts and terms, which highlight the party doctrines or theoretical principles, Xi's Chinese Dream has chosen a pragmatic approach. In his speech at the 2015 Global Poverty Reduction and Development Forum, Xi stated, "to build a moderately prosperous society, to achieve the Chinese Dream, is to improve people's wellbeing."⁴³ By being associated with factors contributing to wellbeing, such as better jobs, better education, better life and so on, Xi's Chinese Dream carries more positivity and simplicity, making it relatable and easier to understand for most Chinese people. Another example is the release of "The Chinese Dream-365 Stories" into the global market. "The Chinese Dream-365 Stories" is a 100-episode documentary series created in Beijing. It captures how common people of different professions are chasing their dreams in their own modest ways.⁴⁴ There are also a number of events and stories relating to the Chinese Dream that focus on similar themes, which is the lives and wellbeing of ordinary people. As Mohanty (2013, p.38) pointed out, "from the very start, Xi emphasized on paying attention to people's concrete day-to-day problems, such as jobs, housing, education and healthcare". Consistent with Xi's pragmatic diplomatic style, the Chinese Dream focuses on concepts like better lives and better futures, which make it more positive and much easier for the whole society to understand and relate to.

As argued in the previous section, since Jiang first mentioned the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in his speech, the mission of the CCP has diverged to a more nationalistic objective. Consistent with the third generation of Chinese leadership, another core feature of Xi's Chinese Dream is that it has a patriotic emphasis on the bonds between the development of every individual and the prosperity of the nation. At Xi's Chinese Dream speech, he highlighted the core feature of this notion by stating

that, “History tells us, the destiny of every individual is closely connected to the destiny of the country and of the nation. Only when the country is doing well, and the nation is doing well, can every individual do well...it requires every generation of people to strive hard to achieve this great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (Xi, 2013). In one of Xi’s letters to the students from Beijing University in 2013, he replied that “the Chinese Dream is a dream of a country, a dream of a nation, as well as a dream for every Chinese including the young people. Only when a person integrates his/her own dream into the whole dream of the nation, can he/she accomplish great things eventually”.⁴⁵ It can be seen that Xi’s Chinese Dream ties together the government and society by highlighting the important connection between the prosperity of the nation and wellbeing for the people.

In addition, the mechanism of Xi’s Chinese Dream is based on a traditional collective top-down relationship between the state and individuals. As argued before, with the influence of Confucianism, the relationship between the ruling class and the common people in China is understood as a paternalistic relationship. Besides the title of Dada given to Xi, another example shows the continuity of a paternalistic governing style within the Chinese Dream era. In 2016, the Chinese Ministry of Education released a policy for the implementation of patriotism in education. At the end of this policy, it states that in order to enhance the promotion of the Chinese Dream abroad, a three-dimensional network of “the motherland, the embassies and consulates- international students societies – the individual students studying abroad” should be built at home and abroad”.⁴⁶ This again demonstrates that Xi’s Chinese Dream is derived from Confucian’s paternalistic top-down relationship between the government and the society.

“Xi’s Chinese Dream narrative is like an old wine in a new bottle with the dream’s name replacing Jiang and Hu’s national rejuvenation, Deng’s invigoration of China, and Mao’s realization of socialism and communism... it continues the CCP’s tradition of providing the people a rose-tinted picture of the future” (Wang, 2013, p.7). However, there is a slight modification that distinguishes the Chinese Dream from the previous political slogans. The concept of the Chinese dream repositions China’s identity in international society by using the word ‘rejuvenation’, which is deeply rooted in Chinese history and Chinese culture. As Wang pointed out, “the use of that word underscores an important point: the Chinese view their fortunes as a return to greatness and not a rise from nothing.”⁴⁷ As examined in Chapter 2, early cultural exchanges show that China was a prosperous country during the Han, Tang and Early Qing dynasties, both culturally and economically. However, from the beginning of the First Opium War in 1840 to the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1945, China had experienced one hundred years of foreign invasions, extreme poverty and a dramatic decline in both economics and culture. All of these ups and downs became the key elements in shaping the Chinese peoples’ national identity.

This memory has been passed down through the generations as part of Chinese history.

“There are textbooks, novels, museums, songs, and parks devoted to commemorating national humiliation” (Callahan, 2004, p.199). More importantly, the young generation not only learnt it through history classes, museums or other forms of patriotic education, but also from their older family members’ personal experiences, pictures, and their childhood memories. “For the Chinese themselves, the historical memory of past humiliation is not just a psychological issue, or something only related to perception and attitude. It is a key element of constructing the Chinese national identity... After suffering a humiliating decline in national strength and status, the Chinese people are unwavering in their commitment to return China to its natural state of glory, thereby achieving the Chinese Dream” (Wang, 2013. p.4).

Therefore, ‘rejuvenation’ does not simply mean becoming a rising power in the international system, but a process of self-acknowledgement and a self-awakening of its past achievements and failures, based on the understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture; this is also not purely global, but individualistic with people’s aspirations and expectations for the future of China taken into consideration. Rejuvenation reminds Chinese people that the final goal of the Chinese dream is to revive the country in every aspect, bringing back the prosperous state that China used to be in ancient times. As Ding and Saunders stated, “for much of its history, China was the strongest country in the world--not only in economic and military terms, but also in the cultural sphere” (Ding; Saunders, 2006, p.13). “the Chinese Dream is an attempt to restore China’s ideational greatness while not losing the material gains of the past 35 years (Barr, 2015, p.191). The purpose of Xi’s Chinese Dream is not to make it better from nothing, but to be as strong as it used to be in the past, both economically and culturally. As Sørensen *noted*, “the ‘Chinese Dream’ is thus not only the narrow, aggressive and anti-foreign version that hinges on the ‘century of humiliation’ discourse. Rather than on foreign invasion and exploitation, the focus is on the positive elements and strengths in Chinese history and in Chinese ancient civilization with strong calls to revive and be proud of Chinese cultural values, strengths and achievements” (Sørensen, 2015, p.64). It encourages Chinese people to have faith in the CCP and their approach, to have confidence in Chinese traditional culture and values, and to have determination in the Chinese nation on its way to rejuvenation.

In brief, consistent with Xi’s pragmatic diplomatic style, the Chinese Dream patriotically emphasizes the bonds between the development of every individual and the prosperity of the nation, which is based on a traditional collective top-down relationship between the state and the individual. More importantly, by using the word ‘rejuvenation’, it demonstrates that there is a process of self-acknowledgement and self-awakening based on the understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture within Xi’s Chinese Dream.

3.3 The Chinese Dream and cultural diplomacy: Xi Jinping and the fifth generation of the Chinese leadership (2012-present)

The proceeding paragraphs provide a broad review of China's foreign policy and cultural diplomacy within Xi's presidency. Accordingly, it argues that instead of keeping a low profile, the broader foreign policy context within Xi's presidency indicates that China has become more proactive and pragmatic in seeking leadership opportunities in international society. In correspondence with the Chinese Dream, traditional Chinese culture and historical narratives are embraced as the resources of soft power that are implemented by China's cultural diplomacy within Xi's presidency. and historical narratives are embraced as the resources of soft power that are implemented into China's cultural diplomacy within Xi's presidency.

3.3.1 An overview of Xi's foreign policy context

In order to understand how Xi has been mapping the future for China with the key idea of the Chinese Dream, it is necessary to examine China's foreign policy in a broader context. Through several speeches given over in the past 4 years, the CCP has articulated a new foreign policy known as *FenFa YouWei (striving for achievement)*. The transition of China's foreign policy strategy from *Taoguang Yanghui (hide the brightness and keep a low profile)* to *FenFa YouWei (striving to achievement)* has been a gradual process within the fifth generation of Chinese leadership. As noted in Chapter 2, *Taoguang Yanghui* foreign policy was first proposed by the second generation of Chinese leadership, Deng Xiaoping. The original meaning of the phrase in Chinese is to "hide one's advantages and to improve one's disadvantages". To be more specific, it focuses on *Taoguang (cultivated the mind)* as the first step and followed by *Yanghui (hide the brightness)*. *Taoguang* is achieved by improving people's living standards and *Yanghui* refers to being humble and keeping a low profile in world affairs.

However, this has been replaced by a more active foreign policy with the guideline of *Fenfa youwei (striving to achievement)* under the fifth generation of Chinese leadership. Xi's foreign policy is indeed beginning to show signs of departure from that of his predecessors (Pho and Li, 2017. P.84). After Xi took power in 2012, the Chinese Dream became the most featured ideological slogan, revealing the determination of the CCP in leading China toward the great rejuvenation. In Xi's speech at the National History Museum, he stated that: "the greatest Chinese Dream for Chinese people in modern days is to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, which has been a long-cherished dream for many Chinese generations." ⁴⁸ As Zhao Kejin pointed out, "previous leadership addressed the importance of how China integrates itself into the mainstream international society, however, Xi's Chinese dream emphasizes that

the primary goal for China is to revive its nation, and more importantly, this implies that Xi wants Chinese people to have faith in Chinese approach, Chinese values and Chinese nation...We used to pay much attention to how the changing world has been influencing China, now we reckon China itself as an important factor of changing the world, therefore we shall take the initiative to plan and design.”⁴⁹

Another key concept of Xi’s grand foreign strategy is *the Community of Common Destiny (Mingyun Gongtongti)*. This is often linked with *the New Type of International Relations (Xinxing Guoji Guanxi)* which is based on win-win cooperation and the peaceful resolution of international and regional disputes (Sørensen, 2015, p.59). In Xi’s speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations in 2013, he called for a new type of international relations with win-win cooperation at the core. Xi argued that, “the international community has increasingly become a more complex community of common destiny. The Chinese people and people from different countries are positively correlated, therefore the dream of the Chinese people and the dreams of the people from all over the world are tightly connected.”⁵⁰ In 2015, at the annual United Nations’ General Assembly high-level debate, Xi addressed again, “we should renew our commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations (UN) Charter, build a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation, and create a community of common destiny for mankind.”⁵¹

In 2014, Xi put forward a new phrase called *Global Network of Partnerships (Quanqiu huoban guanxi wangluo)* in Central Meeting on Foreign Affairs within the CCP. Adhering to *the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*, it highlights that China would remain engaged in a larger global society by seeking partnership with more countries under the non-aligned principle and without interference in the internal affairs of other countries. More importantly, the fifth generation of leadership is also aware of the complicated relations between different countries. For example, in Xi’s 2013 visit to the United States, Xi stated that China will be searching for a *New Type of Power Relationship (XinXing DaGuoGuanXi)*, which is based on equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation.⁵² In terms of China’s relationships with neighbouring countries, the CCP announced the *Qin Cheng Hui Rong Policy*, which specifically focuses on improving and maintaining good relations among periphery countries.

By looking at these new concepts, it can be seen that Xi’s foreign policy is seeking for a more pragmatic approach to pursuing common economic benefits. (Poh;Li, 2017,p.86). As Xi recently emphasized at the 19th National Congress, “the dreams of the Chinese people and those of other peoples around the world are closely linked. The realization of the Chinese dream will not be possible without a peaceful international environment and a stable international order.”⁵³ With the guideline of *striving for achievement*, the priority of China’s foreign policy work is to maintain a peaceful developing environment for achieving the Chinese Dream. More importantly, it also demonstrates China’s ambition to build a new international order on behalf of China’s voice. It indicates that instead of keeping a low profile, China’s

foreign policy within the fifth generation has started to take the initiative and seek leadership opportunities to shape the international order. In other words, the new leadership aims to enhance China's soft power by making more contributions to international affairs as a great power and gaining a better reputation among international society.

In short, the broader foreign policy context within the fifth generation indicates that China has started to take the initiative and seek its leadership in shaping the international order. Distinguished policies towards different countries demonstrate that China's foreign policy has become more pragmatic as well. Creating a peaceful international environment for making achievements has been put as the priority of the diplomatic policies within the fifth generation of Chinese leadership.

3.3.2 An overview of China's cultural diplomacy within the Chinese Dream era

As a tool of mobilizing soft power, China's cultural diplomacy has received growing attention since power was transferred to the fifth generation of Chinese leadership in 2012. Echoing with the Chinese Dream and the '*Fenfa youwei*' policy, it can be found that traditional Chinese culture and historical narratives have been warmly embraced in the context of cultural diplomacy in the promotion of China's soft power in Xi's era. As Nye pointed out, culture is one of the three pillars in generating soft power (Nye, 1990). Obviously, the CCP started to show greater awareness of the importance of communicating with domestic and foreign publics through the implementation of cultural diplomacy, which draws inspiration from Chinese historical narratives and traditional cultural resources.

This feature can be first observed from Xi's wife, Peng Liyuan, who has stood out since 2013 because of her breakthrough in public diplomacy during presidential visits abroad. Peng has caught the attention of other nations through her elegant dress style with 'Chinese characteristics' and her sophisticated diplomatic manners during visits. "Eschewing international luxury labels, logos and Western bling, Peng has curated a specific style that is feminine yet conservative, confident and chic and often nods to her Chinese heritage with qipao, mandarin collars and traditional details on otherwise quite modern outfits."⁵⁴ In November of 2014, Peng accompanied the wives of leaders and representatives from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and introduced Chinese cultural heritage such as cloisonné, filaments Mosaic, and carved lacquerware during their visit to the Summer Palace in Beijing. Later in the same month, during Peng's visit to the University of New South Wales, she talked about Mandarin, Chinese calligraphy, traditional Chinese art, paper-cutting, and embroidery in Confucius classroom. In addition, Peng has prepared a variety of cultural gifts that symbolize Chinese character and carry Chinese values, such as the Chinese traditional instrument Guzheng, Chinese folk music, Chinese brand cosmetics, Chinese calligraphy work and so on.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, she has also been frequently engaged in a number of charity projects and serious tasks since 2006, such as raising awareness of childcare, female education, and critical public health issues, including the prevention and

treatments of tuberculosis, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). As one of the most popular Chinese folk singers, her domestic popularity as a singer also boosts her influence in advocacy and publicity among Chinese society. “Since Xi’s elevation to the most powerful position in China, Peng has increasingly been travelling abroad, prompting some Chinese media to tout the first lady as an example of China’s expanding soft power.”⁵⁶

In brief, Peng’s role as the first lady has seen her become a Chinese cultural ambassador which has set a precedent for the CCP’s cultural diplomacy. “For many Chinese, Peng’s sense of glamour and natural elegance is even more significant in a historical context – as she is the first Communist Party first lady to embrace a polished, modern style that doesn’t look amiss on the international stage.”⁵⁷ Traditional Chinese culture became a key element of China’s cultural diplomacy in the promotion of soft power under the fifth generation of Chinese leadership.

Another case to explore in the fifth generation’s cultural diplomacy is a recently proposed strategy called ‘*One belt, One road*’ (*Yidai Yilu or Belt and Road Initiative BRI*), which is focused on connectivity and cooperation between China and Eurasian countries. The ‘belt’ refers to the ‘Silk Road Economic Belt’ which bonds China with land-based countries in Central Asia, and Eastern and Western Europe. The ‘road’ refers to the ‘21st Century Maritime Silk Road’ which bonds China with sea-based countries in South-East Asia, Africa and Central Asia. As noted in Chapter 2, the Silk Road dates back to ancient times and it used to be both a major hub for trade and commerce, and more broadly, as a cultural bridge between Chinese civilization and foreign societies.

BRI is not only a story of prosperous trade between China and a variety of Eurasian countries, but also a magnificent history of harmonious cultural exchanges and activities. In Xi’s speech at Connectivity Spearheads Development and Partnership Enables Cooperation in 2014, he suggested to “draw peoples closer to one another for exchanges of ideas and intercultural dialogue through connectivity development in Asia, so that they will meet and learn about each other, trust and respect each other, create a harmonious and peaceful life for their common enjoyment and jointly pursue an Asian dream of peace, prosperity and progress.”⁵⁸ In 2015, Xi also indicated in his speech to the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference that the Belt and Road Initiative will “promote inter-civilization exchanges to build bridges of friendship for our people, drive human development and safeguard the peace of the world.”⁵⁹ BRI is based on a deep understanding of this concept of history and cultural exchanges between China and countries across Eurasia. “Histories of silk, porcelain, and other material pasts, together with competing ideas about civilizations and world history, will play a distinct role in shaping trade, infrastructure, and security within and across countries in the coming years... Culture forms part of the international diplomatic arena now, and with routes, hubs, and corridors serving as the mantra of *the Belt and Road*, countries will continue to find points of cultural connection through the language of shared heritage in order to gain regional influence and loyalty.”⁶⁰

More significantly, ancient cultural exchanges and historical narratives are embraced as the resources of soft power that implemented into China's cultural diplomacy. This initiative echoed Xi's Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation: it aims to not only continually build on this cultural legacy, but to remind the rest of the world of China's prosperity in ancient times and its ambition to achieve the great rejuvenation. A rich Chinese cultural resource conveying Chinese values, norms and beliefs have been implemented into Xi's cultural diplomacy as a tool for enhancing China's soft power. The Chinese Dream provides broad ideological guidance that orients China's cultural diplomacy to enhance its soft power. On the one hand, China's soft power is also actively applied to its domestic situation in order to aid ethnic relations and promote conditions for sustained growth (Barr, 2011, p.7). On the other hand, cultural diplomacy aims to create a stable, peaceful, and favourable international environment to propel the achievement of the Chinese Dream.

In sum, the Chinese Dream provides broad ideological guidance in orienting China's cultural diplomacy to enhancing its soft power. It is the key ideational strategy orienting China's soft power promotion. Traditional Chinese culture and historical narratives are embraced as the resources of soft power implemented by China's cultural diplomacy within Xi's presidency.

Conclusion

The Chinese Dream relies on cooperation between the state and every individual of the Chinese nation. It is also about the ambitious goal of bringing China back to the top of international society, as in ancient times. It is a national agenda that seeks to incorporate the personal dreams of individual Chinese people. It is a dream that is to be accomplished by both the government and the Chinese people in order to maintain security, stability and eventually the revival of a prosperous country. In pursuit of the goal of a more vigorous foreign policy, cultural resources, which Nye suggested as one of the three pillars of attraction, have been mobilized by China as a way to build up soft power. Nevertheless, Nye also argued that it is essential to observe soft power towards different audiences because context matters. How, then, has China's cultural diplomacy been implemented towards different audiences? This will be clarified through case studies in the proceeding chapters.

Chapter 4: China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan

Introduction

Japan represents the strongest of China's neighbours with whom significant political, economic, and cultural ties have existed throughout a long history. Existing literature lacks a strong connection between the Chinese Dream and China's cultural diplomacy when analysing China's soft power toward Japan in the contemporary context. This chapter contributes to the existing literature by providing a holistic analysis of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan and the correspondence with the Chinese Dream under the three-dimensional analytic framework.

The chapter develops through six structured sections. The first section presents a literature review of research on Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations and Sino-Japanese soft power and cultural diplomacy. The second section provides a clarification of the historical context of the Sino-Japanese cultural ties, and of the contemporary development of PRC's cultural diplomacy toward Japan, in particular within Xi's presidency. The next three sections clarify the manifestations of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan and its correspondence with the Chinese Dream based on the three-dimensional framework: media exchange, educational exchange, and cultural exchange. The last section provides an analysis of the key features and limitations of China's cultural diplomacy in promoting China's soft power toward Japan.

Overall, this chapter argues that there is a high level of correspondence between China's contemporary cultural diplomacy in Japan and the foundational ideas of the Chinese Dream paradigm. Practice and paradigm both demonstrate a broad commitment to more confident leadership and projection of Chinese leadership within international politics. This analysis of China's cultural diplomacy practices in Japan suggests that in the realm of media there have been significant attempts of rebranding China as an economically strong and culturally attractive country. This has been done by projecting visions of Chinese citizens' and corporations' successes, albeit in a manner that commonly acknowledges the presence of social and political tension. In the realm of education, attempts at convincing Japanese students to accept Chinese narrative regarding the historical disputes became the focus in China's pursuit of soft power; strong political interference has been the main obstacle in promoting its soft power toward Japan. In the realm of cultural exchange, there have been various activities aiming to cultivate a favorable, friendly, and strong image of China toward Japan, despite the negative uncertainties of political dissent at a governmental level. To conclude, this chapter points out that historical disputes remain the fundamental impediment for China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan in the pursuit of soft power.

4.1 Sino-Japanese Cultural Diplomacy: State of the art of existing literature

The cultural relations of China and Japan can be traced back to two millennia. Nowadays, as the second and third-largest economies in the world, whether and how China and Japan cooperate with each other will certainly affect the welfare of nations both in the region and around the world. Substantial attention has been paid to the analysis of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations within IR academics, particularly given China's troubled historical relationship with Japan (Iriye, 1990; Rose, 2000; Yahuda, 2006; Hagström, 2008; Sun, 2012; Mori, 2013; Beeson and Li, 2014; Yang, 2015; Men, 2016, Zhao, 2016). For example, Caroline Rose (2000) analysed the role of nationalism in affecting Sino-Japanese relations and the implications for Sino-Japanese relations. Takeshi Uemura (2013) offers a cultural constructivist framework to capture how China's perceived identity of Japan constitutes and evolves through social interactions, and how such identity in turn gives meaning to the PRC's interactions with another state. Kazuko Mori (2013) explores how Sino-Japanese relations transformed over 40 years, the unresolved issues after the 1972 negotiations, and attempts on the institutionalization of cooperative frameworks.

Some existing literature focuses on the analysis of Japanese soft power and cultural diplomacy toward China (Lam, 2007; Mochizuki, 2007; Vyas, 2011, Otmazgin, 2012). Mike Mochizuki argues that Japan has "shifted away from the 'friendship diplomacy' paradigm to a mixed strategy that involves both positive engagement and realistic balancing to hedge against the potential threats that China may pose in the future" (2007, p.739). Peng Lam's (2007) examination of Japan's soft power approach to China argues that despite the attractiveness of Japanese pop culture and other more traditional forms of public diplomacy, Japan's soft power is undermined by its failure to overcome its burden of history. In the book *Soft Power in Japan-China Relations*, Utpal Vyas (2011) systematically examines how Japanese state agents, governmental organizations, and non-governmental actors enable soft power to be transformed, based on a three-level agent comparison framework.

Furthermore, there is also some work focusing on comparative studies of soft power between China and Japan (Heng, 2010; Sun, 2012). Noticeably, Yee-Kuang Heng (2010) compares China and Japan's culture, history, norms, values, and private sectors to examine the two countries' soft power strategies. He argues that Japan has developed a well-rounded foundation for soft power from its popular and traditional culture, together with values and norms embodied in its policies, while China is still behind with its shortcomings. In addition, Jing Sun (2012) explores the competition of soft power between China and Japan toward South Korea, Taiwan, and other states in the region. He also evaluates the effectiveness of individual campaigns from the perspective of the target state, looking at public opinion polls, media coverage, and

the response from state leaders (Sun, 2012).

However, little attention has been paid to cultural diplomacy from China's side to Japan (Passin, 1967; Liu, 2013; d'Hooghe 2015). Ingrid d'Hooghe (2015) provides an overview of China's public diplomacy toward Japan with a particular focus on Hu's presidency at the beginning of the 21st century. It summarizes the key features and organizations of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan (D'Hooghe,2015). Liu Bei (2013) identifies the key factors affecting China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan from a cross-cultural communication perspective. He argues that the underestimated cultural difference, unfavourable media environment and Chinese anti-Japanese nationalism are the key factors affecting the development of Sino-Japanese relations (Liu, 2013, p.237). Some studies focus on the specific aspects that are closely engaged with the practice of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan. For example, Chunlian Chao (2016) provides an overview of Sino-Japanese film and television cooperation from the 1980s to the beginning of the 21st century. Fan Qiang and Zhang Yun (2017) take Confucius Institute at Ritsumeikan University as a case and analyse China's public diplomacy in promoting diplomatic relations with Japan.

To conclude, this chapter contributes to the existing literature by providing a systematical analysis of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan and the correspondence with the Chinese Dream under the three-dimensional analytic framework. It addresses the existing insufficiencies of proving a systematical analysis of the manifestation of the Chinese Dream in contemporary practices of cultural diplomacy toward Japan.

4.2 The background of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan

The following section provides a foundation from which the connection between historical ties between the two countries and China's contemporary cultural diplomacy can be explored. The broad evolution of Sino-Japanese cultural relations and practices of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan from ancient times to Xi's first five years of the presidency is covered. It argues that despite both countries being under the East-Asian cultural sphere and having strong cultural affinity, historical disputes remained the central obstacle to Sino-Japanese relations, along with distinctive perceptions and narratives from both sides. Overcoming historical disputes has become a significant focus of the CCP's cultural diplomacy towards Japan. More recently, the renewed political stability in both countries has shown great potential for creating a better environment for the development of cultural diplomacy.

4.2.1 Sino-Japanese cultural relations

The cultural relations between China and Japan have lasted since the Han dynasty (57

AD), nearly 2,000 years. Over the centuries, geographic proximity had brought the two countries into constant contact through maritime trade, cultural contacts, periodic military battles, regional rivalries, and economic exchanges⁶¹ As the older civilization, the Chinese strongly impacted various aspects of Japanese society such as language, political thoughts, religion, and art, particularly during the Tang, Ming and Qing dynasties (Wang, 2010; Huntington, 1912).

Noticeably, the most significant influences are scholarship, religion, and art. It is generally believed that there had been no writing system in Japan until Japanese Buddhist monks had returned from China with texts written in the Chinese language (Beermann, 2006). The Chinese writing was used as a bridge between the languages of different tribes and communities. After, by absorbing and modifying the logographic components of Chinese characters, *Kanji (Han characters)* was formed and from there widely used in the Japanese writing system (Tyler, 1995). Furthermore, Japanese *Ruism (Confucianism)* was also imported from China and played an extremely important role in the history of the Japanese language and culture. According to Japanese historic records, the book *The Analects of Confucius* was first introduced to Japan by Wang Ren in AD 285 (Chang, 2013, p.409). It was warmly embraced and studied by the Japanese elites and became an integral part of the Japanese cultural religion (Chang, 2013, p.416). As Passin (1962, p.42) noted, “all the major elements of Japan’s civilization owe their character to Chinese influence. Japan was indeed the ‘younger brother’ and China the ‘older brother’...For Japan, China was the ‘eternal Rome’, under whose inspiration she transformed herself after the 5th century from a tribal, non-literate society to a ‘cultured’ nation”.

However, what makes Japan different from other Asian countries is that Japan never abandoned its own native culture. On the contrary, it contributed to the East Asian cultural sphere by adding modifications and making innovations. The beginning of the Meiji Restoration in 1868 represented Japan’s first attempt at modernization, and successfully led to Japan’s transformation from a feudal nation into a modern industrial state (e.g. Beasley, 1972; Wilson, 1992; Sim, 2001). Based on European experiences, structural reforms were carried out within the political system, law system, investment and banking system, the military and in education. In the meanwhile, following the defeats in the First and Second Opium Wars, there was also an agreement of strengthening national power through reforms within the Chinese government, which led to China’s Self-Strengthening Movement from 1861 to 1895 (Inoue and Li, 1985).

However, modernization resulted in different outcomes for the two countries. This relationship of Chinese dominance eventually changed when Japan’s increasing militarism and imperial ambition enabled it to gain a number of military victories and impose punitive economic arrangements over the weakened Chinese government. The end of the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895 marked the emergence of Japan as a major world power, while at the same time highlighting the falling of China in the world.

During the period of 1894 to 1945, Japan's long chain of invasions, occupation and crimes changed the cultural and political relationship between the two countries. Japan's political victories included the annexation of Taiwan, acquisitions in China's Shandong Province, occupation of Manchuria, and a full-scale invasion of the Chinese mainland,⁶² which became part of the Japanese colonial empire. On the other hand, China was also culturally viewed as an antiquated civilization without the ability to defend itself against western invasion. Among the Japanese, traditional admiration for China turned quickly to contempt. "Japan showed a much greater adaptability to the pressure coming from the West than China did... Japanese national pride reached the point of open contempt" (Passin, 1962, p.42).

After World War II ended, Japan's long chain of war crimes in China in 1945 came to light. The Japanese government followed the U.S. and recognized the Republic of China (ROC) in Taiwan as China's legitimate government. The undermined diplomatic relations between China and Japan did not resume until 1972. The normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations helped bring the PRC out of its diplomatic isolation and made significant rapprochement in Sino-Japanese relations. As a result, a great deal of effort was made by both governments to improve cultural exchange between the two countries. Since Deng Xiaoping announced The Open Policy, Japan has provided substantial economic development aid and investment to the PRC through concessional loan programs. In an effort to improve cultural exchange, both governments appropriated funds for education and cultural exchange programs and encouraged public communication and non-governmental exchange activities. For example, between 1983 and 1992, the number of Chinese overseas students in Japan grew at an average rate of 16.1% annually (Tanaka, 1995, p. 184). With China's emerging economic power in the international economy, previous cultural relations of Japan as the leader has gradually shifted to a subtler role in both countries' eyes. There are several challenges in Sino-Japanese cultural relations, as both countries tend to forge their historical narratives in ways that frame them as their historical 'Other'. In Japan's eyes, China began to appear less as a supplicant for Japanese aid and investment, and more as a regional rival to Japan's own interests. In China's eyes, there is a strong voice calling for both countries to make a consensus regarding those conflicts left during the wartime. However, they still face a number of historical and territorial conflicts, which are affecting their mutual relationship and damaging to cultural diplomacy in the Post-Cold War era. "The historical legacy has not yet been overcome on a government-to-government basis" (Betzler and Austin, 1997, p.579).

A great deal of public concern has been aroused over the past decade due to the sharpest confrontations regarding historical disputes and territorial conflicts between Japan and China during the periods of wartime. One concern is about Japanese officials' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, which honours Japanese leaders and war dead, including those convicted of war crimes in Sino-Japanese conflicts during World War II. It is said that Japan made an unwritten agreement with China in the 1970s that serving leaders would not visit the shrine.⁶³ However, since Prime Minister Koizumi

first visited the shrine in 2001, Japan appeared to have broken the deal. China was outraged, criticizing this as a major political obstacle in the improvement of bilateral relations and calling for Japan to be responsible for all the consequences. After Koizumi, the next Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, continued to visit Yasukuni Shrine for the next 7 years. Although the Japanese government emphasized that Abe's visit did not reflect Japanese government views, this has gained massive condemnation and critique from China. During the past three decades, China routinely made protests and refusals of bilateral engagement against the Prime Ministers' visits to the shrine.

Another obstacle is textbook controversy raised as a history issue. The controversies are primarily concerned with the Japanese nationalist efforts to whitewash or downplay the nature of Japan's military aggression during the First and Second World War. The 1982 history textbook controversy in Japan first raised the issue of history as a serious obstacle in Sino-Japanese relations. "Over the course of this debate, the 'standard' historical account— that is accepted by Chinese, Western, and many Japanese scholars—has been challenged by Liberal Democratic Party politicians, right-wing scholars, and journalists in Japan. According to their account, Japan's war was not a war of aggression, but rather one of liberation in which Japan fought to free Asia from the noose of Western imperialism".⁶⁴ More recently, after the textbook called *New History Textbook* was approved by the Ministry of Education in 2001, a number of students, historians and educators from both countries protested against the content, which tends to downplay or minimize Japan's wartime atrocities.

The most notorious example of this was the Rape of Nanking, where millions of Chinese civilians were killed through inhuman looting, mass rape, massacres, and other crimes during the Japanese invasions. In the conclusion of Barnard's investigation on 88 Japanese high school textbooks' coverage of the Rape of Nanking, he stated that "although the textbooks do deal with the atrocity in reasonable detail, there is a consistent pattern of language use that has the effect of isolating knowledge of the Rape of Nanking from Japan and Japanese people" (Barnard, 2001, p.519). Relations between Japan and China have been complicated as a result, as the denial of the massacre is seen as part of an overall unwillingness on Japan's part to admit and apologize for its aggression, or a perceived insensitivity regarding the killings.

From time to time, the Japanese government would stand up and attempt to play down Japan's responsibility for war crimes. On the other side, the Chinese government has fiercely voiced its opposition and criticized the Japanese government regarding the issues of history textbooks and shrine visits. "Instead of trying primarily to subordinate the war issue to the goal of China-Japan cooperation, Chinese leaders undertook a widespread program of education about the war as part of a program to revive patriotism" (Betzler and Austin, 1997, p.579). With China's emerging economic power in the global economy, previous cultural relations with Japan as the leader have gradually shifted into another subtle status where China is viewed as a rival to challenge Japan's regional dominance. Although Sino-Japanese relations consisted of

attempts at economic and political engagement mixed with stages of transformed tension and confrontation in the Post-Cold War period, historical disputes and confrontations still remain the central obstacle within Sino-Japanese relations.

To conclude, throughout ancient times and continuing to the contemporary era, Sino-Japanese cultural relations have experienced unexpected turns, with ups and downs. In the eyes of Japan, China has been viewed as a 'big brother' to admire, a 'loser' to western civilization and then, more recently, a powerful rival. Despite the close cultural relations and cultural similarity under the East-Asian cultural sphere, historical disputes created within wartime still remain the central obstacle nowadays within Sino-Japanese cultural relations.

4.2.2 An overview of PRC's cultural diplomacy toward Japan

The normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations is not only historically significant regarding the rapprochement of Sino-Japanese relations, but also in enhancing the depth and width of cultural diplomacy between the two countries. Arguably, there was no better time in the history of Sino-Japanese cultural relations than in the 1980s (Akio, 2017, p.12). Deng Xiaoping kept promoting the Open-door Policy to encourage economic development and cultural exchange. He stated that "it is the right decision to apply the Open-door Policy at the economic level, at the same time we also need to develop cultural exchange towards other countries in the long term" (Deng, 1994, p.233). In 1978, Deng visited Japan for 8 days, during which he visited a number of modern factories and took a ride on the bullet train. "It was exactly at this time that the Japan Film Week Festival was held in seven major cities in China" (Akio, 2017, p12). Echoing Deng's Open-door Policy, both governments supported massive programs of cultural exchange and joint cultural institutions and organizations. "Following the 'panda boom' in the Japanese society in the 1970s, a positive image of China was boosted by the 'Silk Road boom', which arose from a popular NHK documentary series" (Peng, 2017, p.33). In 1984, the Twenty-First Century Committee for Sino-Japanese Friendship organized a 15-day visit to China for 3000 young Japanese people, with the aim of mutual understandings for the future between the youths of both countries. A number of initiatives such as the establishment of the Beijing Centre for Japanese studies and academic liaisons between universities were made during the 1980s (Betzler and Austin, 1997, p.579).

In response to an invitation extended by the government of Japan, the third generation of Chinese leadership, Jiang Zemin, made an official visit to Japan as a state guest in November 1998. During the visit, an intense exchange of views between Jiang and Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi regarding the international situation, regional issues and the overall Sino-Japanese relationship were discussed.⁶⁵ Jiang's visit was intended to be a milestone in the process of healing suspicions between the countries. "Tokyo also hoped that expanding cooperation and friendly ties would top the agenda when Chinese President Jiang Zemin arrived on the first state visit by a Chinese head

of state".⁶⁶ However, the result of the visit seemed to inflame and antagonise, rather than solve the misunderstandings. For example, during Jiang's visit to Japan, he intended to gain two concessions from Mr. Obuchi: a clear-cut written apology to the Chinese people for Japan's actions during World War II, similar to the apology Japan gave South Korea a month earlier, and a pledge regarding relations with Taiwan, similar to the statement given by American President Bill Clinton to China during his visit earlier in the same year. However, instead of offering an oral apology for the war, Japan rebuffed Jiang on both counts.⁶⁷

Cultural exchange played an essential role in developing the mutual understandings and had a direct effect on Sino- Japanese cultural relations within Jiang's presidency. There were 14,524 Japanese students studying in China in 1994, which was more than any other group of overseas students (Zhao, 2007, p.82). By 1994, 40,000 Chinese students had been to Japan for further studies, (Betzler and Austin, 1997, p.583) and this figure had tripled by the end of 2004 (Zhao, 2007, p.82). A number of cultural exchange activities were held between both countries during this period. In September 1999, in cooperation with Japan, the Chinese Cultural Ministry hosted cultural exhibitions named Touring Japan 99. In the same year, the Japanese Embassy in China hosted activities to mark it as the Year of Sino-Japanese Friendship and Culture.⁶⁸ More importantly, it is from this period that Japan started impressing the Chinese public with its exceptional cultural products, such as anime and manga. As a result of this, a whole generation of Chinese children grew up watching Japanese animation and reading Japanese comic books.

Hu Jintao's presidency commenced during the first decade of the 21st century; it is also when soft power theory started to become prominent amongst the Chinese government and Chinese academia. In Hu's presidency, China's all areas of cultural exchange with Japan experienced a constant boom. Taking researcher exchange as an example, from 1999 to 2004, the number of Chinese researchers in Japan increased from 4,411 to 6,537, and the number of Japanese researchers in China nearly doubled, increasing from 7,436 to 14,438. By the end of 2003 China had 936 Japanese language-learning institutes and nearly 390,000 people studying Japanese (Zhao, 2007, p.55). Meanwhile, the themes and contents of cultural exchange have broadened dramatically. The themes and contents ranged from the arts, such as music, dance, drama, film, painting, museum, archaeology, photography, folk custom, and literature, to fields such as education, publishing, broadcasting, television, sports, science and technology, religion, and architecture. In 2008, Hu Jintao arrived in Tokyo, kicking off a five-day "warm spring" trip to Japan. The trip aimed at boosting the strategic and mutually beneficial relationship between the two nations. In a written statement issued at the airport, Hu said that 2008 marks the 30th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship and the China-Japan relations are facing new opportunities for further development.⁶⁹ The Japanese government also described Hu's engagement with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda as fruitful.⁷⁰ Both Beijing and Tokyo have been very cautious to eschew any risk that would damage

the development of Sino-Japanese relations.

2012 marks the 40th anniversary of the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations; it is the Sino-Japanese People's Friendship Year; it is also the year when Xi Jinping and Shinzo Abe both emerged as political leaders. By looking at the reports of Xi's main statements and speeches from 2012 to 2017, it can be seen that historical issues have been a central idea regarding Sino-Japanese relations during his first couple of years. Due to domestic pressures and the deterioration of Senkaku/Diaoyu island between 2010 and 2012, Xi held a strong attitude towards the need for Japan's government to acknowledge and properly handle several important historical issues. In 2014, both Xi and Abe met for the first time in two-and-a-half years at the APEC Summit, where they sought solutions to repair ties frayed by territorial and historical disputes. However, the result of this meeting in repairing the Sino-Japanese relationship is barely satisfactory. An awkward scene was captured when Xi, with an unsmiling and a stiff facial expression, reluctantly shook hands with Abe; it was also reported that he did not speak to Abe when they first met.⁷¹ Xi stated clearly China's position regarding historical issues again by emphasizing: "the rights and wrongs of recent serious difficulties appearing in Sino-Japanese relations are very clear and obvious" and "calling for Japan to apply the commitments they have made within previous governments".⁷² Unsurprisingly, cultural exchanges between the two countries have also been negatively affected under this antagonistic atmosphere between both governments and the people of both countries. Cultural exchange events between local governments, and non-governmental exchanges between China and Japan have been cancelled. Even the event for the 40th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations and friendship was delayed for a few weeks and eventually cancelled.⁷³

The tension was first alleviated at the China-Japan Friendship Meeting in 2015. During this period, the Japanese Secretary-General of the Liberal Democratic Party, Toshihiro Nikai, led 3000 people on a visit to China for a "Japan-China Tourism Cultural Exchange Tour". This visit was viewed as a symbol of achieving detente in Sino-Japanese relations since Xi took the power. The effort of cultural diplomacy has achieved remarkable success in the recovery of Sino-Japanese relations during this period. Since then, China and Japan have sent each other several friendly signals aimed at improving Sino-Japanese relations. 2017 marked the 45th anniversary of the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations. In September 2017, Abe made a surprise appearance at the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo which was hosting an event marking China's National Day, which was the first time in 15 years that a Japanese prime minister had attended such an event.⁷⁴ In return, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi immediately met with Yutaka Yokoi, the Japanese ambassador to China in Beijing, and told Yokoi that China expects more good news from Japan.⁷⁵ In Nov 2017, on the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in Danang, Vietnam, Abe met Xi again and it was described as a "fresh start" to the relationship between the countries. Different from three years ago, both leaders smiled while shaking hands at the start of the meeting. In Xi's speech, he placed particular emphasis on both countries continuing to enhance

the exchanges of culture, media and youth generation, therefore improving the development of public relations between China and Japan. Xi also said this was a meeting that marks a fresh start of relations between Japan and China, which has gained Abe's agreement.⁷⁶ This again verified that highlighting cultural diplomacy has become one of the key features within the fifth generation of Chinese leadership's approach to dealing with their relationship with Japan.

To conclude, while there are still historical factors negatively affecting cultural relations between China and Japan, the recent decades, especially from 1978, have witnessed the steady growth of cultural exchange between the two countries. Overcoming historical disputes has become a significant focus of the CCP's cultural diplomacy towards Japan. Within Xi's first five-years of the presidency, the effort of cultural diplomacy has achieved remarkable success in the recovery of deteriorated Sino-Japanese relations, particularly in the Senkaku/Diaoyu island dispute. More recently, the renewed political stability in both countries has shown great potential for creating a better environment for the development of cultural diplomacy.

4.3 The manifestation of cultural diplomacy toward Japan—Media exchange

This section analyses China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan in the realm of media exchange and how the Chinese Dream ideology has been manifested through the practice of cultural diplomacy. It argues that there has been a steady increase in media exchange between China and Japan since the 21st century, featured with real stories based on the lifestyles of everyday people. Furthermore, it argues that there is a high correspondence between the Chinese Dream and media exchange, most readily to be found in documentaries. Attempts at rebranding China as an economically strong and culturally attractive country can also be seen through a variety of cultural programs that echo with the appeal of 'the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'. However, historical disputes remain the major obstacle in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan.

4.3.1 An overview of Sino-Japanese media exchange

There has been a steady increase in media exchange between China and Japan since 2000. When it comes to TV series, historical and martial arts dramas have always been the most popular, regardless of the fluctuation in Sino-Japanese political relations. *The Bund* (Shanghai) is a drama portraying a story of hatred among gangs and romance between a couple in the 1920s. This TV series became the first popular Chinese TV series on Japanese mainstream TV channels in 2008.⁷⁷ Martial arts series such as *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*, *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*, and *the Smiling, and Proud Wanderer* also went viral among Japanese audiences in the 21st century. Furthermore, film-industry collaboration between China and Japan is also on the rise. China's film

industry is growing rapidly, earning approximately 55.9 billion yuan (950 billion yen, or \$8.9 billion) in box office revenue in 2017, which is over four times that of Japan.⁷⁸ Between 2000 and 2015, there were more than 56 films co-produced and released in both countries. Japan's 2017 animated film *Your Name* completed a history-making run in China, pulling in \$83.7 million. Jackie Chan's *Skiptrace* and Chinese mega-blockbuster *Wolf Warrior II*, meanwhile, received theatrical releases in Japan.⁷⁹ *Legend of the Demon Cat 2017*, a fantasy mystery film based on a novel penned by Japanese writer Baku Yumemakura, became the biggest film collaboration (costing US\$170 million) between the two countries up until that point.⁸⁰ At the same time, events such as the "Chinese film week in Tokyo", "Chinese film festival in Japan", and the "Japan and China film forum" have also been organized to promote the development of film exchange and cooperation between the two countries.

The content of media exchange varies from history documentary to war movies, from art programs such as calligraphy, tea culture, to daily life themed programs such as food, travelling, and entertainment shows. It is worth noting that documentaries have become a particularly popular form of media exchange in the 21st century. In the last three decades of the 20th century, there were only three China-themed documentaries broadcasted in Japan (Silk Road 1980, Yellow River 1986, and The Treasure of Forbidden Palace 1997). However, this figure increased to 9 between 2000 and 2011, almost 9 times more than it was on average (Chao 2016, p.68). Among them, three were produced by CCTV with the cooperation of Japan's largest public broadcasting organization NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation). Four of them were made by Beijing Television and Japanese Daifu, and the rest of them were made by NHK and with Chinese local televisions and non-governmental organizations.

Noticeably, different from purely promoting traditional Chinese culture in the last century, more programs and films that focused on presenting stories about the lives of common people have been produced.⁸¹ Four lifestyle-themed documentaries were produced in the first decade of the 21st century and 11 films about the daily lives of common people were released in Japan between 2000 and 2014 (Chao 2016, p.68). In particular, a trend of recording how Chinese people pursue a better life in Japan began to appear on the screen at the beginning of the 21st century. In the documentary, *The Little International Student* (2000), a 9 years old Chinese girl from Beijing called Zhangsu followed her parents to study in Japan. Through this documentary, it reflects the difficulties of the subject in adjusting to Japanese society and how her parents worked hard in order to seek a better life in Japan. After broadcasted in Fuji TV during prime time, the film caused a huge response in Japanese society, with 20.6% of the high ratings creating an annual record among the same category programs.⁸²

Six years later, the director of *The Little International Student*, Zhang produced another documentary called *Living in Tears* (2006), which won the documentary" NHK Fund Award " after *The Little International Student*.⁸³ It tells the tough life story of a 35-year-old Chinese man from Shanghai who lived as an illegal immigrant in Japan for 15

years, separated from his family and his motherland. He faced various difficulties such as long working hours and tough living conditions in order to support his family but was eventually reunited with his family after his daughter finished her studies and settled down in the U.S. More recently, 6 Chinese films, including *Lost and found*, *Alajiangse*, *Pegasus*, *Patrolman Baoyin*, *The Island*, and *Weizezhilu* were released during the Chinese Film Festival in Japan 2019.⁸⁴ All of these films were based on the lives of ordinary people in contemporary China, which reflects the context of actual life in contemporary Chinese society.

In brief, there has been a steady increase in media exchange between China and Japan since the start of the 21st century. Rather than purely promoting traditional Chinese culture, more documentaries, TV series, and films based on common people's everyday lives have appeared on screen.

4.3.2 Media exchange and the Chinese Dream

Interestingly, audiences began to see a more positive image of an emerging China within Xi's presidency, which highly correspondences with the Chinese Dream ideology. Such a shift can be most readily seen from recently released documentaries. During the Chinese New Year of 2013, People's Daily Online (Japanese)⁸⁵ and Japanese Channel launched a joint documentary series called *The Chinese Dream of Japanese*. Different from recording Chinese people's lives in Japan as it was usually reported, this documentary recorded interviews with Japanese people who came to Beijing searching for a better life. The interviewees had many occupations such as student, artist, musician, teacher, architect, volunteer and acupuncturist.⁸⁶ In contrast with the previous documentary *The Little International Student*, rather than narrating how Chinese people flock into Japan seeking a life with a higher living standard, this documentary series presented how Japanese people came to China to fulfill their 'Chinese Dream'. Accordingly, China is portrayed as a culturally attractive and economically prosperous country with plenty of job opportunities that is worthy Japanese of people travelling to and settling down in for a better life.

More recently, to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the normalisation of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations, the documentary TV series *China Story* began to broadcast through Japan Fuji TV in 2017.⁸⁷ Produced by the Japanese Fuji TV, Daifu and China Intercontinental Communication Centre (CICC), *China Story* focused on the lives of common Japanese people living in China. It tells stories of how ordinary Japanese people have overcome the difficulties of living in China, what attracted them to live there, and how they successfully achieved their dreams. For example, the first episode recorded a Japanese single mum's life in Shanghai. With the help of many Chinese friends, she has overcome a number of difficulties while simultaneously studying and raising her child, eventually becoming a successful businesswoman in China. These documentaries correspond with the basic goal of the Chinese Dream, which is to improve people's material living standards. More importantly, they are

consistent with Xi's Chinese Dream goal for Chinese citizens to have faith and confidence in the Chinese nation.

Furthermore, the reflection of the Chinese Dream can also be seen from a book that was selected as one of the core textbooks in Meiji University, Japan. Released in Japan in 2016, the book *The Chinese dream: whose dream?* adopts stories of Chinese entrepreneurs, students, and foreign people who live in China to reflect the modernization of China and different people's interpretations of their Chinese dreams.⁸⁸ As one of the authors stated, the purpose of this book is to "reduce the misunderstandings of China, to let people know more about China, allow people to understand more about China and to like China".⁸⁹ This book clearly conveys the key message of the Chinese Dream, that is, China is no longer the backward China. The development of China has provided more opportunities for not only the Chinese people but also for the foreign people living in China, allowing everybody to pursue their career and life.

Although Sino-Japanese media exchange has gradually increased since the start of the 21st century, political factors still play a decisive role in media exchange between China and Japan. For example, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Island territory dispute worsened political relations between China and Japan and directly affected the size and the content of media exchange. Anti-Japanese became the subject of Sino-Japanese relations guiding public opinion; therefore, media exchange activities involved strong political preference. In 2015, the SCIO held a conference regarding the exhibition of China's anti-Japanese war (the world's anti-fascism war 70th anniversary). It identified 10 films, 12 TV series, 20 documentaries, 3 TV animations, 100 books selected topic, and 20 kinds of audio and video electronic publications as the key films and publications, with particular guidance and support for the government.⁹⁰ In the same year, China Daily also updated a list of eight Chinese classic war films against Japan in World War Two (WWII). In China, a number of anti-Japanese WWII films and TV series were made⁹¹ and frequently broadcast to Chinese audiences. Between 2012 and 2015, when the two countries were at their lowest ebb, only two Japanese films were allowed to be shown under the regulation of imported film in China as a result.⁹²

Only after the alleviation of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Island in 2015, media exchange between both countries began to recover. In May 2018, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang signed an agreement to pursue joint film productions on his visit to Japan. The policy aims to deepen ties between the two nations through improved cultural cooperation to mark the 40th anniversary of the Japan-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship.⁹³ Such state-level partnerships ease the permissions process for filming location permits, work visas and also the exemptions from Beijing's strict quota on film imports. As a result, Chinese audiences could finally see the Japanese animation classic *My Neighbour Totoro* on screen 30 years after its release.⁹⁴ However, it is unquestionable that the uncertainty of Sino-Japanese political relations could still strongly affect the implementation of media exchange between the two countries in the future. Not only

because cultural diplomacy relies on political stability, but more importantly, it is because unresolved historical disputes have always been an obstacle to China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan.

To conclude, more documentaries, TV series, and films based on the lifestyles of everyday common people have appeared on screen in media exchange between China and Japan. Furthermore, attempts to rebrand China back to a strong power can be seen through a variety of cultural programmes echoing with the goal of 'the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'. However, by looking at the realm of media exchange, it can be seen that historical disputes remain the main obstacle in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan.

4.4 The manifestation of cultural diplomacy toward Japan-- Educational exchange

The following section analyses how educational exchange as a means of implementing China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan has been developed since the 21st century and how it fits into the Chinese Dream narrative. It argues that echoing with 'the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation' initiative, traditional Chinese culture has been used as an essential resource in the implementation of educational exchange with Japan. Attempts at convincing young Japanese people to accept the Chinese narrative regarding the historical disputes became the focus of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan in the realm of educational exchange during Xi's presidency. Political dissent remains the key obstacle of China's cultural diplomacy in promoting its soft power toward Japan in the realm of educational exchange.

4. 4.1 An overview of Sino-Japanese educational exchange

The educational exchange between China and Japan plays an essential role in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan. The Agreement of Cultural Exchange between the People's Republic of China and the Government of Japan was signed in 1979. Later on, in 1980, the Agreement of Science and Technology Cooperation between China and Japan was also signed by officials from both countries.⁹⁵ These two agreements highlighted the necessity and the broad prospect of educational exchange and science and technology cooperation between the two countries, it also laid a solid foundation for the Education Ministers Meeting and Five Years Educational Exchange Plan.

Educational exchanges of students and scholars, inter-institutional collaboration, and cooperation in language teaching and academic research between China and Japan have witnessed a remarkable expansion in the 21st century. According to a survey conducted by the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO)⁹⁶, it was shown that there were up to 208,379 overseas students studying in Japan in 2015, which was an

increase of 13% compared to 2014. Among them, 94,100 students were from China.⁹⁷ In 2017, this figure went up to approximately 107,200, which accounted for 41% of all overseas students in Japan, far more than the second most, Vietnam (23%).⁹⁸ Meanwhile, there were approximately 14,000 Japanese students in China, which has remained stable for many years.⁹⁹ The rapid expansion of educational exchange can also be seen from the Confucius Institutes in Japan. Since the first Confucius Institute in Japan opened its doors at Ritsumeikan University in 2005, they have quickly gained popularity throughout the rest of the country.¹⁰⁰ By the end of 2018, there were 14 Confucius Institutes and 8 Confucius Classrooms across elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in Japan, which is second to Thailand (23 in total).¹⁰¹

Furthermore, since 2000, both countries have organized a number of educational exchange events and activities such as academic conferences, forums, and meetings. In October 2000, Beijing University and the University of Tokyo conducted the "Chinese and Japanese University Chancellor Forum", which was held in Tokyo, Japan. This annual forum provides an important platform for higher education exchanges between the two countries and is also an effective way to conduct the university chancellor dialogue and educational exchanges between China and Japan (Zhang, 2010, p.965). More recently, the fifth China-Japan Educational Exchange Conference was held in Japan in Nov of 2018. Hundreds of colleges and universities, scientific research institutions, and education agencies from both countries attended the conference. A series of more specific forums were held, such as "the university headmaster forum" and "medical exchange forum", along with discussions on the topics of university management experience and challenges, university innovation and cooperation.¹⁰²

The rapid expansion of educational exchange between the two countries is not just reflected in the numbers but also the scale and the content. Take Ritsumeikan Confucius Institute as an example, the Institute offers a structured Chinese language curriculum at all levels, from introductory to advanced. Besides regular teaching, it is also in collaboration with its partner, Peking University, to develop Chinese teaching materials for the Chinese character in cultural sphere. Besides, it also organizes Chinese language seminar tours to China during summer vacations and supports student study visits to Chinese universities through its scholarship-funded system. The institute also promotes Chinese language teaching at Ritsumeikan's local youth centers and affiliated elementary, junior high, and senior high schools.¹⁰³ In addition, the Confucius Institute at Ritsumeikan also organizes a number of activities to motivate and promote Chinese language teaching. It holds a Chinese language speech contest once a year in order to encourage Chinese language students in their daily efforts. It invites leading experts from the fields of Chinese language study, Chinese language teaching, and linguistics to give interactive symposiums and lectures. Lectures on understanding China have been held once a month; art performance, Chinese classics lectures and other special courses have been held regularly. They have also worked on research projects about Chinese food culture through a comparative study, historical

research, and an accumulation of food culture survey data.¹⁰⁴ In 2015, to celebrate the 10 years anniversary of the Confucius Institute at Ritsumeikan, the Beijing University Students Art Troupe carried out a 9-day art tour of activities at Ritsumeikan University, Aichi University, and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University.¹⁰⁵

In brief, by looking at international student exchange, Confucius Institutes and a series of educational exchange initiatives and events, it can be seen that educational exchange between China and Japan has expanded remarkably since the start of the 21st century.

4.4.2 Educational exchange and the Chinese Dream

A recent policy instruction on how to strengthen patriotic education in the Chinese educational system was published by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2016. It highlights the important role of patriotic education in achieving the Chinese Dream and indicates the general direction and priorities of China's cultural diplomacy during Xi's presidency. For the planning of Confucius Institutes and Chinese language teaching, it stated that "China should actively carry out Chinese teaching and Chinese cultural exchange activities, heighten the portion of Chinese culture and contemporary China in all kinds of Chinese teaching material content, carry out more brand projects such as the 'Chinese Bridge' summer camp in China, 'Chinese Bridge' Chinese competition, and the 'Confucius Institute Day'. Therefore, to effectively play the role of Confucius Institutes in promoting and strengthening China's soft power".¹⁰⁶

As argued before, since its arrival to Japan in ancient times, the philosophy of Confucius has gained massive acceptance and has had a lasting impact. Chinese influence can also be seen within several aspects of Japanese culture, such as art, food, tea culture, and traditional medicine and so on. In terms of the content, it is not difficult to observe that traditional Chinese culture has become an essential resource in the implementation of educational exchange toward Japan, particularly based on the historical fact that both countries share many cultural similarities under the East-Asian cultural sphere. The first Traditional Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute (TCMCI) is a good example of this. Opened at Hyogo University of Medicine in 2012,¹⁰⁷ TCMCI has a regular system of university education, such courses as Medical Chinese, Introduction to Oriental Medicine, Therapeutics of Han Medicine, Formulae of Han Medicine, Clinical Therapeutics of Han Medicine and Introduction to Taiji Quan. Research projects that focus on attempting to explain traditional Chinese Medicine with modern science are available to students. Such projects include analysis and curative effects, the mechanism of pain treatment and so on.¹⁰⁸ Compared to western countries, it is probably much easier to adopt traditional Chinese culture as a recourse of cultural diplomacy toward Japan. Such highlighting of traditional Chinese culture in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy corresponds with the Chinese Dream: the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is not simply related to the development of people's material living standard, but more importantly connected to

the prospering of Chinese culture, it is not to rise China from nothing, but to regain its glory both economically and culturally.

It is also worth noting that attempts at convincing Japanese students to accept the Chinese narrative regarding historical disputes became the focus of China's educational exchanges with Japan within Xi's presidency. In 2017, the fourth China-Japan Education Exchange Conference was held in Tokyo, which raised the voice for mutual communication and cooperation on education exchange between the two countries.¹⁰⁹ Topics such as bilateral relations, historical disputes and post-war reconciliation were often discussed at those forums and conferences. Such first-hand experiences are expected to give students an opportunity to reconsider the relationship between the two countries based on more than just common media narratives, which are overwhelmingly negative.¹¹⁰ As Chinese ambassador to Japan Cheng said, "If students visiting Japan, through their own eyes, ears, and body, feel and understand how each Japanese truly thinks of the past history, it will be very useful for them to learn the history better."¹¹¹ In August 2018, Li made the remarks in a congratulatory message to an exchange conference attended by more than 1,000 Chinese and Japanese university students at Peking University in Beijing to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Japan and China should develop a friendly and stable relationship, he said, adding the two sides should continue promoting exchanges between the young people and build more bridges of communication to enhance bilateral friendship. Noting that the youth represent the future, Li said the Chinese government would always support mutual visits and exchanges between the young people of the two countries.¹¹²

Traditional Chinese culture has been used as an essential resource in the implementation of educational exchange toward Japan and had the intention of changing young Japanese people's perceptions of historical disputes. However, it is worth pointing out that strong political interference has become a major obstacle to educational exchange in promoting soft power toward Japan. As it was argued, "It (China) tends to use utilitarian soft power resources in a coercive and rigid way, imposing policies, laws and regulations on its foreign partners and pushing its agenda and outcomes through propaganda and control mechanisms" (Lo and Pan, 2014, p.1). For example, due to strong political influence from the government, the robust expansion of Confucius Institutes encountered resistance and had negative effects in Japan. In 2009, Shigesato Toshiyuki, former director of the Osaka Sangyo University affairs board, made a statement suggesting that the Confucius Institute is a spy agency established to gather cultural intelligence. He pointed out that, "although the Confucius Institute is not an invasion by the Chinese government, it can be seen as a 'soft landing' for China's expansionism."¹¹³ As the Japanese newspaper Sankei Shimbun reported, Shigesato Toshiyuki sued his former employer because he was made to leave his position and the university; the trial ended in an out-of-court settlement. Osaka Sangyo University also declined to give any details regarding the

former director's dismissal.¹¹⁴ The Sankei Shimbun also pointed out that the reason why Confucius Institutes are welcomed by Japanese universities is because Japan is facing what is called the "2018 problem" — a decline of university students caused by the lack of 18-year-olds in the population.¹¹⁵

To conclude, echoing with 'the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation' initiative, traditional Chinese culture has become an essential resource in the expansion of educational exchange toward Japan. Attempts of convincing Japanese students to accept the Chinese narrative regarding historical disputes became the focus in China's pursuit of soft power through educational exchange within Xi's presidency. Political dissent remains the key obstacle of China's cultural diplomacy in promoting its soft power toward Japan in the realm of educational exchange.

4.5. The manifestation of cultural diplomacy toward Japan -- Cultural exchange

The following paragraphs explore the recent development of China's cultural exchange activities toward Japan and its correspondence with the Chinese Dream. It argues that Sino-Japanese cultural exchange, featuring friendship cities and delegate visits, has expanded despite the negative uncertainties of political dissent on the governmental-level. In the realm of cultural exchange, echoing with the Chinese Dream, traditional cultural affinity has been highlighted throughout various cultural exchange practices in order to cultivate an economically and culturally prosperous China toward Japan.

4.5.1. An overview of Sino-Japanese cultural exchange

China has been conducting various cultural exchange activities with Japan to cultivate a favorable image. The tradition of establishing *Friendship Cities/Sister Cities* as a means of China's cultural diplomacy was actually started with Japan. In May 1973, Kobe (Japan) and Tianjin (China) became the first pair of Friendship Cities, followed six months later by Yokohama (Japan) with Shanghai (China). From 1973 to 1978, the only 6 pairs of Friendship Cities between China and abroad were established with Japan under a Chinese government initiative. However, by May of 2018, 248 Friendship Cities had been established between China and Japan (Cheng, 2012, p.111). The establishment of friendship cities not only allows the exchange of technology, trade, investment capital and labor, but more importantly, it allows local governments to make full use of cultural exchange activities to promote local culture and expand cultural influence.

For example, since Tianjin and Kobe became the first pair of Friendship Cities in 1973, Kobe has provided substantial support to Tianjin regarding port management and pollution control. Kobe has also sent experts to Tianjin to help develop its medical and

transport infrastructure, sewage management, and city planning (Vyas, 2017, p123). In the 21st century, the cultural exchange activities between those two cities have become more frequent: both cities invited each other to hold cultural exchange activities such as art performances, exhibitions, film weeks, and exchange TV series and advertising videos. In addition, the two cities explored extensive cooperation through academic reports, professional seminars, and the exchanges of visitors. With the financial support of Kobe local government, the Tianjin Art Troupe has been regularly performed in Kobe. The Tianjin government also organizes students and artists to Japan to participate in Kobe Art exhibition every two years. A strong link was established between schools, hospitals, television networks, and universities from both sides (Cheng, 2012, p.113). Similarly, 2018 was the 45th anniversary of the Friendship City relationship between Yokohama and Shanghai.¹¹⁶ Various events and activities have been conducted to improve the economic and cultural exchange between the two cities. Since 1998, delegation visits every five-years have become routine to commemorate the anniversary of the Friendship City relationship. Art exhibitions and art performances have also been carried out at the same time to propel the economic cooperation and cultural understanding between those two cities.

However, it would be a mistake to view the expansion of the friendship cities between China and Japan as either peaceful or inevitable. There are still uncertain factors within friendship cities that have been negatively affecting China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan. For instance, at the beginning of the 21st century, some Japanese right-wing groups organized anti-Chinese protests against the Chinese narrative of the Nanking massacre in Osaka. The Osaka government refused the request to cancel this protest from Shanghai's government, which has subsequently cast a shadow on the relationship between the Osaka and Shanghai governments. As a consequence, the dispatching program for advanced students on technology and agriculture was suspended in 2003 after 22 years. All of the exchange programs between Osaka and Shanghai were reduced to 7 in the same year. Since 2007, both governments were only able to maintain 2 exchange activities per year at the official governmental level (Gong, 2007, p.22). Similarly, in 2003, newly elected Yokohama Mayor Hiroshi Nakada made a decision to cut the budget for exchanges between Yokohama and Shanghai. Two years later, due to the textbook revision issue and Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, a few large-scaled anti-Japanese protests occurred in big cities in China, including Shanghai. The Yokohama government sent a protest letter to the Shanghai government and denounced it at a press conference. As a result, the volume of exchange programs in 2005 and 2006 was only half of what it was 1996 (Gong, 2007, p.22).

Cultural exchange plays an indispensable role in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan, particularly within Xi's presidency. Take delegate visits as an example. As it was noted in the previous section, the visit of 3000 Japanese citizens, also called the "Japan-China tourism cultural exchange tour" in 2015, was seen as a significant turning point in the Sino-Japanese relationship since Xi came to power. The

delegation included Japanese politicians, central and local government officials, Japanese representatives from different organizations and associations, and ordinary tourists.¹¹⁷ This cultural exchange tour was believed to have achieved significant improvements in Sino-Japanese relations, it also led to a more vigorous environment for Sino-Japanese cultural exchange. Furthermore, in 2003, in order to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Friendship city, Shanghai Archives Bureau and the government in Yokohama jointly organized a photography exhibition in Japan called *Using photos to recall – The 30 years of development of Yokohama and Shanghai*.¹¹⁸ Ten years later, even when Sino-Japanese relations were at the worst point in years, due to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Island territorial dispute, the photography exhibition was still carried out as planned. As Japanese archive researcher Ituwimi said, although Sino-Japanese relations are not very good at the moment, we still want people to know more stories about people in Shanghai and Yokohama and their contribution to Sino-Japanese relations.¹¹⁹

In brief, despite the negative uncertainties of political dissent on a governmental-level, Sino-Japanese cultural exchange, with a particular focus on friendship cities and delegate visits, plays an indispensable role in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan.

4.5.2 Cultural exchange and the Chinese Dream

Echoing with the Chinese Dream, traditional cultural affinity became the highlight in the practice of cultural exchange toward Japan for generating a friendly and favourable image of China. As the Chinese ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua, noted at the opening ceremony of the "2016 Chinese Festival" in Japan: "China and Japan are close neighbours that are only separated by a strip of water, there has been a long history of friendly exchanges between the two countries, and cultural identity and traditional values of the people from both countries are highly integrated."¹²⁰ At the 2017 Chinese Festival, he stated that: "the Chinese Festival not only provides wonderful performances that deepen Japanese people's understanding of China, it also allows people from both countries to appreciate the shared traditional cultural ties, which were inherited by the two countries over more than two thousand years. Hopefully it could be a good opportunity to strengthen face-to-face exchanges and promote friendly feelings between the two countries".¹²¹

A wide range of Chinese cultural elements and symbols, such as Chinese food and tea culture, Chinese artworks and handicrafts, Chinese folk music, folk dance, and local instruments, were presented through a series of cultural exchange activities and events toward Japan. These cultural exchanges echoed with the Chinese Dream paradigm of the growing confidence in Chinese culture. In the 2018 Chinese Festival, more than a hundred points were set up at the exhibition, including Chinese cuisines, Chinese products, cultural heritage and landscapes.¹²² Activities and events were set up surrounding popular cultural themes from both countries, such as a ramen

challenge, table tennis competition, karaoke contests, and an electronic design contest.¹²³ Such focus draws on the cultural affinity between the societies of the two countries highlights China's cultural exchange toward Japan.

More importantly, corresponding with the growing cultural confidence of the Chinese Dream, more and more Chinese cultural elements are being introduced to Japan. As mentioned before, China's home-grown cartoons paled in comparison to the many Japanese anime series on television and in comic books, which led to a number of Chinese people being influenced by Japanese animation and manga culture since the 1990s. However, a new wave of Chinese animation, which is driven by the country's technology and internet giants, has begun to show up in Japan. More recently, the "Chinese animation trip to Japan -- from ink" was the first large-scale Chinese animation exhibition in Japan, where more than 130 cartoon works were presented to Japanese audiences.¹²⁴ The works include not only classic Chinese cartoons made in the last century, but also modern Chinese animation created by the new generation of Chinese cartoonist.¹²⁵ Accordingly, a more developed modern China, which corresponds closely with the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, has also been presented to Japan through a variety of cultural exchange practices. As Cheng addressed, "China is also a fast-changing country with development and prosperity, Chinese traditional culture and the modern China both enjoy its charms, hopefully it will present Japanese people with a dimensional, authentic, and comprehensive image of China".¹²⁶

To conclude, echoing with the Chinese Dream, traditional cultural affinity has been used as the key resource for generating a friendly and favourable image of China in the practice of cultural exchange toward Japan. A more developed modern China, which corresponds closely with the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, has also been presented to the Japanese audiences through a variety of cultural exchange practices.

4.6 The Chinese Dream, cultural diplomacy and soft power

The last section of this chapter concludes by reiterating the key features of China's cultural diplomacy toward the case study country Japan with its unique cultural relations, and its correspondence with the Chinese Dream ideology. Overall, it argues that there is a high level of correspondence between China's contemporary cultural diplomacy in Japan, and the foundational ideas of the Chinese Dream paradigm. However, historical disputes and political dissent remain the fundamental impediment and provides an obstacle to China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan in the pursuit of soft power.

The Sino-Japanese relations are of central importance to East Asia; the future not only of the two countries, but also of the Asia Pacific region and potentially the rest of the world depend on this relationship. As Akira Iriye (1990, p.635) stated: "In discussing a pair of countries like China and Japan, the cultural dimension seems particularly

pertinent not only because of their historical cultural (religious, literary, artistic) ties, but also of the modern experiences involving their encounter which have so often been notable because of lack of understanding, condescension, brutality, prejudice.” By looking at the historical character of Sino-Japanese relations since ancient times and comparing these with the current political atmosphere, it argues that the cultural relationship between the two countries has experienced constant unexpected turns with ups and downs. In the eyes of Japan, China has been viewed as a ‘big brother’ to admire, a ‘loser’ to western civilization and then a powerful rival. Historical disputes, along with distinctive perceptions and narratives from both Japan and China, remained the central obstacles within Sino-Japanese relations. In China’s eyes, there is a strong voice of calling for both countries to make a consensus regarding those conflicts left during the wartime. Although the scale and number of cultural exchanges between China and Japan have increased dramatically since the normalization of diplomatic relations, they still face a number of historical and territorial conflicts, which affect their mutual relationship and damage the development of cultural diplomacy in the Post-Cold War era.

While there are still historical factors negatively affecting cultural relations between the two countries, recent decades, especially since 1978, have witnessed the steady development of cultural exchange between China and Japan. Within Xi’s first five-years of the presidency, the efforts to improve cultural diplomacy have achieved remarkable success in the recovery of deteriorated Sino-Japanese relations due to the Senkaku /Diaoyu island dispute. After exploring the practice of China’s cultural diplomacy toward Japan through media, educational exchange, and other cultural exchange activities in the 21st century, it argues that cultural exchange has witnessed remarkable expansion, and substantial resources have been invested to promote a favourable image of China to the Japanese people. More recently, the renewed political stability in both countries has shown great potential for creating a better environment for cooperation through enhanced cultural diplomacy.

There is no doubt that the implementation of China’s cultural diplomacy in the 21st century has made considerable improvements in cultural relations between China and Japan. However, it is difficult and still too early to answer the question of whether the implementation of China’s cultural diplomacy could have a positive impact on China’s soft power or not. According to Nye (2008, p.1), soft power rests on three resources: "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority)." Furthermore, soft power also rests on the ability of framing and persuading agenda to influence the preference of targets. In terms of persuasion, it is significant to consider it as a two-way process of communication that involves much interpreted information for different selected targets rather than a single-tracked information interaction. Observing soft power in a way that focuses more on the perception of the audience plays an essential role in understanding the mechanism of soft power.

According to a recent research report by the PEW Research Centre on Japanese views of China, the index measuring unfavorable views of China held by Japanese people increased from 71 to 86 within the decade from 2006 to 2016. In 2016, only 11% of the Japanese population expressed a favourable opinion of China, while 14% of the Chinese say they have a positive view of Japan. 81% of the interviewees used the word “arrogant” to describe China and 70% of the interviewees think China is nationalistic.¹²⁷ According to the 2017 Japan-China Public Opinion Survey conducted by Genron NPO¹²⁸, 44.9% of the Japanese viewed Sino-Japanese relations as “bad”, while 64.2% of the Chinese public held this view. Most people in both countries feel that there “has not been any special change and there will not be a change”. Despite the close cultural relationship and cultural similarities under the East-Asian cultural sphere, historical issues still remain the central obstacle within Sino-Japanese relations and continue to negatively affect the development of cultural relations between the two countries. History and territory impeded the improvement of perceptions about the other side and emotions began to deteriorate in a serious way. For a long time, the development of these unsolved historical issues brought up strong feelings of nationalism in both countries. There are still hidden dangers leading to nationalism and revisionism on both sides.

In China’s perception of Japan, Japan has never made appropriate apologies that China has found satisfactory or acceptable regarding historical War Time issues. Japan’s lack of repentance or failure to learn from the past remains the main concern within Sino-Japanese cultural relations. As Liu argued, “what China asks of the Japanese side is that it should not whitewash its history of aggression and eulogize those who died in the war of aggression. Japan should admit the crimes of its militarist aggression against China, appropriately address the problems left over from WWII, draw lessons from the history and stick to a road of peaceful development”.¹²⁹ The prevalence of references to history and the Japanese aggression toward China remains a defining feature of Chinese rhetoric on Japan. Similar to China’s perception of Japan, there is also a very high prevalence of threatening rhetoric when it comes to Japan’s perception of China. There is also a critique among the public that the media tends to report on China in a sensational and negative fashion, which has contributed to the deterioration in Sino-Japanese relations (Akio, 2017, p.45). Unsurprisingly, as argued in previous paragraphs, Japan tends to downplay historical issues by revising history textbooks and so on because they wish to move beyond the past. Both China and Japan criticize each other for lacking transparency, creating uncertainty and raising concerns in the region about the direction they intend to take. As a result, both countries repeatedly present each other as posing a direct danger due to their aggressive disposition, territorial ambitions, attempts to change the international order, or their reckless behaviour.¹³⁰

Take the Senkaku/Diaoyu Island issue as an example. Nationalist activism on both sides of the East China Sea has intensified the tension within Sino-Japanese relations. Japan and China have both claimed this island as their own territory, either based on

contemporary control since the 19th century or historical tributary administration since the 14th century. On China's side, regular attempts of approaching the island have been made by Chinese non-governmental nationals since 1970, against strong interference and warning from the Japanese Coast Guard. These fierce and dangerous actions are highly praised as a spirit of patriotism on Chinese social media, particularly after Japan's agenda of nationalizing the island in 2012.¹³¹ To some extent, the Chinese government has "allowed anti-Japanese feelings to become an important element of Chinese nationalism" (D'Hooghe, 2015, p.199). On Japan's side, the protests and inflamed sentiments did not stop the process of nationalising the island. Some local officials called on the government to push ahead with plans to deploy a unit of the Japanese military and patrol in greater force to assert its control of the island.¹³² Eight-in-ten Japanese (80%) and about six-in-ten Chinese (59%) are concerned that territorial disputes between China and its neighbours could lead to a military conflict.¹³³

Another problem of whether the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy could have a positive impact on China's soft power or not is due to the broad nature of soft power itself. Although Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges have witnessed remarkable expansion, due to the intangible features associated with the concept of soft power, it is imprudent to claim that China's soft power toward Japan has been enhanced as there are so many factors in affecting the dynamic of soft power. For example, living abroad is an important and transformative experience where most students will gain some measure of intercultural understanding. However, does this mean it can automatically be translated into soft-power gains? The result remains unknown. In other words, it is still too early to say whether the efforts of cultural diplomacy toward Japan have been transformed into China's soft power.

Although China's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) has surpassed Japan to become the second-largest economy in the world in 2010, through looking at the implementation of cultural diplomacy there are still some distinct figures indicating the weakness of China's soft power to Japan. Take publishing for example, according to statistics from the UNESCO Index Translationum, the number of books translated from Chinese to Japanese has been growing year on year since 2005. However, it is insignificant if we compare with the statistic of books translated from Japanese to Chinese, 3129, which is more than 6 times the opposite(487) since 2005.¹³⁴ Furthermore, according to Portland's 2017 research on soft power world rankings, Japan's position of 6th in the rankings is much higher than China's, which was only 25th.¹³⁵ In this case, it can be seen that there is still a huge gap between China and Japan. Therefore, there is still a long way to go for China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan in enhancing its soft power. In the near future, the close relationship between Japan and the U.S. will not allow Tokyo to fundamentally change its political position and reverse policies toward China. However, by encouraging more cultural exchanges that facilitate mutual understandings, both China and Japan can play a greater role in creating a peaceful region. 2018 marked the 40th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of

Peace and Friendship. Rather than simply seeing cultural diplomacy as a salient tool of soft, it may be more important to use it as a communications platform to reduce the misunderstanding and distrust between the people of both countries, allowing for peaceful solutions regarding territorial conflicts and historical disputes to be found.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has outlined the historic context from which contemporary practices have emerged and assessed correspondence between these practices and the Chinese Dream paradigm. Overall, it argues that there is a high level of correspondence between China's contemporary cultural diplomacy in Japan and the foundational ideas of the Chinese Dream paradigm. Practice and paradigm both demonstrate a broad commitment to more confident leadership and the projection of Chinese leadership within international politics. This analysis of China's cultural diplomacy practices in Japan suggests that in the realm of media there have been significant attempts to rebrand China as an economically strong and culturally attractive country. This rebranding was attempted by projecting visions of Chinese citizens' and corporations' successes, albeit in a manner that commonly acknowledges the presence of social and political tension, into the Japanese sphere. In the realm of education, attempts at convincing young Japanese people to accept the Chinese narrative of historical disputes became the focus in China's pursuit of soft power, with strong political interference being the main obstacle in promoting its soft power toward Japan. In the realm of cultural exchange, there have been various activities aiming to cultivate a favourable and friendly image of China toward Japan, despite the negative uncertainties of political dissent on a governmental level. Issues such as historical disputes and political dissent remain the fundamental impediment and challenge of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan in the pursuit of soft power.

Chapter 5: China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia

Introduction

Modern Sino-Russian cultural relations are becoming an important factor in ensuring peace, security and stability both regionally, in Eurasia, and globally. Since Xi took power in 2012, the Sino-Russian relationship has entered a new period with overarching guidance of the Chinese Dream. Beginning with an overview of Sino-Russian cultural relations, this chapter explores the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia in the realms of media exchange, educational exchange and cultural exchange, and its correspondence with the overarching guiding ideology the Chinese Dream.

The first section looks at existing studies concerned with China-Russia soft power and cultural diplomacy. The second section provides a clarification of Sino-Russian cultural ties within a cultural context and the contemporary development of PRC's cultural diplomacy toward Russia, in particular within Xi's presidency. The next three sections analyse the manifestations of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia and its correspondence with the Chinese Dream in the realms of media exchange, educational exchange and cultural exchange. The last section concludes the chapter by clarifying the dynamic of China's cultural diplomacy and the Chinese Dream in promoting China's soft power with Russia.

Rather than making judgements over the result of China's soft power or comparing it with Russia's approach, this chapter takes a different track to explore China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia and the correspondence with Xi's Chinese Dream narratives. It argues that, unlike with Japan, China's cultural relations with Russia do not share a long history of cultural similarities in religion, philosophy, language, social values and art. Sino-Russian cultural relations only became closely linked through the shared political values of Marxism and Communism raised in the 20th century, with activities being primarily conducted by both governments. Within Xi's presidency, China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia in the Chinese Dream period has turned into an increasingly active environment.

In the realm of media, despite the limited number of media exchanges corresponding with the Chinese Dream, a strong message of presenting China as a genuine global player is clearly embedded within certain media exchange activities and initiatives, demonstrating China's recent economic development and political reform. More importantly, the adoption of traditional Chinese culture echoes closely with the concept of rejuvenation by demonstrating growing cultural self-confidence. In the realm of educational exchange, the Chinese Dream rhetoric of benefiting other countries corresponds with China's direct financial support for Russian students and

joint universities. Traditional Chinese elements are often used as the key cultural resources for creating a favourable image of an unthreatening neighbour with a grand cultural heritage. In the realm of cultural exchange, it argues that cultural exchanges with Russia in the Chinese Dream period have increased steadily, with a particular interest in tourism exchange. Traditional Chinese culture has been seen as the symbol of Chinese identity and a key resource in generating Chinese influence through the implementation of cultural exchange toward Russian audiences. More importantly, corresponding with the Chinese Dream, the historical communist connection was used as the key resource in order to generate a positive and friendly image of China through cultural exchange.

To conclude, China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia via media, education and cultural exchanges corresponds with the Chinese Dream rhetoric. By pointing out the limitations of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia in the framework of Nye's soft power theory, it argues whether it contributes to China's soft power toward Russia still remains unknown.

5.1 China-Russia Cultural Diplomacy: State of the art of existing literature

This section looks at existing studies of Sino-Russian soft power and cultural diplomacy. It argues that existing research tends to either compare or assess the influence of China and Russia when it comes to soft power, and there is a low level of clarification within existing literature regarding the analysis of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia. Rather than making judgements over the result of China's soft power or comparing it with Russia's approach, this chapter is interested in mapping the correspondence between China's contemporary cultural diplomacy toward Japan and the articulations of the Chinese Dream. The three-dimensional theoretical framework allows a more holistic account to be generated compared to a more focused case study stated above.

The relationship between China and Russia is vital for regional development and global stability, particularly within the 21st century. The Putin–Xi dynamic, and Sino-Russian partnership, suggest a world where common interests, mutual trust, and shared purpose are more than just slogans (Lo, 2019, p.1). The relationship is becoming more complex, with lingering mistrust and fears from both sides. As Paul Stronski and Nicole Ng (2018, p.2) pointed out, “as China envisions a more active role in regional and global affairs, its long-term ambitions with respect to Russia are not clear.” On the other hand, some argued that Russia's turn to the East is merely toward diplomacy and economy, rather than the turn of culture or identity based on attraction and emotional preference (Zhao, 2016, p.1). Fundamentally, they are two different countries, two different nations, with distinctive cultures and civilizations, and cannot

always share the same interests (Li, 1996, p.5).

This branching point precisely reflected the importance of the soft power research on Sino-Russian relations. Given the distinctive cultural difference between the two neighbouring countries, it is worth asking whether soft power has ever been involved in this process. If yes, how has soft power been transferred and wielded between both countries? Do they share the same approach to soft power when dealing with each other? How has the pursuit of soft power been manifested in practice within both countries? How do we track the subtle transformation of soft power and the main purpose of it?

Existing studies on Sino-Russian relations paid considerable attention to either compare or assess the influence of China and Russia when it comes to soft power (Nye, 2013; Shambaugh, 2013; Rawnsley, 2015). In Nye's article, he pointed out that the mistake that China and Russia have both made in enhancing soft power is the misconception that the government has the main role in soft power, rather than civil society (Nye, 2013). Jeanne Wilson (2015) also shared Nye's point of view, arguing that both China and Russia consider the soft power methods of the West to present nothing less than an existential threat. She compared and evaluated the similarities and differences in Russian and Chinese soft power strategy, highlighting that both countries share a legacy of communism, which notably influenced their national identities and their approaches to soft power (Wilson, 2015). Gary Rawnsley (2015) discussed the difference between China and Russia in pursuit of soft power by focusing on the field of broadcasting. In general, compared to the political trust and economic cooperation between the two countries, deficient attention has paid to the cultural exchange in Sino-Russian relations still seems deficient (Smirnova, 2016; Gasma, 2017; Xu, 2018).

Noticeably, little attention has been paid specifically to China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia in the contemporary context, particularly within the soft power framework. Valeev and Alikberova's work presented a detailed analysis and evaluation of Sino-Russian cultural exchange policies, education programmes and events, the main results, trends, and prospects of Russian-Chinese relations in the field of culture between the 1990s to the 2000s (Valeev and Alikberova, 2011). Xu scrutinized China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia in the fields of media, art, education, sports, and tourism under the framework of "A Community of Common Destiny for Mankind" and made some suggestions regarding the limitations of China's cultural diplomacy (Xu, 2018).

Furthermore, some recent research into China's cultural diplomacy towards Russia focuses on specific fields such as film cooperation, joint education, student exchange and tourism. Smirnova explored the extensive development models in education cooperation between China and Russia and argued that despite the restrictions, bilateral cooperation in science and education appears to be an increasingly ambitious

objective aiming to build up the national innovative capacity of the two countries (Smirnova, 2016). Lao explored the role of cultural diplomacy in the Sino-Russian relationships by looking at cultural initiatives, educational cooperation, and a series of cultural diplomacy policies (Lao, 2012). Some research also investigated the current status and the popularity of Chinese films and TV series in Russia through surveys and interviews (Yang, 2017; Song, 2018).

The sections below extend the existing literature on China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia, through the application of a three-dimensional framework, which allows a more holistic account to be generated compared to the more focused studies noted above. In addition, rather than making judgements over the foundations of China's soft power or the comparative strength relative to Russia's soft power, this chapter is interested particularly in mapping the correspondence between China's contemporary practices in Russia on the one hand, and articulations of the Chinese Dream and practices in other case study countries on the other. In doing so, this chapter will systematically analyse how and what China aims to prioritize in the pursuit of soft power toward Russia by looking at the realms of media, education and cultural exchange, and how this corresponds with the Chinese Dream rhetoric within Xi's presidency.

5.2 The background of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia

The following section provides a foundation from which the connection between historical ties and China's contemporary cultural diplomacy can be explored. The broad evolution of Sino-cultural relations and practices of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia from ancient times to Xi's first five years is covered. It argues that fundamentally, there has been an enduring cultural difference in many aspects of the Sino-Russian relationship, such as religion, language, race, custom, social values and art. Sino-Russian cultural relations only became closely connected through the shared political values of Marxism and Communism raised in the 20th century. Within Xi's presidency, cultural diplomacy in the Chinese Dream period has been emerging into an increasingly active environment.

5.2.1 Cultural relations between China and Russia

The traditional beginning of Russian history is the establishment of Kievan Rus, which ultimately disintegrated as a state due to the Mongol invasions between 1223 and 1240 (Soucek, 2000; Li, 1998; Halperins, 1985). Batu Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, established the Golden Horde which became the northwestern sector of the Mongol Empire from the 1240s to 1502. On the other side of the Eurasian continent, Kublai Khan was officially proclaimed emperor of the Yuan dynasty in 1271. This was

the first foreign dynasty to rule China and lasted until 1368 (Hsiao, 1978, p.36). The earliest cultural exchanges between China and Russia were conducted under the Mongolian empire between the mid-13th century and the mid-14th century. In the book *The History of Yuan*, it was recorded that there were a number of Russian soldiers collated in Beijing. There were also Chinese craftsmen and artists who followed the Mongol armies to Russia.¹³⁶

In the 16th century, China and Russia officially started formal contact through visiting envoys. In 1689, both governments signed the *Treaty of Nerchinsk* to redefine the border: Stanovoy and the Argun River, which remained stable until the 1840s (Frank, p.265). As the first milestone in the development of Sino-Russian relations, the agreement not only settled the political and geographic issues but also deeply influenced the trade and cultural exchange between the two countries. In Chinese ambassador Tulisen's book *Narrative of the Chinese Embassy to the Khan of the Tourgouth Tartars (1712-1715)*, the geography and the native culture in Russia were described in detail (Tulisen and Staunton, 1821). As the first detailed description of Russia, this book largely enhanced China's understanding of Russia in terms of geography, culture, politics and economy. By the 18th century, Russia had grown to become the Russian Empire, stretching from Poland to Far-East Asia. The Russian government attached great importance to the development of cultural exchange with China by sending students to study in China and actively supporting the research of China. At the same time, the Qing government set up the Russian School in China, which started to accept the Russian orthodox missionaries and students to learn Chinese and Manchurian languages and develop Chinese experts in Russian. One outstanding person who made significant contributions to Sino-Russian cultural relations is Sinologist Nikita Yakovlevich Bichurin. Known as the founder of Chinese studies in Russia, Bichurin translated a number of ancient and medieval Chinese manuscripts and published several books about Chinese history, geography, law, and ethnography between the 1800 and 1840s (Popova and Miasnikov, 2002).

However, unlike Japan, which shares a number of cultural similarities in religion, philosophy, language, art, and food under the East-Asian Cultural sphere, Russia's culture distinguishes itself from neither the west nor the east. Despite some early cultural exchanges between the two countries, there have been enduring cultural differences in many areas, such as religion, language, race, custom, social values, and art, which are deeply rooted in Sino-Russian relations. More concretely, Russia and China only became closely connected through the political values of Marxism and Communism in the 20th century. As the CCP's first leader, Mao stated that "the salvos of the October revolution brought us Marxism-Leninism", and cultural exchange at the governmental level expanded remarkably through Russian and Chinese communist parties.¹³⁷

Considerable Russian literature became the inspiration for China's anti-Japanese Imperialism and anti-fascism. In this regard, between 1921 and 1927, more than 30

pieces of Lenin's work were translated and published.¹³⁸ The widespread slogan named after a book called 'To Moscow' also demonstrates that the attraction of Russia's political culture has made significant contributions in boosting China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia (Mattkov, 1959). Some leaders of the CCP, including the second-generation leader Deng Xiaoping, have studied or visited in Moscow. Cultural exchange was also conducted by intellectual elites and science experts supporting China's Technology and nuclear weapon. After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, Mao pursued the Leaning to One Side diplomatic policy, which led China to ally with the Soviet Union and Communist bloc in opposing the imperialist and capitalist camp led by the United States. Unsurprisingly, the Soviet Union became the main focus of China's cultural diplomacy.

Since the early 1950s, Russia's political values, literature, music, art, dance, drama, and movies have become particularly popular. Russian became the priority foreign language studied throughout the country, even in the distant southern provinces (Smirnova, 2016, p.8). Soviet experts offered technical assistance to complete China's socialism construction, which has further promoted cultural exchanges between the two countries.¹³⁹ However, the Sino-Soviet split (1956–1966) cut off communication between the two countries. Accordingly, cultural exchange was frozen for decades until the normalization of diplomatic relations in the late 1980s.

In brief, unlike with Japan, who shares cultural similarities in religion, philosophy, language, social values, and art with China under the East-Asian Cultural sphere, the Chinese and Russian societies do not share a traditional cultural affinity. Sino-Russian cultural relations only became closely linked through the shared political values of Marxism and Communism raised in the 20th century, with relations primarily conducted by both governments for political purposes.

5.2.2 Overview of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia in the Post-Cold War era

After a series of intergovernmental agreements on cultural exchange and education cooperation were signed in the 1990s, it became possible for both countries to implement cultural diplomacy projects such as annual cultural festivals, educational exchanges, literature, musical arts, and events and activities in the field of sports. In 1992, both countries signed a cultural cooperation agreement, which opened the door for bilateral cooperation and exchange in culture and art, media and film, broadcast and publishing, and education and science.¹⁴⁰ In 1993, the first Chinese Studies Centre was set up in Moscow's State Mining University, soon followed by St Petersburg State University and the Far East National University. In 1995, the two countries signed an agreement acknowledging each other's colleges' and universities' education diplomas, degree certificates, and graduation certificates.¹⁴¹

Since then, cultural and educational exchanges, as the foundation of the development of Sino-Russian relations, have experienced significant growth in terms of volume and the variety. In 1992, the China National Song and Dance Troupe had several performances in St Petersburg and Moscow. In 1994, musicians and dancers from the Russian National Dance Theater, Russian Jazz Orchestra, and Russian Army Chorus Art groups visited China for performances (Huang, 2015). The year 1999 was widely celebrated by people from both countries for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the PRC and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. It is also the year of the 200th anniversary of the birth of A.S. Pushkin, when a series of work of Russian writers and poets was published. A number of symphony concerts including Russian and Chinese musicians, performances of the Central Ballet Troupe of China, a circus troupe and Song and Dance Ensemble of the miners also took place in Russia. (Valeev and Alikberova, 2015)

Beginning with the Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship, the volume and variety of cultural and educational exchange continued to expand during the first decade of the 21st century. In commemoration of the 55th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Russian diplomatic relations, the year 2004 was chosen as the “Chinese and Russian Youth Friendship Year” according to a consensus reached by Hu Jintao and Vladimir Putin.¹⁴² Various forms of activities, such as tourism forums, science forums, delegation visits and other cultural activities in literature art and sports, were implemented to expand bilateral exchanges between the young generations. In 2006 and 2007, China held the first large-scale cultural exchange project with cooperation from the Russian government: The Year of the Russian Federation in China and the Year of China in Russia in 2006 – 2007. The political and cultural significance of these events is confirmed by the personal participation of Hu Jintao and Vladimir Putin in the opening ceremony of the “Year of Russia in China”.¹⁴³

Under the initiative of both presidents, 2009 was the Year of the Russian Language in China while the Year of the Chinese Language in Russia was in 2010.¹⁴⁴ More than 260 events were conducted in 14 provinces, 4 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities and 26 cities in China during the Year of the Russian language, including thematic and scientific conferences, seminars and workshops, university and school festivals, competitions and Olympiads on the Russian language and Russian culture (Valeev and Alikberova, 2015). As Li Yingnan, the director of the Russian Studies Centre in the Beijing Foreign Studies University stated, "the Russian year is not simply engaged with language teaching, but also within a wide range of the humanitarian sphere in the two countries, and the main purpose is to deepen Chinese youth's understanding of Russian culture and contemporary Russia"¹⁴⁵

There has also been a dramatic expansion in the amount of educational exchange between China and Russia since the 21st century. The significant cultural diplomacy initiative was the opening of the Russian centers in China and the establishment of Confucius Institutes in Russia. An agreement upon educational cooperation signed by

both sides in 2006 highlighted that both governments would strongly support and promote Sino-Russian educational exchange and language teaching.¹⁴⁶ Since 2000, more than ten Russian Studies Centers have been set up in China's top-ranking universities, such as Beijing Foreign Language University, Shanghai Foreign Language University, Heilongjiang University, and East China Normal University. The first Confucius Institute in Russia was opened in Moscow in 2008, there is now a total of 17 Confucius Institutes and 5 Confucius Classrooms in Russia.¹⁴⁷

Within Xi's first five-year presidency, China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia saw continuous development, with a particular focus on education and young generations. In 2013, Xi stated in his speech at Moscow State Institute of International Relations that, "the youth is the future of the country, the future of the world, it is also the future of the friendship between China and Russia". Later on in 2013, during his New Year Congratulatory message, Xi stated that: "I believe that the China-Russia Youth Friendly Exchanges Year program in 2014 and 2015 will further deepen the understanding and friendship between the young people of the two countries, and the concepts of passing on bilateral friendship from generation to generation and achieving common revitalization will be more deeply rooted in people's heart. It will make new contributions to the continuing in-depth development of comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Russia".¹⁴⁸ As a result, the first Sino-Russian university MSU-BIT University was opened in Shenzhen, China, in 2014. Both countries signed a memorandum of understanding on establishing the university at a signing ceremony witnessed by Xi and Putin.¹⁴⁹ In 2017, it was agreed to set up Weinan Moscow Institute of Arts (WNU) in Weinan with the cooperation of Moscow National Normal University and Weinan Normal University after Li Keqiang's regular meeting with Medvedev in Nov 2016. More recently, Xi again called on the two countries' youths to enhance communication and mutual learning to promote friendship between young generations during a visit with Vladimir Putin to the All-Russian Children's Centre.¹⁵⁰

In general, cultural and educational exchanges, as the foundation of the development of Sino-Russian relations, have embraced experienced growth in terms of the volume and variety since the 1990s. Within Xi's presidency, cultural diplomacy in the Chinese Dream period has been emerging into an increasingly active environment.

5.3 The manifestation of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia—

Media exchange

This section analyses how China's use of media in implementing cultural diplomacy toward Russia has developed since the start of the 21st century and how it fits into the Chinese Dream narrative. It argues that considerable attention has been paid to enhance media exchange between China and Russia by both governments, particularly within Xi's presidency. Different from the case of Japan, there is a very low level of

practice in media corresponding with the Chinese Dream. However, a strong message of presenting China as a genuine global player is clearly embedded within certain media exchange activities and initiatives by demonstrating China's success in economic development and political reform. More importantly, the adoption of traditional Chinese culture echoes closely with the concept of rejuvenation by demonstrating the growing self-confidence in culture.

5.3.1 An overview of Sino-Russian media exchange

In recent years, the Sino-Russian media exchange has drawn attention from both governments during Xi's presidency. During Xi's visit to Moscow in 2013, Xi and Putin reached a consensus of holding a Chinese/Russian film festival every year instead of every two years (under the regulation of China's State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television and the Ministry of Culture of Russian Federation).¹⁵¹ In 2015, the years 2016 and 2017 were named China and Russia Media Exchange Year[s]. During the closing ceremony of the 2017 China-Russia Media Exchange Year program in Beijing, Chinese Premier Li noted: "today's closing ceremony is not an ending but a new starting point, which is expected to open a new chapter for media cooperation and people-to-people exchanges between two countries and push enduring bilateral friendship to pass from generation to generation".¹⁵²

In general, Sino-Russian media exchange and cooperation have increased, both in terms of the volume and their size. Within the two China-Russia Media Exchange Years, more than 250 media exchange events and cooperative projects were carried out between the two countries.¹⁵³ In Oct 2016, both countries started filming a 3 year-long documentary series called *This is China* (Это Китай), which was designed to promote China's international image and Chinese culture among Russian audiences. In 2017, China's largest English-language website, China Daily, signed a cooperation agreement with SPB TV in Russia during the second China-Russia New Media Forum. Han Lei, editor-in-chief of the China Daily website stated that "through taking advantage of the SPB TV platform, we hope that more good Chinese stories can be known and favoured by Russian people".¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, Chinese films and TV series also became more accessible for Internet users in Russia. In Russia's most commonly used web search engine Yandex, there are a number of Chinese TV series that can be found by searching for китайский сериал (Chinese TV series). Some recent TV series popular among Chinese audiences such as "New Shanghai Bond", "Nirvana in Fire" "The Empress of China", "Ode to joy", "Prince of Lanling", and "Female Prime Minister" are also available for Russian Internet users. By the end of December 2017, there were more than 3700 Chinese films on Russia's largest movie website (www.kinopoisk.ru) including dramas, documentaries and short videos.¹⁵⁵

Noticeably, the news and information content platform called *China-Russia headlines* released in both countries in 2017, hit 4 million downloads in 2018.¹⁵⁶ It is the first bilingual mobile platform that has been set up by both countries' mainstream media:

China International Radio and Russia Sputnik News. In the app, there are several categories including news, politics, cultural cooperation, and entertainment. It can also be easily switched between Chinese and Russian languages, and there is even has an in-app Chinese Russian translation dictionary. In June 2018, *China-Russia headlines* launched the “Who are Putin’s fans?” online activity, which aimed to create a positive public opinion of Putin's visit to China. According to the report, there were more than 10 million participants engaged in the activities and there were 100,000 effective questionnaires completed.¹⁵⁷

In terms of book translation and publishing, it is worth noticing the agreement of "Classical, modern and contemporary literary translation publishing project between China and Russia". This agreement was signed by China’s State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, and the Russian Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communication in 2013 to promote literary exchange between the two countries.¹⁵⁸ According to the agreement, both sides aim to translate and publish at least 50 different pieces of each other’s literature by the end of 2019. In 2015, both countries decided to expand the agreement to 100 pieces of literature, including the theory of literature and art, history, and philosophy books.¹⁵⁹

In brief, considerable attention has been paid to enhance media exchange between China and Russia by both governments. As a result, Sino-Russian media exchange and cooperation in the fields of film, TV, and the Internet have increased in terms of both volume and size.

5.3.2 Media exchange and the Chinese Dream

In 2014, at a domestic foreign affair meeting regarding neighbourhood relationships, Xi stressed that “we should introduce our domestic and foreign policies well, tell Chinese stories well, spread Chinese voices well, connect the Chinese Dream with the regional development prospect and the wish of living a better life of people from neighbouring countries, and let the idea of Community of Common Destiny take root in the surrounding countries.”¹⁶⁰ As argued before, the Chinese Dream is about improving the living standards of common Chinese people, and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation involved with self-acknowledgement and self-confidence. However, what message does China intend to send to Russian audiences through media in order to pursue soft power? How is the Chinese Dream reflected in the practice of media exchange with Russia?

In general, media exchange with Russia rarely corresponds with the Chinese Dream’s main subject of improving common people’s living standards. Unlike in Japan, very few documentaries or films that relate to Chinese common people’s lives have been made to reflect the rapid economic development of China and people’s daily lifestyle toward Russian audiences. Similarly, correspondence with the Chinese Dream scarcely occurs

within books and publishing. According to updating statistics from the UNESCO Index Translationum database, only 38 books have been translated from Chinese to Russian in the past decade. By looking at the content of the records, the majority of these translated books focused on topics from traditional Chinese philosophy and medicine, including Daoism, Taiji, Confucianism, Buddhism and acupuncture.¹⁶¹ Likewise, among the 10 Chinese books that were translated and published in Russia for the “2014 Sino-Russian Classical, modern and contemporary literary translation publishing project” event, only one book (*Tear is Gold*) reflects Chinese people’s common life and the social reforms in the late 20th century. In 2017’s event, only the book *Massage* was about Chinese common people’s daily lives in the 21st century.¹⁶²

However, a strong message of presenting China as a genuine global player is clearly embedded within certain media exchange activities and initiatives by demonstrating China’s recent economic development and political reform. First of all, it is worthwhile to explore a recent documentary called *Amazing China*. *Amazing China* is a documentary series that particularly represents Xi’s Chinese Dream ambition toward the world. Since it was first translated in Russian and broadcasted by China Global Television Network (CGTN) in Oct 2017, it has hit 129,000 total views on CGTN Russian’s official YouTube channel.¹⁶³

Consisting of 6 episodes, *Amazing China* records China's remarkable economic development and achievements since the 18th CCP Congress and combines it with Xi’s Chinese Dream. Produced by CCTV and the state-owned China Film Group, the six-part documentary *Amazing China* articulates a message of how China would like to be perceived within the new Chinese Dream era by all the audiences inside of China and abroad. It presents a story of how China has become a prosperous country under the governance of the CCP through the introduction of China’s recent grand projects, technological innovation, poverty improvement, environmental protection, people’s livelihood and international affairs engagement, particularly in the 21st century during Xi’s presidency. From mobile payments to shared bikes, from the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to the *Fuxing* fast train, as it noted, “today's China is moving to the centre of the world's stage, and it has never been so close to the achievement of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”¹⁶⁴. By translating this documentary into Russian and broadcasting it on TV and online, this is precisely the message that the Chinese government intends to deliver to Russian audiences through media exchange.

It is also worth mentioning the book entitled *Xi Jinping: The Chinese Dream*. Released in May 2015, just before Xi’s visit to Moscow for the 70th anniversary of the world's anti-fascist war memorial event, this book became the first monograph of Xi Jinping in Russian. CCTV organized an interview with the author Yuri Tavrovsky to introduce his interpretation of Xi’s Chinese Dream, People’s Daily (Overseas) made a special report about this book, and the book was also translated into Chinese and published by the Central Party School of the Communist Party of China.¹⁶⁵ Surrounding the “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” theme line, this book details Xi’s personal

experience of growing up and his family background. It also explores the cultural background of the proposal of Xi's Chinese Dream and the prospect of Sino-Russian relations. In general, this book speaks highly of Xi's reforms on new ideas, policies and initiatives such as the Chinese Dream, the B&R Initiative and First-lady diplomacy with a strong political complexion. By demonstrating the success of China's economic development and political reform, this book portrays a strong and powerful image of the fifth generation of Chinese leadership's creation of a favourable impression in the eyes of Russian people.

It is also worth exploring another documentary named *This is China*, which is one of the key projects organized under the framework of the Year of Media Exchanges between China and Russia in 2016 by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China and the State Council Information Office.¹⁶⁶ Produced by the Beijing Zhongshi Yayun company, China Radio International (Russian) and Russian Today television, three seasons of *This is China* aimed at promoting China's international image and Chinese culture. In 2017, *This is China I* was first broadcasted on CCTV, CGTV and Russian Today in Chinese, Russian and English.¹⁶⁷ During the launching ceremony, Chinese ambassador to Russia Li Hui stated that "the Year of Media Exchange between China and Russia is a strategic decision made by the supreme leaders of the two countries based on the whole picture of the development of Sino-Russian relations, and it is continuously leading the further development of people-to-people exchange and cooperation between the two countries".¹⁶⁸ By splitting the series into traditional and contemporary sections, *This is China* season I focuses on telling extraordinary Chinese stories that happened on the "old silk road" and the "new silk road". It explains China's contribution of the ancient silk road to the world and the potential influence of the contemporary Belt & Road Initiative on global society. It introduces China's fast-growing technology and "Made in China" stories, which reflect the dramatic development and remarkable progress that China has made in previous decades. On the other hand, it also displays the essence of traditional Chinese cultural elements such as Chinese opera, Chinese Kungfu, and Chinese carving to generate attraction toward Russian audiences.

In July 2017, the Beijing Zhongshi Yayun company signed another agreement with the Russian Today company regarding cooperation in shooting *This is China* season II.¹⁶⁹ As reported, season II would continue to focus on the presentation of traditional Chinese culture and the recent social development of China.¹⁷⁰ In June 2018, the film crew started shooting in Beijing to explore the crafting process of making China's diplomatic gifts, the sophisticated Chinese traditional handicraft production.¹⁷¹ The giving of diplomatic gifts has a long history, with the gifts that are presented usually seen as a symbol of peace and the cultural image of the country.

By looking at *This is China*, it can be seen that traditional Chinese culture and Chinese history have been adopted as the main resources in the implementation of media exchange with Russia. The combination of the ancient cultural resources and the

recent social reforms portrays China as a genuine global player within its increasing influence, not only economically and politically, but also culturally. More concretely, by presenting stories such as the ancient silk road, it corresponds with the concept of 'rejuvenation': China is not being raised from nothing, it has a grand cultural heritage and splendid history from the past, with this cultural influence contributing to global civilization. In other words, the adoption of traditional Chinese culture echoes closely with the concept of rejuvenation by demonstrating a growing cultural self-confidence.

To conclude, there is a very low level of practice in media exchange with Russia that corresponds with the Chinese Dream's main subject of improving common people's living standards. However, a strong message of presenting China as a genuine global player is clearly embedded within certain media exchange activities and initiatives through the demonstration of China's recent economic development and political reform. More importantly, the adoption of traditional Chinese culture echoes closely with the concept of rejuvenation by demonstrating the growing cultural self-confidence.

5.4 The manifestations of China's Cultural diplomacy toward Russia--

Educational exchange

This section explores the implementation of educational exchange between China and Russia and its relationship with the overarching political ideology of the Chinese Dream. It argues that within Xi's first term of presidency, educational exchange with Russia had a particular interest in youth exchange and joint universities. The Chinese Dream rhetoric of benefiting other countries corresponds with the direct financial support for Russian students and joint universities. Traditional Chinese elements are often used as the key cultural resources for creating a favourable image of an unthreatening neighbour with a grand cultural heritage.

5.4.1 An overview of Sino-Russian educational exchange

The educational exchange between China and Russia is in line with China's pursuit of soft power and plays an important role in China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia. As argued before, there has been a dramatic expansion of educational exchange between China and Russia led by the governments. The most significant cultural diplomacy initiative was the opening of the Russian Centres in China and the establishment of Confucius Institutes in Russia. "Since 2000, more than ten Russian Study Centres have been set up in China's top-ranking universities such as Beijing Foreign Language University, Renmin University of China, Shanghai Foreign Language University, Heilongjiang University, and East China Normal University. The first Confucius Institute was opened in Moscow in 2008 and so far, there are 17 Confucius Institutes and 5

Confucius Classrooms in Russia".¹⁷²

Within Xi's first term of presidency, education exchange with Russia focused primarily on the youth. In Xi's 2013 speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations he stated that, "the youth is the future of the country, the future of the world, it is also the future of the friendship between China and Russia". He also stated that "in order to develop good relations between China and Russia, we need to face the future, cultivate the friendship between the young generations. Young people need to know about each other's country's history and the present, learn each other's language, and communicate with mind and soul".¹⁷³ During the visit, Xi and Putin jointly announced that both countries would hold Youth Friendly Exchange Years in 2014 and 2015.¹⁷⁴ Numerous educational exchange activities such as language contest events, student art exchange exhibitions and performances, student exchanges and visits, youth summer camps, and youth entrepreneur exchange forums between the two countries have been carried out under the Youth Friendly Exchange Year framework across the country. More recently, during a visit to the All-Russian Children's Centre, Xi again called on the two countries' youths to enhance communication and mutual learning, in order to promote friendship between young generations.¹⁷⁵

Furthermore, opening joint universities has become a new trend in Sino-Russian education exchange within Xi's presidency. The first Sino-Russian university MSU-BIT University was opened in Shenzhen, China in 2014 under the framework of a partnership between Lomonosov Moscow State University and Beijing Institute of Technology. Both countries signed a memorandum of understanding on establishing the university at a signing ceremony witnessed by Xi and Putin.¹⁷⁶ As the Chinese Education counsellor to Russia noted, "this project should be a sign of the whole education exchanges between China and Russia...This is a cooperation with particular depth, which will lead education between China and Russia to reach a deeper understanding, so that both the education exchanges and cultural exchanges can move into a new step".¹⁷⁷

Approved by the Ministry of Education for its formal establishment in October 2016, the University is the first Sino-Foreign Cooperative University in China, which introduces the superior educational resources of the Russian Federation. The tenet is to promote culture, education, and science and technology cooperation between China and Russia. More concretely, as stated on their website, it is dedicating the need of developing a Sino-Russian strategic partnership.¹⁷⁸ MSU-BIT University has set up four bachelor's degrees (Russian language and literature; Applied Mathematics and Computer Science; Chemistry, Physics and Mechanics of Materials; and Contemporary Russian Language and Culture) and three master's degrees (Nanobiotechnology, Fundamental and Systemic Ecology).¹⁷⁹ In 2017, it recruited a total of 144 students, including 8 foreign students. It is worth pointing out that rather than following geographic preference, the location is not limited to the north-eastern part of China

but shifted to economically advanced regions. “A large Russian community has emerged in the developed southern provinces, which will eventually facilitate the recruitment of students and academic professionals in joint educational institutions”.

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In 2017, after Li Keqiang’s regular meeting with Medvedev in Nov 2016, Weinan Moscow Institute of Arts (WNU) was agreed to be set up in Weinan with the cooperation of Moscow National Normal University and Weinan Normal University. Since it opened in 2017, three undergraduate programs in music, art and preschool education have been set up.¹⁸¹ 49 full-time Chinese academic staff and 12 Russian staff were recruited, and 300 students were enrolled in the first academic year.¹⁸² Graduated bachelor students will also be offered more opportunities for master and Ph.D. studies at Moscow National Normal University. Likewise, rather than having geographic limitations or focusing on developed cities such as Beijing or Shanghai in China, joint universities like Weinan Moscow Institute of Arts could potentially benefit students and academic staff from less developed tier 4 or tier 5 cities by providing more opportunities to study or work in Russia to achieve a deeper educational exchange.

According to official Chinese news, the total number of educational exchange students and visitors between China and Russia has reached more than 70,000, and both countries aim to increase this number to 100,000 by 2020.¹⁸³ The number of Mandarin learners in Russia has grown greatly in the past 10 years, from 17,000 in 2007 to 56,000 in 2017, according to a survey of a regional research centre of linguistics in Russia.¹⁸⁴ In 2018, it was reported that the Chinese language would be chosen as one of the language subjects for national entrance exams. “The Russian Education Supervision Bureau was aiming to include Mandarin in the final exam for ninth-graders by 2018, and for 11th-graders in their college entrance exam by 2020”.¹⁸⁵ The establishment of joint universities and growing numbers of educational exchange activities have the potential to become the niche for deepening Sino-Russian educational exchanges and therefore of promoting China’s soft power toward the young Russian generation.

In brief, educational exchange with Russia pays particular attention to youth exchange and joint universities. The establishment of joint universities and research centres has the potential to become the niche for deepening Sino-Russian educational exchange and therefore promoting China’s soft power toward Russian youth.

5.4.2 Educational exchange and the Chinese Dream

Given the particular attention that has been paid to the young Russian generation and the potential of educational exchange in promoting China’s soft power, it is worth considering how Xi’s Chinese Dream is reflected in the implementation of educational

exchange toward Russia. It is also worth understanding what message China intends to deliver to Russia through educational exchange. Considering these two points will, therefore, allow for the exploration of the dynamic between the Chinese Dream and the practice of educational exchange toward Russia.

First of all, attempts at creating an image of an economically powerful neighbor and the benefits this can provide can be traced to the Chinese government's substantial increase in investment for supporting Russian students in educational exchange. Financial support for educational exchange consists of scholarships from cooperative projects between universities, joint universities, Confucius Institutes, research centres and government funds for Russian entrepreneurship and academic exchange. In a survey of Russian students in Chinese universities and sociology statistics analysis in 2016, when asked about Russian students' motivation to study in Chinese universities, the highest motivation (36.5%) was due to Chinese scholarship. This is an increase from 19.8% in 2006 where this recommendation ranked second among another 4 reasons, such as friend or family recommendation (highest motivation with 24.7%), university reputation and location.¹⁸⁶

Take Confucius Institutes in 2019 as an example. Scholarship enrolment in institutes from 18 Chinese universities will provide 430 scholarships for one-year visiting international students, 290 for students who intend to do a bachelor's degree in Chinese studies, and 105 for master students.¹⁸⁷ Among them, 2 Russian Confucius Institutes' linked universities: China Dalian Foreign Language University and Harbin Normal University. These universities have 60 scholarships for one-year visiting students, 40 scholarships for bachelor's candidates and 35 for master candidates in Chinese studies, which could possibly provide more approachable access and convenience for those Russian students back at home. The scholarship provides a full coverage of tuition fees, accommodation fees, living allowance, and comprehensive medical insurance. This direct financial support to Russian students fundamentally corresponds with the Chinese Dream as Xi noted in his speech in Moscow, "the achievement of the Chinese Dream does not only benefit the Chinese people, but also benefits people from all over the world".¹⁸⁸

Secondly, as in the case of Japan, traditional Chinese culture is used as the key resource echoing the advancement of China's cultural confidence in the implementation of educational exchange toward Russia within the Chinese Dream period. A number of 'Chinese Dream' themed student exchanges were held by Chinese universities and Confucius Institutes both in China and Russia¹⁸⁹ to demonstrate Chinese confidence in its own culture, which echoes with the cultural rejuvenation of the Chinese Dream. For instance, sponsored by the head office of CI Hanban, the Chinese Bridge Competition is a large-scale international Chinese Proficiency contest and is well-known in terms of cultural and educational exchanges worldwide. The contents of the competition include Chinese language proficiency, knowledge about China, Chinese cultural talents and comprehensive learning abilities.¹⁹⁰

Elements of Chinese culture such as the Chinese language, Chinese history, Chinese calligraphy, Chinese painting, Chinese opera, Chinese tea ceremony, Chinese Wushu, Tai Chi, Chinese paper cutting, and Chinese folk music, are often used as the key cultural resources for highlighting Chinese cultural identity that corresponds with the Chinese Dream, therefore creating a favourable image of a country with a grand culture in the eyes of Russian students. More recently, it is reported that Chinese calligraphy and Chinese idioms will be added to the new edition of Russian students' Chinese textbooks.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, it is often combined with the attempts of creating an image of an economically powerful neighbouring country of benefit. In the 2018 "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students, a 19 years old Russian student stated in his speech that: "China and Russia are friendly neighbours. The bilateral economic and trade exchanges are increasingly close. The courier service in China is so fast, which always makes me euphoric. I would like to introduce China's fast courier service to Russia one day, as well as more good quality Chinese products".¹⁹² This speech made him stand out in the final round and was eventually crowned the champion with high praise coming from the judges.

However, unlike underscoring historical disputes in the case of Japan, the Chinese Dream that China would like to cultivate through educational exchange with Russia is that China is not just a powerful global player, but, more importantly, an unthreatening country whose peace-loving trait is deeply rooted in its culture. In Xi's speech at Moscow National Institute of International Relations in 2013, he stated that "the Chinese nation cherishes peace. China will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development, be committed to promoting the development of open, cooperative and win-win development... achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people is the greatest dream of the Chinese in modern times, which we have called the Chinese Dream...The development of China provides the world more opportunities rather than threats".¹⁹³ The message that China is delivering to Russian audiences through education exchange is the portrayal of China as a powerful global player and a friendly neighbour.

To conclude, China's educational exchange toward Russia during Xi's presidency features the cooperation with joint-universities and particular attention is placed on young generations. The Chinese Dream rhetoric of benefiting other countries corresponds with the direct financial support for Russian students and joint universities. Traditional Chinese elements are often used as the key cultural resources for creating a favourable image of an unthreatening neighbour with a grand cultural heritage.

5.5 The manifestations of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia--

Cultural exchanges

This section explores the recent development of China's cultural exchange activities toward Russia and its correspondence with the Chinese Dream ideology by looking at the Culture Festival and the Tourism Exchange Year. It argues that cultural exchange in the Chinese Dream period has grown into an increasingly active environment, with a particular interest in tourism exchange. More importantly, corresponding to the Chinese Dream, the historical communist connection became another resource in China's pursuit of soft power for generating a positive image of a friendly neighbouring country through cultural exchange toward Russia.

5.5.1 The implementation of cultural exchanges between China and Russia: Culture Festival and Tourism Year

The tradition of holding a China and Russia Culture Festival was started in the 1990s. Since China and Russia held National Years in 2006 and 2007, it has become a governmental routine for China and Russia to take it in turn to host the Culture Festival. So far, the Culture Festival has been held six times in each country with numerous cultural activities and events. Initiated by the Russian and Chinese Ministries of Culture, the festival aims to boost creative cooperation and cultural exchange between people of the two countries. It is one of the largest and most influential cultural exchange initiatives between the two countries.

Art performance and exhibitions have always played a key role in the Culture Festival. In terms of the content of China's Culture Festival in Russia, obviously traditional Chinese elements such as Wushu, Opera, Chinese folk music, folk dance, handicrafts, and acrobatics are the most popular and often presented through a variety of concerts, theatrical performances, shows, and exhibitions. In the 2010 Chinese Festival, China sent more than one hundred artists to Russia to attend the shows, performances and exhibitions.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, it should also be noted that another activity called the "China-Russia Stage Art Dialogue" forum has been added to the Culture Festival since 2011. As a result, the Festival was no longer limited to art performance or exhibition, it now provides an important direct platform for people-to-people cultural exchange and communication in the field of cultural exchange between China and Russia.

Within Xi's presidency, cultural diplomacy in the Chinese Dream period has grown into an increasingly active environment, which has resulted in a steady increase in cultural exchanges over the past decade. In 2012, the Chinese Culture Festival in Russia was held in 16 cities across 10 states and consisted of four programmes: performances, local "culture week" events, art exhibitions, and forums. There were 50 performances involving some 500 participants.¹⁹⁵ Art performances such as Chinese operas,

symphony, and art exhibitions were presented to Russian audiences. In addition, modern Chinese dance was also presented for the first time in Russia. Meanwhile, Chinese and Russian experts on theatre, ballet dance, and culture management also discussed cultural exchange projects regarding further cooperation in the field of art, music, sports and so on.¹⁹⁶

In 2013, Xi Jinping and Putin both attended the opening ceremony of the Tourism Year in Russia. Xi stated: "China and Russia are good neighbours, good partners and good friends. Good neighbourliness is the treasure of the nation", and "hope that both countries could see Tourism Year as an opportunity to develop tourism cooperation into the new highlight of strategic cooperation between China and Russia".¹⁹⁷ As a result, nearly 400 cultural exchange events (236 organized by China and 160 by Russia) were carried out over the year. Between January and September 2013, the total number of tourist visits between China and Russia hit 2.37 million. Chinese tourists were the second most common in Russia, whilst Russian tourists were the third most common in China.¹⁹⁸

The exchange events included a series of visiting tours, programme broadcastings, music performances. During 2013, China invited 155 Russian journalists and reporters on the "Beautiful China" visiting tour. During the tour, they visited 15 provinces (municipalities and autonomous regions) to conduct interviews and reports. Seaside resorts, spas, ecotourism destinations and other forms of tourism products that reflect Chinese daily life and the development of China's rapid modern urbanization achievements were introduced throughout the tour.¹⁹⁹ Representatives from 120 Russian large and medium-sized tourism enterprises visited China to explore and discuss the Chinese tourism market, potential tourism resources, tourist routes and tourism cooperation. In addition, the fifth China-Russia youth sports meeting was held in Shanghai, with nearly 300 Russian and Chinese teenagers taking part in the event. Meanwhile, the "Hello China" tourism promotional videos were also being broadcast through radio, television, aero planes and other network media.²⁰⁰

In brief, cultural diplomacy in the Chinese Dream period has grown into an increasingly active environment and has resulted in a steady increase in cultural exchange over the past decade. Within Xi's presidency, careful consideration has been put into Sino-Russian tourism as a form of cultural exchange.

5.5.2 China's cultural diplomacy in cultural exchange and the Chinese Dream

The following paragraphs explore the correspondence of Sino-Russian cultural exchange activities with Xi's Chinese Dream. It points out that promoting traditional Chinese culture continued to be the focus of Sino-Russian cultural exchange in the Chinese Dream era, echoing the growing cultural confidence of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. More importantly, through cultural exchanges with Russia, and corresponding with the Chinese Dream, affinity with political values became another

resource in China's pursuit of soft power for generating a positive image of a friendly neighbour.

As Xi noted in one of his speeches in Russia, “the Chinese nation and the Russian nation both have a long history, ancient civilization, and splendid culture, they are both great nations. Our two great nations should be closer and friendlier, must be friends from generation to generation, and never be enemies. The Chinese Dream, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is highly intertwined with Russia's goal of development”.²⁰¹ By looking at the activities and the contents of Culture Festivals, it is not difficult to observe that promoting traditional Chinese culture continued to have been the focus of Sino-Russian cultural exchange in the Chinese Dream era. This promotion of traditional Chinese cultures echoes the growing confidence in culture and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation that closely fits into China's broad strategy for the pursuit of soft power.

In the 2018 China Culture Festival, the Chinese Peking opera “Monkey King” was first performed at St. Petersburg Music Hall. As China Foreign Performance Company's project manager Gao noted, “Opera is one of the art forms that can reflect the charm of Chinese traditional culture most. ‘Monkey King’ contains the rich background knowledge of Chinese culture, presents the comprehensive art of Peking Opera, and shapes the vivid image of each actor. It is beneficial to the promotion of the ‘personification’ of Chinese culture, to ‘go out’ and form a long-lasting influence.”²⁰² Naturally, traditional Chinese culture has been seen as the symbol of Chinese identity and a key resource in generating Chinese influence through the implementation of cultural exchange toward Russian audiences.

More importantly, the shared history of communism became a resource of China's pursuit of soft power in correspondence with the Chinese Dream. As Wilson pointed out: “Both countries share a joint legacy of adherence to a Communist experience which significantly informs their behaviour and sense of national identity” (2015, p287). Since the launch of the first Tourism Year in 2013, the “Red Tour”, with its traditional focus on visiting historical socialist or communist landmarks, has become more and more popular between the two countries. In 2015, 22 tourism agencies from China and Russia agreed to conduct red tours during a tourism exchange program held in Hunan Shaoshan, the birthplace of Mao Zedong.²⁰³ A series of new policies have been made to facilitate and promote the Red Tour: more direct flight routes have been opened, more Red Tour tourism routes have been designed and developed in both countries, the tourism visa application process has also been simplified, promotions such as photography and painting exhibitions have also been held.²⁰⁴

China's red tourist landmarks, where its early communist activities began, are drawing a large number of Russian tourists, particularly those in Hunan Province, which currently has 140 such landmarks. “Hunan received 35,025 Russian tourists in 2016, up 31.66 percent year on year. The number of Russian tourists to Hunan grew 13.06

percent year on year to 14,523 in the first half of 2016.”²⁰⁵ For Chinese tourists, such tours play a role in carefully crafting this ‘historical memory’ through this promotion of a positive, nationalistic ideology, which is encouraging and uplifting, and aims to instill a sense of hope and patriotism (Bowcher and Liang, 2014). However, for the case of cultural diplomacy and cultural exchange with Russia, such shared communist memories are used as the cultural resource for generating a positive image of an intimate neighbour.

To conclude, promoting traditional Chinese culture continued to be the focus of Sino-Russian cultural exchange in the Chinese Dream era, which echoes with the growing cultural confidence of China’s rejuvenation. More importantly, corresponding to the Chinese Dream, the historical communist connection became another resource in China’s pursuit of soft power for generating a positive image of a friendly neighbour toward Russia.

5.6 The Chinese Dream, cultural diplomacy and soft power

The last section concludes the chapter by clarifying the dynamic of China’s cultural diplomacy and the Chinese Dream in promoting China’s soft power toward Russia. It argues that the implementation of cultural diplomacy toward Russia is intended to promote China’s soft power toward Russian people. Fundamentally, it is intended to facilitate the achievement of the Chinese Dream. Due to the lack of understanding and the cultural differences between the two countries, it remains to be seen whether the political elite’s long-cherished dream of rejuvenating the Chinese nation can be achieved by promoting soft power toward Russia through the implementation of cultural diplomacy.

In a meeting with Putin in Brazil, Xi highlighted that “cultural cooperation between China and Russia should shift from general friendly exchanges to the enhancement of both countries’ soft power, such as by opening joint schools and promoting the development of the cultural industry.”²⁰⁶ Considerable attention has been paid to the implementation of China’s cultural diplomacy in the pursuit of soft power toward Russia, particularly within Xi’s presidency. As a result, China’s cultural diplomacy toward Russia has embraced steady growth in terms of the size, volume, and variety during Xi’s presidency.

In the realm of media, the volume and scope of Sino-Russian media exchange and cooperation have grown significantly during Xi’s presidency, particularly in the fields of film, TV, and the Internet. The attention paid by both governments to media exchange is reflected through a series of events, activities and programs implemented by both countries, such as the China and Russia Media Exchange Years, documentary series like *This is China* and *Amazing China*, the news application China-Russia

headlines, the translating project Classical, publishing translations of modern and contemporary literature in Chinese and Russian, and the plethora of available cultural products on the Internet. Despite a small amount of media exchange corresponding with the Chinese Dream, a strong message of presenting China as a genuine global player is clearly embedded within certain media exchange activities and initiatives by showing China's recent economic development and political reform. More importantly, the adoption of traditional Chinese culture echoes closely with the concept of rejuvenation of demonstrating the growing cultural self-confidence.

However, certain problems lie in the implementation of media exchange for promoting China's soft power within the Chinese Dream guidance. First of all, the focus of media exchange insufficiently reflects the recent changes in contemporary Chinese society and the real lives of Chinese people, which is a fundamental part of the Chinese Dream narrative of improving common people's living standards. For example, martial arts films seem to have been the dominant Chinese film type among Russian audiences. Among the 35 best Chinese films rated on Russia's largest movie website (www.kinopoisk.ru) in 2017, 19 of them were based on the theme of Chinese martial arts or Kungfu. 25 of them were based on ancient or modern Chinese history (Song, 2018). It indicates that apart from Chinese martial arts, the popularity of other types of Chinese films or TV series in Russia tends to be very low. Likewise, few TV series that are closely related to the context of contemporary China are available for Russian audiences, even on the official Chinese TV channel CGTN(Russian).²⁰⁷ The majority of available Chinese TV series online are traditional Chinese costume dramas and fantasy dramas such as "Nirvana in Fire" "The Empress of China", "Prince of Lanling", and "Female Prime Minister". These TV series do not reflect the recent changes in contemporary Chinese society and the real lives of Chinese people within the Chinese Dream context. Furthermore, it is also worth pointing out that contrary to claims by the Chinese media, documentaries such as *This is China* and *Amazing China* were not broadcasted on mainstream TV channels in Russia such as Channel One, Russia-1 and NTV. Despite the claim that *This is China* hit a total of 100 million views between its release in March 2017 and January 2018, online viewing had a fairly poor performance. By following the search link to CGTN (Russian) YouTube channel when typing in Это кита́й (*This is China*) on Yandex, we can find a striking contrast compared to the TV report: the six episodes on average had less than 2,000 views, despite being published over a year ago. The most viewed episode with more than 5,000 views was about the Chinese martial art Wushu.²⁰⁸

In the realm of educational exchange, particular attention has been paid to youth exchange and joint universities during Xi's presidency. Numerous educational exchange activities such as language contests, student art exchange exhibitions and performances, student exchanges and visits, youth summer camps, and youth entrepreneur exchange forums between the two countries have been carried out under the framework of the Youth Friendly Exchange Year across the country. The establishment of joint universities such as MSU-BIT University and Weinan Moscow

Institute of Arts could also potentially become the niche for deepening Sino-Russian educational exchange and therefore promoting China's soft power toward Russia's younger generation. The Chinese Dream rhetoric of benefiting other countries corresponds with China's direct financial support for Russian students and joint universities. Traditional Chinese elements are often used as the key cultural resources for creating a favourable image of an unthreatening neighbour with a grand cultural heritage.

However, since English has evolved as a global language in teaching and academic communication, neither Russian nor Chinese are the first choice for their second language in either country. A much larger amount of academic teaching, research, exchange, and collaboration was conducted in English or with English-speaking countries such as the US (Hayhoe, 2009). Joint education projects are often challenged with the issue of language and communication. "Because of the objective difficulty of both Russian and Chinese, it is extremely hard for the majority of people to learn these languages for professional purposes" (Smirnova, 2017). Furthermore, when asked about Russian students' motivation to study in Chinese universities in 2016, the highest motivation was because of Chinese scholarship (36.5%). Ironically, the motivation for joining a university based on reputation had dropped to 12.3%, compared to 14.8% ten years ago (A and K and Ren, 2017).²⁰⁹ According to Nye, soft power is attraction and persuasion rather than payment or coercion (Nye, 2004), therefore whether wielding hard power through financial support could generate soft power in the eyes of Russia remains unknown.

In the realm of cultural exchange, promoting traditional Chinese culture continued to be the focus of Sino-Russian cultural exchange in the Chinese Dream era, echoing growing cultural confidence in the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the pursuit of soft power. Traditional elements of Chinese culture were often used as the key resource in cultural exchange activities and events aimed at featuring Chinese cultural identity and the Chinese Dream ideology. Furthermore, the Red Tour tourism, based on the historical communist connection between the two countries, became another resource of China's cultural diplomacy that corresponds with the overarching Chinese Dream ideology. For the case of cultural diplomacy toward Russia, such shared communist memories are used as the resource of cultural diplomacy that generates a positive image of an intimate neighbouring country.

However, it should be noted that cultural resources like high-class culture or political connection only target specific groups of people. If the original intention of the Chinese Dream was to improve the lives of common people and benefit Russian common people, if China's cultural diplomacy is meant to target the public majority of Russia, the utilization of such cultural resources in the implementation of cultural diplomacy seems to be insufficient for the pursuit of soft power. Noticeably, it has indicated that there is insufficient understanding of China's contemporary culture and social situation in Russia, especially among the public. In Dec 2018, the *China-Russia*

Headline and Russian company Ipanel conducted the “Sino-Russian Relations Public Opinion Survey”. The survey’s results showed that there is an evident asymmetrical phenomenon in terms of communication between people from the two countries.²¹⁰ Not many Russian people are aware or familiar with the enormous changes in China’s foreign policies, political values, social situations, and people’s lifestyles in the 21st century. “When it comes to Chinese culture, Russian people immediately think of Chinese Kung Fu and Jackie Chan, Chinese tea and silk and so on, most of the Russian people don't really know Chinese culture” (Yang, 2017, p.187).

As Nye argued, culture, political values and foreign policy are the three pillars of soft power (Nye, 2004). Although China and Russia share mutual political interests and might find more similarities in political values due to the shared communist history, the lack of understanding and cultural differences could possibly bring about suspicion and threats. “Unlike the heyday of the Sino–Soviet alliance, the two countries do not seek to spread a coherent alternative ideological blueprint. Nor do they share a cultural heritage”.²¹¹ “Russians are, despite their proud and independent culture, mainly European – Russian art, culture, literature, and religion are solidly within the European family, respected and admired for their contributions to Europe as a whole.”²¹² Also, given the growing imbalance of economic development, whether the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation could be able to generate real attraction or persuasion through the implementation of cultural diplomacy remains unclear. When the relationship is riddled with competition and distrust, it remains to be known whether “Beijing can continue to manage Russian sensitivities given the continuing rapid growth of Chinese influence in Central Asia” (Li and Pho, 2019, p.26). As the author Yuri Tavrovsky noted: “China's rising international influence intrigued China’s neighbouring country Russia to know more about China. It is necessary to introduce Xi Jinping to Russian people, to let them better understand what has been happening in China, and more clearly perceive the direction of the development of China and the world”.²¹³ Since there is a lack of understanding and cultural differences between the two countries, it remains to be seen whether the political elite’s long-cherished dream of rejuvenating the Chinese nation can be achieved by promoting soft power toward Russia through the implementation of cultural diplomacy.

Conclusion

To conclude, China’s cultural diplomacy toward Russia via media, education and cultural exchange highly corresponds with the Chinese Dream rhetoric. In the realm of media, despite the limited number of media exchange corresponding with the Chinese Dream, a strong message of presenting China as a genuine global player is clearly embedded within certain media exchange activities and initiatives, demonstrating China’s recent economic development and political reform. The adoption of traditional Chinese culture echoes closely with the concept of rejuvenation by demonstrating growing cultural self-confidence. In the realm of educational exchange, the Chinese

Dream rhetoric of benefiting other countries corresponds with China's direct financial support for Russian students and joint universities. Traditional Chinese elements are often used as the key cultural resources for creating a favourable image of an unthreatening neighbour with a grand cultural heritage. In the realm of cultural exchange, it argues that cultural exchanges with Russia in the Chinese Dream period have increased steadily, with a particular interest in tourism exchange. Traditional Chinese culture has been seen as the symbol of Chinese identity and a key resource in generating Chinese influence through the implementation of cultural exchange toward Russian audiences. More importantly, corresponding with the Chinese Dream, the historical communist connection was used as the key resource in order to generate a positive and friendly image of China through cultural exchange. By pointing out the limitations of China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia in the framework of Nye's soft power theory, it argues whether it contributes to China's soft power toward Russia still remains unknown.

Chapter 6: China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States

Introduction

Arguably, the development of Sino-American relations is significant for world prosperity and global security in the 21st century. China is one of the oldest civilizations, with more than five thousand years of history, while the United States is the youngest hegemon, with less than three hundred years of history. Beginning with an overview of Sino-American cultural relations, this chapter explores China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States. The overview will cover media, education, and cultural exchanges, as well as its correspondence with the overarching guiding ideology of the Chinese Dream.

The first section looks into the art of the existing study of China-United States soft power and cultural diplomacy. The second section explores their cultural relations and the contemporary development of the PRC's cultural diplomacy toward the United States, in particular within Xi's presidency. The next three sections analyse the manifestations of China's cultural diplomacy toward the U.S. and its correspondence with the Chinese Dream. The last section concludes the chapter by pointing out the limits of China's cultural diplomacy toward the U.S. in the context of soft power theory. This chapter contributes to the existing literature by providing an updated systematic analysis of China's implementation of cultural diplomacy within the Chinese Dream period to enhance its soft power toward the United States.

In the realm of media, there have been significant attempts to rebrand China as a powerful and responsible global player, with a growing confidence in both hard and soft power. In education, traditional Chinese culture is often used as the key resource for echoing the advancement of China's cultural confidence and is featured in a number of 'Chinese Dream' themed exchange activities, albeit providing little resistance to the challenges from the United States. However, cultural exchanges with the United States are presented through a complicated narrative of modern economic success and traditional cultural heritage. Overall, this analysis of China's cultural diplomacy practices in the U.S. suggests that there is a high level of correspondence between China's contemporary cultural diplomacy and the Chinese Dream paradigm in promoting a favourable image toward the U.S., featuring with new trends and distinctive characteristics in the realm of media, education and cultural exchange.

6.1 Sino-American cultural diplomacy: State of the art of existing literature

This section looks into existing studies of China- U.S. soft power and cultural diplomacy. It argues that little work has provided a systematic analysis of China's implementation of cultural diplomacy toward the U.S., in particular under the framework of soft power within Xi's Chinese Dream era. By looking at the implementation of cultural diplomacy within the Chinese Dream context, this chapter contributes to the existing literature by providing a more updated and systematic analysis of China's effort to enhance its soft power toward the United States.

After Nye's first mention of soft power in the context of the U.S. in the 1990s, the majority of literature focused on American soft power and cultural/public diplomacy toward China in the 20th century. However, since the start of the 21st century, China's soft power has drawn increased attention from scholars, researchers, and thinktank institutes (Callahan, 2008; Steinfeld, 2010). Existing literature regarding the study of China's soft power has paid much attention to the question of whether China's soft power ambition would create a challenge to the U.S. or not. Many scholars anticipate competition between China and the United States over their competing soft power (Wang, 2008, p.267). Nye himself noted that China's soft power still has a long way to go compared to the United States, pointing out the lack of non-governmental organizations and the attractiveness of cultural industries and universities (Nye, 2005). In the CSIS report on Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States, it concluded that China has leveraged soft power in developing regions such as Africa, South America, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. It suggested that China has not sought to replace or supplant the United States in its role of security provider, therefore viewing Chinese successes or failures in the developing world through a zero-sum framework is not an effective way for the United States to shape its policy (CSIS, 2009).

Existing studies also go beyond the literature on China's broad use of soft power toward the U.S. and focus on specific case studies of Chinese cultural diplomacy toward the U.S., such as Confucius Institutes, art exchanges and Chinese films in America. For example, in a NAS report on Confucius Institutes and soft power in American higher education, it was argued that Confucius Institutes tend to present China in a positive light and focus on anodyne aspects of Chinese culture to develop a generation of American students with selective knowledge of a major country (Peterson, 2017, p10). Hartig also argues that, "CIs largely remain state-centric which limits its influence to shape China's image and project its soft power" (Hartig, 2014, p.331). Some researchers have pointed out that Hollywood films seem to speak louder about Chinese soft power than China's own films or China-led productions (Peng,

2017). However, little work has provided a systematic analysis of China's implementation of cultural diplomacy toward the U.S., in particular under the framework of soft power within Xi's Chinese Dream era.

This chapter aims to explore China's implementation of cultural diplomacy toward the United States by looking at media, education and cultural exchanges, as well as its correspondence with the Chinese Dream in China's pursuit of soft power. It contributes to the existing literature by providing an updated and holistic analysis of China's efforts to enhance its soft power toward the United States through cultural diplomacy within Xi's presidency. More importantly, rather than simply observing China's overall use of soft power, summarizing the distinctive features of China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States allows us to see the similarities and differences between China's cultural diplomacy toward three different case study countries. Therefore, it allows us to understand more deeply the new trends of China's pursuit of soft power within the Chinese Dream era.

6.2 The background of China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States

The following section explores China-United States' cultural relations throughout the period from the early 19th century to the end of the pacific war. In addition, it will give an overview of the contemporary PRC's cultural diplomacy toward the U.S. from 1949 to present Chinese leadership. It argues that the United States had played a leading role in Sino-American cultural exchange from the early 18th century to the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War, featuring an imbalance of American cultural export. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1978, China's cultural exchange activities with the United States have increased remarkably. However, China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States is likely to encounter serious challenges due to U.S. President Trump's foreign policy in restricting the cooperation of cultural exchange between the two countries.

6.2.1. Cultural relations between China and the United States

The history of Sino-American cultural relations can be traced back to when the United States first gained independence. Since 1783 there have been American businessmen, sailors and adventurers, coming to China for trade and exploration. In 1830, the first American missionary, Elijah Coleman Bridgman, arrived in Guangzhou. Since then, American missionaries have played an important role in China-United States cultural exchange. Along with Christianity, American missionaries also brought modern science and technology, medical systems, educational institutions, and charity services to China. Schools and institutes were set up for Chinese students, and programs were set

up to fund Chinese students in American schools and universities. Between Bridgman's arrival in 1830 and the last missionary, John Leighton Stuart, leaving in 1949, thousands of American missionaries came to China as an essential medium for cultural exchange between the two countries. Their engagement in education, medical systems, and publishing directly contributed to the early cultural exchange between China and the United States (Ping, 2018, p.1-p.209).

Arguably the most famous and influential cultural exchange program was the Boxer Indemnity scholarship²¹⁴, set up to allow Chinese students to study in America in 1909. As a result, universities teaching in both Chinese and English were set up in China with the support of the Qing government and American missionaries. The curriculum varied, including topics such as English, mathematics, biology, geography, chemistry, astronomy and western medicine. Furthermore, a group of Chinese students were funded to study in American schools and universities, with top universities like Harvard and Yale began offering scholarships to Chinese students (Malone, 1926, p.64). Therefore, a number of young Chinese intellectuals received western education were educated both in China and America within the two decades since 1909 (Meng, 1931; Li, 2018). Some outstanding students who went back to China after studying, including Nobel laureate Yang Zhenning and Hu Shih, a key contributor to Chinese liberalism and language reform, have played a significant role in serving the socialist construction of the P.R.C. in the fields of industry, agriculture, education, and politics.²¹⁵

Furthermore, books and publishing were also focal points of Sino-American cultural exchange. The spread of Newspapers such as *The Chinese Repository*, *Wan Kwoh Kung Pao*, and *The Canton News* provided large amounts of information about Chinese current affairs, reforms and foreign policies, as well as American religions, politics, science and technology. During the Second Sino-Japanese war, the newspaper Millard's Review (1917-1922), founded by American resident Millard, actively participated in appealing for international support for China against the Japanese invasion (Zhang, 2001). Numerous books and journals in natural science, social science, and western medicine were translated into Chinese to educate the new generation of Chinese intellectuals and broaden Chinese people's outlook.

In 1941, the establishment of the U.S. Division of Culture Relation's branch in Beijing marked a new period of Sino-American cultural exchanges throughout the Pacific wartime. American textbooks, films, and scientific research instruments were donated to the Chinese by different American institutes, organizations, and societies under the approval of the State Council. A number of American journalists and reporters visited China and recorded a large amount of valuable first-hand materials of the Second Sino-Japanese War (Liu, 1988, p.2). In 1943, China's National Capital Library approved the request from Washington to allow the Library of Congress to make microfilm copies of 2720 books, which were shipped to the U.S. in 1941 due to the Second Sino-Japanese War (Zhang, 2001, p.11). Between 1942 and 1945, several groups of American experts were dispatched to China to offer assistance in such areas as education,

telecommunication, agriculture, engineering, and public welfare (Xu, 2001, p.459).

It is worth pointing out that Sino-American cultural exchange before the Second Sino-Japanese War was more focused on a one-way cultural export, which was led by the United States. It is during the war period that Sino-American cultural exchange gradually became a two-way communication under the governance of the Kuomintang government. In 1943, the Kuomintang government sent 10 professors from National University and another 74 well-known Chinese scholars to visit and lecture in the United States. Two years later, 200 technicians were sponsored by the government to get technical trainings in different fields. However, due to China's internal political instability and foreign military interference in the war, American's cultural diplomacy toward China was far more active and powerful than China's toward the United States. Sino-American cultural relations featured an imbalance, with the United States playing a leading role in cultural exports.

To conclude, the United States played a leading role in Sino-American cultural exchange from the early 19th century to the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Both the Qing and Kuomintang governments made efforts to support cultural diplomacy activities in order to promote cultural exchange between the two countries. However, Sino-American cultural relations featured an imbalance, with the United States in the lead in terms of cultural exports.

6.2.2. An overview of the PRC's cultural diplomacy toward the United State

After Kuomintang's defeat in the 1949 Chinese civil war, cultural exchange once again stagnated for nearly 30 years between the two countries due to the derecognition of the United States of the CCP's legitimacy in China. In 1972, American President Richard Nixon's visit to the P.R.C was seen as a momentous diplomatic approach in the recovery of China-United States relations after years of diplomatic isolation. Accordingly, the cultural exchange between the two countries became increasingly more common. Between 1972 and 1979, approximately 10,000 Chinese citizens in academia went to study in the United States (Fei, 1989, p.23). In 1972, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with the United States was established in Los Angeles. In 1978, the U.S. Information Agency and the Ministry of Education of P.R.C also signed the memorandum of understanding the exchange of students and scholars (National Research Council, 1986, pp.233-235). Academic exchange, particularly scientific exchange between the two countries, has largely boosted the process of establishing Sino-American diplomatic relations once again.

The diplomatic relationship that had terminated 30 years prior had been retied and reopened the way for a great expansion in cultural exchange. A number of businessmen, artists, students, experts, and scholars were involved in various cultural exchange activities. Institutes, organizations, and joint programmes were set up and rapidly expanded, particularly in China. Between 1978 and 1985, the Chinese

government sent about 10,000 students to study in the United States (Zhang, 2001, p.231). In 1989, there were approximately 70 American studies institutes in China (Zhang, 2001, p.231). After the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protest, the deterioration of Sino-American relations once again resulted in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy slowing down. Cultural exchange between the two countries resumed 6 months later after numerous bilateral negotiations.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, a significant change has taken place within the Sino-American relationship, leading to China achieving remarkable economic growth and moving its eyes toward the pursuit of soft power. Government-led cultural exchange activities with the United States have begun to gradually increase. In 2000, China's State Council Information Office and the Ministry of Culture successfully held the "2000 Chinese culture's American trip" event; In 2005, the "Chinese Culture Festival" was first launched in the United States; In December 2008, China's Ministry of Culture and the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities jointly held the first "China-United States cultural forum", which acts as a platform for cultural and academic dialogue between the two countries; In 2010, the "Chinese Culture Week" opening ceremony was held in California State University, Long Beach (CSULB).²¹⁶

Furthermore, China has also learnt from America's advanced management mechanism and operation mode to promote its cultural system of reform. Cooperation between the two countries has been strengthened to continue promoting Chinese culture products "going out". Well-known American companies such as Disney, DreamWorks, and Universal Entertainment have started to cooperate with their Chinese counterparts (Yang,2019, p.71). Chinese enterprises also acted more actively in the film entertainment industry and media communication. The TianChuang company acquired the majority stake of the White House Theatre in 2009; the Wanda group merged AMC Entertainment, which has allowed Chinese films to screen within the top cinemas in the United States. (Yang,2019, p.77).

In 2013, Xi proposed establishing a 'new type of great power relations' on his visit to the United States. Since then, China has been proactively striving to establish 'a favourable international environment for China's national rejuvenation' (Yan, 2014, p.154). Within his presidency, China's cultural exchange with the U.S. continues to expand in the fields of media, education, science, technology, and sports. In 2015, China's Ministry of Education launched the 'Bai Qian Wan' student exchange program: from 2016 to 2020, China would invite 100 American young elites, and 1000 outstanding American college students to study in China; 1000 Chinese Ph.D. students would be supported in doing their research in the U.S.²¹⁷ In 2016, the Sino-American High-Level Consultation on People-to-People Exchange²¹⁸ formed a plan with a series of detailed cultural exchange activities and initiatives in education, technology, culture, healthcare, youth, sports, and women's issues.²¹⁹ To date, 2019, there were 105 Confucius Institutes and 501 Confucius Classes in the United States, which is far more than in other countries.²²⁰

However, there have been dramatic ups and downs between the two countries since Donald Trump's administration started in 2017. In the first year of Trump's presidency, Sino-American relations experienced a stable period, despite the attitude toward China that Trump indicated in his election speeches. Accordingly, China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States has achieved productive results. In September 2017, Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong and the U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson co-chaired the first China U.S. Social and Cultural Dialogue, which was launched by Trump and Xi 5 months ago at Mar-a-Lago.²²¹ According to the plan made through this dialogue, both sides would continue to deepen the cooperation within seven areas – education, social development, science and technology, health, arts and culture, and environment and conservation. In November 2017, Trump and his wife officially visited Beijing and received a warm welcome from Xi and his wife Peng.²²²

A turning point started from the proposal of the U.S. national security strategy report in Dec 2017, followed by the U.S. National Defense strategy report at the beginning of 2018. In both reports, China was defined as America's strategic rival, from whom the United States will face primary challenges in the future.²²³ On March 24, 2018, the memorandum "Section 301" marked the beginning of the China-United States trade war.²²⁴ In 2018, the United States imposed a 10% tariff on \$200bn worth of Chinese products, including fish, handbags, clothing and footwear.²²⁵ More importantly, it also included cultural products such as Chinese art and antiques, along with paintings, drawings, and pastels. In brief, China's cultural diplomacy will probably suffer an unprecedented impact due to the China-U.S. trade war. The foundation of a long-term healthy and stable development of Sino-American relations for cultural exchange is likely to encounter unprecedented challenges in the next few years.

6.3 The manifestation of cultural diplomacy toward the United States—

Media exchange

This section explores the manifestation of China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States in the realm of media exchange. It argues that the past ten years has seen a dramatic expansion of Chinese media to enhance its communications and develop its influence in the United States, particularly in the fields of television, film and the internet. It argues that the growing confidence in the Chinese Dream has been clearly delivered to American audiences: the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation not only in its hard power, but also in soft power. Moreover, China has been making an effort in order to change American perceptions of China through media, in particular within Xi's Chinese Dream era: China is not just a powerful player in the world economy, it is also a responsible player who cannot challenge U.S. hegemony on the global stage.

6.3.1 An overview of China's cultural diplomacy in media exchange

Media exchange has become a key element of China's cultural diplomacy in the 21st century. Unsurprisingly, the United States is the primary market for the reach of China's media. The past ten years have seen a dramatic expansion of Chinese media to enhance its communications and develop its influence in the United States, particularly in the fields of television, film, and the Internet.

Founded in 2009, the China Network Corporation (CNC) plays an important role in China's attempt to show an international vision with a Chinese perspective. In the same year, China Daily also launched a Boston edition and is available in eight other markets in the United States, including New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. (Dale, Cohen and Smith, 2012, p.6). China Daily also publishes the China Watch, a weekly supplement distributed through the Washington Post, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal in the United States (Creemers, 2015, p.301). In 2011, Xinhua News Agency also moved into new, high-profile headquarters in New York. (Creemers, 2015, p.301). In 2016, CGTN America began broadcasting in the United States, replacing the former English language CCTV America. It provides breaking news, award-winning in-depth reporting and analysis in English – and from a Chinese perspective – to viewers in the United States, China, and more than 100 countries and regions around the world. Its online live TV and radio are also available 24/7 through phone, pc and TV. ²²⁶

In the past decade, China's film industry has entered into an unprecedented "golden age", with a predominant success in the domestic market. According to Deloitte's China film industry report, "by 2020, China's box office is expected to reach RMB200 billion and will exceed North America as the world's largest market in box office revenue and audience numbers" (Deloitte Global, 2017, p.2). Since 2016, the top-grossing Chinese films all earned more than \$500 million: *The Mermaid* (2016, \$507m), *Wolf Warrior 2* (2017, \$849m), *Operation Red Sea* (2018, \$545m), and *The Wandering Earth* (2019, \$660m).²²⁷

For decades, American film production companies have dominated the global film market with numerous successful Hollywood blockbusters, earning 35 percent of their revenue from foreign markets. Hollywood has done an exceptional job of spreading American culture and values around the globe. China has also taken its first steps toward entering into the American film market, particularly with Kung Fu films, which have become a major genre of transnational co-production. Chinese martial arts movies have experienced success in the U.S. from the beginning of the 21st century, most notably is *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* which remains the highest-earning foreign-language film (\$128 million). *Hero* (2002) and *Fearless* (2006) – both of which starred Jet Li – each grossed tens of millions of dollars and remain the 3rd and 7th highest-grossing foreign-language films in the U.S. (China Power, 2019). In 2000, China released just 91 films. That number jumped to 798 in 2017, more than the 740 features released in North America (China Power, 2019). Culturally, all these movies use

Chinese martial arts as their biggest selling point, featuring dazzling, skillful fighting scenes. They also highlight traditional Chinese cultural values, like brotherhood, family ties, personal perseverance, and loyalty. The fundamental strategy that these films employ is to draw on traditional Chinese culture and historical resources while incorporating Hollywood techniques (Su, 2014).

Chinese enterprises have also become more active in the film entertainment industry and media communication, which has enhanced the connection between Sino-American media exchange. For example, since its acquisition of AMC Entertainment Holdings Inc. (AMC), Wanda Group, a Chinese real estate and entertainment giant, has become the largest cinema chain operator in the world. More importantly, this acquisition has also allowed Chinese films to be screened within the top cinemas in the United States. (Yang, 2019, p.71). Wanda also acquired US-based production company Legendary Entertainment in 2016 for \$3.5 billion. Moreover, the number of co-productions has steadily risen since 2014. *The Meg*, a 2018 thriller that follows a group of scientists who encounter a giant shark, was co-produced by Warner Bros. and China Media Capital's Gravity Pictures. The picture earned \$527.8 million worldwide, making it the all-time highest-grossing co-production between the US and China (China Power, 2019).

In brief, with China's rising economy, the past ten years has seen a dramatic expansion of Chinese media, enhancing its communications and developing its influence in the United States, particularly in the fields of television, film and the internet.

6.3.2 Media exchange and the Chinese Dream

In Xi's congratulatory letter to the opening ceremony of CGTN in 2016, he addressed China's need to understand the world more and the world's need to understand China more. Corresponding with the Chinese Dream, Xi emphasized that CGTV should be confident in Chinese culture, tell the Chinese stories well, spread the Chinese voice well, and let the world know a colourful China. It should represent a good image of China as the world's peacebuilder, global development contributor, and international order defender.²²⁸ In Kai's brief comparison between the Chinese Dream and the American Dream, he argued that the Chinese Dream emphasizes a collective effort from all Chinese people in gradually achieving China's yearning for a "great rejuvenation" in the 21st century (Kai, 2015). He stated that the American Dream stresses the spirit of freedom and social mobility, while the Chinese Dream (although it incorporates individual dreams) pinpoints unity and stability (Kai, 2015). Interestingly, when a country with more than 5000 years of civilization meets the world's youngest yet most powerful country, when the collective Chinese Dream meets the individual American Dream, we might wonder how China aims to be perceived by the U.S. in order to enhance its soft power; what kind of cultural resources have been mobilised through media exchange with the U.S., and how the key ideas of the Chinese Dream have been reflected in a series of initiatives and activities toward American audiences

in the fields of film, TV, and internet.

Noticeably, a new trend of the Chinese film industry has shown the growing Chinese confidence in correspondence with the Chinese Dream. In 2017, *Wolf Warrior 2* grossed more than \$874 million and broke the all-time Chinese box office record, followed by *Operation Red Sea*, which was 2018's highest-grossing movie in China and ninth in the world, according to Beijing-based film research firm EntGroup (Nie, 2018). These two films are part of a national trend seen in the last three years of strengthening China's soft power by promoting patriotic films. For example, *Wolf Warrior 2* tells the story of a former special forces soldier who stumbles into an African war zone and rescues Chinese citizens from Western mercenaries.²²⁹ Rather than simply highlighting traditional Chinese culture or martial arts, by demonstrating China's successful operations overseas, a key message has been delivered: China is no longer a weak and poor country; the Chinese will act in the best interests of defending its citizens both at home and abroad. Although the film only made approximately \$2.3 million in North America, it is a "clear and undiluted expression of the China Dream that is now openly canvassed in Chinese politics."²³⁰

More recently, it is also worth looking at the Chinese sci-fi film *Wandering Earth*. Released on Chinese Lunar New Year day in 2019, *Wandering Earth* became the first Chinese sci-fi blockbuster set in space. It tells the story of our planet, doomed by the expanding Sun, being moved across space to a safer place.²³¹ Produced by the Beijing Jingxi Culture & Tourism Company and the state-owned China Film Group Corp, it was mainly filmed in the new Oriental Movie Metropolis, an \$8 billion studio built by the Chinese Wanda Group. It had a limited release in the United States, later being bought by Netflix. Noticeably, the release coincides with China achieving a milestone in space: the landing of a probe on the far side of the moon in January 2019. Although decades behind Russia and the United States, China has now put astronauts in orbit and has ambitious plans to join — or even lead — a new age of space exploration (NewYork Times, Myers, 2019). Being broadcasted in America, this promotion of patriotic Chinese films clearly demonstrates growing confidence in the Chinese Dream by American audiences: the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation not only in its hard power like military or space technology, but also in soft power through Chinese films, media, and other relevant cultural industries.

Furthermore, although the *Wandering Earth* takes for granted China's central role in future space exploration, it also has a vision of the international collaboration necessary to cope with the threats facing the planet (NewYork Times, Myers, 2019), which precisely corresponds with Xi's core state-governing theory of the Chinese Dream and the Community of Common Destiny. On Xi's first meeting with American President Barack Obama in 2013, Xi noted that the purpose of the Chinese dream is to achieve national prosperity, national rejuvenation, and the people's happiness. It is a dream about peace, development, cooperation, and win-win. It communicates with the beautiful dreams of people all over the world, including the American Dream.

²³²Along with the Chinese Dream, Xi also advocates for the Community of Common Destiny, which describes a world defined by cooperation.

During Xi's 2015 speech in Seattle, he stated that, "at present, all economies are facing difficulties, and our economy is also under downward pressure, but this is only a problem in the course of progress. We will take coordinated steps to achieve stable growth." In his speech to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) during this same visit to America, President Xi stated that China planned to set up a permanent United Nations peacekeeping force of 8,000 troops and provide \$100 million to the African Union to create an immediate response unit capable of responding to emergencies.²³³ All this amounted to an effort to respond to calls from the United States and others in the West that, as the world's second-largest economy, China needed to shoulder more responsibilities at the United Nations.²³⁴ This is exactly how China has been using world media to change American's perception of China, particularly within Xi's Chinese Dream era: China is not just a powerful economic player, it is also a responsible player on the global stage.

However, Xi's Chinese Dream toward the United States showed little intention of competing with the world superpower to become the next hegemon. Despite the controversial debate, Xi insisted that China is still the world's largest developing country. In 2015, Xi delivered a speech during a welcome banquet hosted jointly by the Washington State government and friendly communities in the United States. In that speech, he pointed out that "China's per capita GDP is only two thirds that of the global average and one-seventh that of the United States, ranking around people living under the poverty line. If measured by the World Bank standard, the number would be more than 200 million. Over 70 million citizens live on basic living allowances, and the number of people with disabilities exceeds 85 million".²³⁵ He explained the two centenary goals and stated that "to anyone charged with the governance of China, their primary mission is to focus all the resources on improving people's living standard and gradually achieve common prosperity".²³⁶ Echoing with the Chinese Dream, he highlighted that the priority for the CCP is to continue developing and improving Chinese people's living standards.

To conclude, by looking at the manifestation of China's cultural diplomacy in the realm of media, it is argued that growing confidence in the Chinese Dream has been clearly delivered to American audiences: the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is evidenced not only in its hard power but also in soft power. Moreover, China has been making an effort to change American perceptions of China through the media, particularly within Xi's Chinese Dream era: China is not just a powerful player in the world economy, it is also a responsible player who is not able to challenge U.S. hegemony on the global stage.

6.4 The manifestation of cultural diplomacy toward the United States—

Educational exchange

This section looks into the realm of educational exchange in the practice of China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States and its correspondence with the Chinese Dream. It argues that within Xi's presidency, China's educational exchange with the United States has seen a rapid growth in the number of exchange students, educational exchange projects and Confucius Institutes, featuring with a particular focus on seeking for premier quality of joint venture university collaborations. Traditional Chinese culture is often used as the key resource for echoing the advancement of China's cultural confidence, which is done through a number of 'the Chinese Dream' themed exchanges, similar to those done with Japan and Russia. Unlike the underlying historical disputes in the case of Japan or highlighting an unthreatening partnership in the case of Russia, China's cultural diplomacy on educational exchange tends to be passive and quiet, especially when it confronts challenging voices from the United States.

6.4.1 An overview of China's cultural diplomacy in educational exchange

Since the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship was first launched in 1909, education exchange has played an essential role in Sino-American cultural relations, as well as China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States. Within Xi's presidency, China's educational exchange with the United States has seen a rapid growth in the number of exchange students, educational exchange projects and Confucius Institutes, and features with a particular focus on seeking a premier quality of joint venture university collaborations.

Over the course of the last century, the U.S. has maintained its leading position for attracting international students from all over the world, while China has become its largest single source of international students. The number of students in each other's country has both increased in the past decade, particularly with regard to Chinese students in America. According to Statista, between 2012 and 2018 the number of college and university students from China in the United States increased dramatically from 235,597 to 363,341. The figure for the 2017-2018 academic year is more than 4 times that of the 2007-2008 academic year.²³⁷ In the academic year 2012-2013, over 14,000 American students studied in mainland China. This figure increased to 23,838 by 2016.²³⁸ Furthermore, a series of educational projects were also carried out by both governments. In 2015, the China-US Young Maker Competition was launched by the Ministry of Education of the PRC to promote the China-United States youth commutation and exchange.²³⁹ In 2015, China's Ministry of Education launched the

'Bai Qian Wan' student exchange program: from 2016 to 2020, China would invite 100 American young elites, and 1000 outstanding American college students to study in China; 1000 Chinese Ph.D. students would be supported while doing their research in the United States.²⁴⁰ Between 2009 and 2016, the China-U.S. High-Level Consultation on People-to-People Exchange²⁴¹ carried out a series of detailed cultural exchange activities and initiatives in education, technology, culture, healthcare, youth, sports, and women's issues between the two countries.²⁴²

Like their counterparts across the world, Confucius Institutes in the United States aim to promote Chinese language education and cross-cultural understanding through teaching the Chinese language and Chinese culture while carrying out a number of activities and programs, such as speeches, exhibitions, language competitions, summer camps and art performances. Since the first Confucius Institute in the United States was established at the University of Maryland in 2006, there have been already 105 Confucius Institutes and 501 Confucius Classes in the United States, which is far more than in other countries.²⁴³ The growing number of US Institutes and Classrooms led the Hanban to opening The Confucius Institute U.S. Center in 2013 in Washington, D.C.²⁴⁴

Different from Russia, the joint university program between China and English-speaking countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom started much earlier and have had much more experience in educational cooperation and exchanges. In 2006, Xi (working as the Secretary of CPC Zhejiang Province) visited Kean University in New Jersey and delivered a keynote speech in the Signing Ceremony of cooperation in establishing Wenzhou-Kean University.²⁴⁵ Five years later, the University was established and made its goal as "striving for excellence in building an international university with world-class education".²⁴⁶ Within Xi's presidency, the focus of joint universities was to create world-class high-quality cooperative education by delivering the highest quality undergraduate and graduate education, rather than focusing on the quantity.

In 2012, NYU Shanghai was founded by New York University and East China Normal University with the support of the city of Shanghai and the district of Pudong. As China's first Sino-US research university, it "seeks to cultivate globally-minded graduates through innovative teaching, world-class research, and a commitment to public service."²⁴⁷ The faculty of renowned scholars, innovators, and educators are recruited from the world's best research universities. It also offers a variety of master's and Ph.D. degree programs in disciplines and fields important to contemporary society. English is the language of instruction on campus, though international students are required to study and achieve proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. The university also regularly provides opportunities for cross-cultural communication and cooperation both in the classroom and through diverse extra-curricular activities.

In 2014, Duke Kunshan University welcomed its first group of students, initially offering

graduate degrees and semester-long programs for undergraduate students enrolled at Duke and other universities. In 2018, Duke Kunshan welcomed its inaugural undergraduate class, a four-year bachelor's degree program that is based in the liberal arts and sciences departments.²⁴⁸ As partnership universities from both sides, Wuhan University and Duke University both enjoyed a world-class reputation in the international education system. As a premier Sino-US joint-venture university, the mission for Duke Kunshan University is to embrace the integration of global, national, and local traditions of thought and experience and promote cross-cultural understanding and cross-border collaborations.²⁴⁹

Educational exchange has been noticeably affected due to the increasingly fierce tension between China and the United States. It was reported that China's trade war with the US drove Chinese students to the United Kingdom. EIC Education, a Chinese consultancy company, found that the UK has become the most sought-after destination for Chinese students, with 20 percent of respondents to its survey picking the UK as their first choice, compared with 17 per cent favouring the US.²⁵⁰ Even visiting Chinese scholars in the United States are encountering a less friendly environment (Yao, 2018). However, it is still too early to know what further consequences this prolonged China-U.S. trade war will have on educational exchange between the two countries.

6.4.2 Educational exchange and the Chinese Dream

In 2015, during one of Xi's speeches in Seattle, he stated that "the more frequent communication between the Chinese and American people, the more solid friendship we will develop, and the more prosperous, pragmatic cooperation will happen between the two countries."²⁵¹ More recently, during a meeting with Harvard University President Larry Bacow, Xi expressed the hope that Sino-U.S. cultural and people-to-people exchanges could produce more positive results. He stated that: "China is committed to promoting the modernization of education. We will expand the opening up of education, strengthen exchanges and experiences sharing with countries around the world, and jointly promote the development of education...We would like to carry out more extensive exchanges and cooperation with U.S. educational and research institutions such as Harvard University."²⁵²

Millions of dollars have been spent on education exchange projects by the Chinese government in both China and the United States. Certainly, it would be naive to think that such a big investment merely stems from pure generosity. As Jin, a professor from Peking University stated: "when they (American students) return to the United States after the study, it will not only enhance the young generation of American people's understanding about China, but also influence the understanding of the older generation about China, this kind of benign influence, will have a positive effect to mutual trust between China and the United States".²⁵³ More concretely, educational exchange is an essential part of China's cultural diplomacy that has been used as a tool

to cultivate a particular perception from the American people. Therefore, it is worth asking what particular image China intends to cultivate toward Americans in order to create attraction, what kind of resources have the Chinese government used in the practice of educational exchange, how it corresponds with the Chinese Dream, and what are the similarities and differences compared to Japan and Russia.

Unsurprisingly, as it is in the cases of Japan and Russia, traditional Chinese culture is often used as the key resource resonating through the advancement of China's cultural confidence in the implementation of educational exchange toward the United States. The Chinese language, Chinese history, Chinese calligraphy, Chinese painting, Chinese opera, Chinese tea ceremony, Chinese Wushu, Tai Chi, Chinese paper cutting, and Chinese folk music are often used as the key cultural resources that correspond with the Chinese Dream and highlight cultural identity, projecting a favourable image of a country with a grand culture on to American audiences. Specific events and activities have been organized by the government and organizations for not only American students, but also for researchers, scholars and relevant officials. For instance, in 2018 HanBan organized a trip to China for principals that work for schools that have set up Chinese courses that promote Chinese language and cultural teaching in their schools, with a reimbursement for all costs in China.

Furthermore, a number of 'the Chinese Dream' themed exchange activities have been held by Chinese universities and Confucius Institutes to correspond with the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Dream. For example, a documentary called "An American lady's Chinese Dream" was presented at a local event organized by the Confucius Institute at Portland State University in 2014. It told the story of an American lady who decided to sell most of her assets in the United States at the age of 82 and moved to a small village in China to help local schools and students. Her action was highly praised and closely linked with the Chinese Dream as "she dedicated the rest of her life to achieving the Chinese Dream of making a better living standard life for common people".²⁵⁴

However, unlike underscoring historical disputes in the case of Japan, or highlighting an unthreatening and friendly partnership in the case of Russia, China's cultural diplomacy on educational exchange tends to be passive and quiet especially when it confronts challenging voices from the United States. It often chooses to remain silent to avoid sensitive political topics while highlighting other positive factors such as elements of traditional culture in order to maintain a positive image of China. Take Confucius Institutes in the United States as an example. CIs are often accused of lacking intellectual freedom and transparency in developed countries, particularly in the United States and other western democratic countries (Hartig, 2014; Hubbert, 2014; Hughes, 2014). Sahlins described CIs as academic malware that functions as propaganda branches of the Chinese government, stating that the CIs are a threat to the principles of academic freedom and integrity at the foundation of our system of higher education (Sahlins, 2015; Sahlins, 2018).

Interestingly, little voices or practices from CIs have effectively responded to challenges from the United States. The University of Chicago closed its Institute in 2014 after 100 professors signed a petition calling on the Council of the University Senate to vote on terminating the university's contract with Hanban.²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, no relevant information about it has been mentioned either on the website of the Confucius Institute in Chicago or the Hanban website. A similar silent response was made when Pennsylvania State University announced its closure of CI as well. It was reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC responded that "Confucius Institutes provide support and help such as teaching materials, which is based on the voluntary application from the United States. It never forces, nor may pose a threat to academic freedom and integrity" on Chinese media.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the fact is that little information was reported by the Chinese mainstream media in English, such as through Xinhua News or the China Daily.

According to Reuters, the University of North Florida has become "the latest U.S. college to [close its Confucius Institute] amid criticism from U.S. legislators that China used the institute to influence American higher education in 2018".²⁵⁷ More recently, "the latest National Defense Authorization Act, which the U.S. passed in August of last year, stipulates that the Ministry of Defense shall not provide funds for Chinese programs of American universities that open Confucius Institutes unless the school submits and obtains relevant exemptions. As a result, several universities including the University of Rhode Island announced that they will close their Confucius Institutes".²⁵⁸ Regarding all of these challenges, neither the Hanban nor the Chinese government has made any clear announcement through either Chinese or English media.

In a survey conducted by the National Association of Scholars, none of the 12 Confucius Institutes they examined publicly would willing to disclose its contract with the Hanban, its budget, or its funding arrangements (Peterson, 2017, pp.18-19). The Confucius Institute of the University at Albany was locked and dark when NAS visited (Peterson, 2017). When Chinese teachers and directors were asked what they would say to a student who asked about Tiananmen Square, several replied that they would talk about the Square's historic architecture (Peterson, 2017, p.18). It argued that Confucius Institutes "have grown into a central node of US-Chinese academic exchanges, making it increasingly difficult for universities to withdraw from Confucius Institutes without jeopardizing other financial relationships" (Peterson, 2017, p.20). However, no official announcement has been made by the Hanban stating that there would be a financial cut for CIs in the United States.

To conclude, traditional Chinese culture is often used as the key resource corresponding with growing cultural confidence in the implementation of China's educational exchange toward the United States, which is similar to the practice toward Japan and Russia. Furthermore, a number of 'the Chinese Dream' themed exchange

activities were regularly held by Chinese universities and Confucius Institutes to correspond with the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Dream. Unlike the underscoring historical disputes in the case of Japan or highlighting an unthreatening and friendly partnership in the case of Russia, China's cultural diplomacy and educational exchanges with the United States tend to be passive and quiet, especially when confronted by challenging voices from the United States.

6.5 The manifestation of cultural diplomacy toward the United States—

Cultural exchange

This section provides an overview of China's cultural diplomacy in the realm of cultural exchange with the United States and explores its correspondence with the Chinese Dream in the context of soft power. It argues that substantial governmental efforts were made by Xi and Obama to boost the expansion of cultural exchange between the two countries in various fields. However, due to the rocky relationship between the two countries since the Trump administration's repressive policies toward China were enacted, cultural exchanges between the two countries are facing an increasingly unfriendly environment. It argues that a more complicated narrative of China's modern economic success mixed with its long history and traditional cultural heritage has been presented throughout the implementation of China's cultural exchange toward the United States.

6.5.1 An overview of China's cultural diplomacy in cultural exchange

As the two largest economies in the world, the number and the depth of cultural exchanges between China and the U.S. is second to no other country in the 21st century. It reaches a large variety of fields such as art, music, sports, tourism, museums and intangible cultural heritage, traditional handicraft, food culture, women and children, professional exchanges and so on. The activities vary from short-term cultural exchange programs to long-term training and internship programs, from summer work and travel programs to cultural exchange forums. Although the bulk of cultural exchange expansion has taken place through nongovernment organizations, private actors and individuals, both governments have made substantial efforts on creating opportunities to encourage more people to get engaged in the practice of cultural exchange. In one of Xi's speeches, while visiting the U.S., Xi said that: "I pay close attention to cultural exchanges between China and the United States. 'family get closer through communication; friends get closer through exchange'. Each province and state conducting cooperation and exchange should do so in various fields, such as education, tourism, sports, youth exchanges, and help support people and each sector of society to communicate more frequently".²⁵⁹

In November 2014, during President Obama's visit to China, the two countries reached a reciprocal visa policy, which extends tourist business class visas from one year to ten years, and student and exchange visas from one year to five years. This agreement massively facilitated the complicated visa procedures and made it more affordable for a larger group of people, especially Chinese citizens. Both countries' citizens who regularly travel back and forth benefit from the longer validity by not having to apply and pay the application fee every year. Businesses in both countries, particularly those involved with the tourism industry, benefit from increased travel, investment, and business development opportunities between the two countries. Longer visa validity allows students and exchange visitors to return to their home countries during school and work holidays more easily.²⁶⁰ Since 2014, tourist, student, and visitor visas have no longer been an obstacle to cultural exchange between the two countries.

A year later, Presidents Xi and Obama announced an agreement for each country to participate in a year of tourism cooperation. On the opening ceremony, Xi stated that: "China and the United States both have a splendid culture, beautiful scenery, the people both have a strong desire to deepen understanding and enhance friendship. I hope Tourism Year will offer an opportunity to expand personnel exchanges, strengthen cultural communication and cultivate a more solid public opinion and social basis for the development of a China-United States relationship".²⁶¹ Under the framework of China-U.S. Tourism Year" in 2016, more than 80 events were completed during the year. These include the February opening ceremony in Beijing; the '1,000 American Tourists Travelling to the Great Wall' event; the China-U.S. Tourism Leadership Summit; "Beautiful China: Maritime Silk Road" themed tourism promotion activities; and the closing event held in Washington, D.C.²⁶² Chinese tourists contributed \$30.1 billion to the United States in 2015, positioning China as the United States' top spending market abroad in terms of travel and tourism exports. According to the October 2016 National Travel and Tourism Office Forecast for International Travelers, more than 5 million Chinese travelers are expected to visit the United States by 2021 – which would make Chinese tourists the top overseas visitation market (Craighead, 2016).

However, due to the rocky relationship between the two countries since the Trump administration's repressive policies toward China were enacted, cultural exchanges between the two countries are facing an increasingly unfriendly environment. For example, it is reported that travel from China to the U.S. fell by 5.7% to 2.9 million visitors in 2018, according to the National Travel and Tourism Office, which collects data from U.S. Customs forms.²⁶³ On China's National Day in 2018, usually known as the golden holiday week, there was a dramatic 42% decrease in flight bookings from China to the US according to travel fare search engine Skyscanner (McCarthy, 2019). It was the first time since 2003 that Chinese travel to the U.S. dropped from the prior year. However, as with other practices of cultural diplomacy, it is still too early to know the full impact that this will have on cultural exchange between the two countries.

6.5.2 Cultural exchange and the Chinese Dream

Neither government denies the importance of cultural exchange in developing a healthy and stable relationship between China and the United States. At the opening ceremony of a Sino-American cultural exchange event in 2017, Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong noted that: "In the face of ongoing changes, strengthening people-to-people exchanges was vital to the sound and stable development of bilateral relations. It was now incumbent on both sides to implement the consensus reached by President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump, raising people-to-people exchanges and cooperation to a new level, to lay a firm social foundation for the development of bilateral relations".²⁶⁴ The U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson also said that the close US-China people-to-people exchanges in recent years had been fruitful and expressed that the United States was willing to expand exchanges and cooperation with China in various social and cultural areas that are significant to US-China ties.²⁶⁵

However, several questions are raised, such as what is the new trend of China's cultural exchange with the United States within Xi's presidency? What kind of cultural resource has been adopted in the implantation of cultural exchange toward the U.S.? How does it correspond with the contemporary overarching ideational guidance of the Chinese Dream? It argues that ever since cultural exchange between China and the U.S. has become more in-depth across several fields, China's cultural diplomacy toward the U.S. went far beyond merely promoting particular elements of traditional Chinese culture, in order to cater to American audiences' taste. A more complicated narrative of China's modern economic success is mixed with its long history and traditional cultural heritage in correspondence with the Chinese Dream and presented to American people throughout the implementation of China's cultural exchange toward the United States.

Unsurprisingly, traditional Chinese culture has always been mobilised as a key cultural resource in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy toward the U.S., particularly those elements which have already generated attraction among American people. Films involving Chinese cultural elements such as Kung-Fu, Tai-Chi and other Chinese martial arts, which featured renowned celebrities such as Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, used to be the key selling points of Chinese cultural products aimed toward American audiences (Li, 2001). However, nowadays such elements are often presented in a way that mixes with narratives of contemporary China in correspondence with the Chinese Dream. For example, in September 2017, China's State General Administration of Sports and the International Wushu Federation launched an event called "Harmony, Health, and Sharing" for promoting Chinese martial arts, with the popular Chinese martial arts star Jet Li being invited as a chief guest.²⁶⁶ This went beyond the pure presentation of the art itself, it also presented American people with the healthy lifestyle of contemporary Chinese society: since Chinese people's living standards have improved considerably, nowadays people are

looking for a better, healthier, and happier lifestyle.

Over the past few years, a variety of cultural exchange activities such as art performances, exhibitions, and competitions have presented a wide range of Chinese artworks, including paintings, handicrafts, ceramics, archaeological artefacts, craft objects, and calligraphy to the American people. Although the content still focuses primarily on traditional Chinese cultural heritage, the way these traditional Chinese elements are presented is no longer limited to traditional Chinese cultural symbols. A deeper understanding of Chinese culture intertwined with China's modernization success can be found throughout China's practice of cultural exchange with the United States. For instance, as one of the key projects of the First China-US Social and People-to-People Dialogue in 2017, the "Innovation Chinese Culture Festival" launched a series of activities and events in New York, Boston, and Los Angeles.²⁶⁷ Events such as the Modern Sky Music Festival, the Chinese Film Tour, and the Chinese Contemporary Art Exhibition demonstrated the recent achievement of the development of the Chinese culture and art, which offered American people a new approach to understanding the rapidly developing contemporary China. Such events and activities often portray the profound Chinese history and culture together with China's contemporary new image.

To conclude, a more complicated narrative of China's modern economic success is mixed with its long history and traditional cultural heritage in correspondence with the Chinese Dream and presented to American people throughout the implementation of China's cultural exchange toward the United States.

6.6 The Chinese Dream, cultural diplomacy and soft power

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1978, China's cultural exchange activities with the United States have increased remarkably. Despite the fact that cultural exchange between the two countries remaining relatively active since Xi's presidency, China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States is likely to encounter serious challenges due to Trump's repressive foreign policy toward China.

The past ten years have seen a dramatic expansion of Chinese media to enhance its communications and develop its influence in the United States, particularly in the fields of television, film and the internet. By looking at the manifestation of China's cultural diplomacy in the media, we can see that growing confidence in the Chinese Dream has been clearly delivered to American audiences: the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation not only in its hard power, but also in its soft power. Furthermore, China has been making an effort to change American perceptions of China through media, particularly within Xi's Chinese Dream era: China is not just a powerful player in the world economy, it is also a responsible player who cannot challenge U.S. hegemony on the global stage.

However, it should be noted that certain problems lie in China's implementation of media exchange for cultural diplomacy. For example, despite *Wolf Warrior 2* grossing millions of dollars in revenue, most of it was generated domestically. The director of *Wandering Earth* Guo pointed out that, "there is at least a 10 to 15 year gap in film visual effect technology between China and the United States, it might be 25 to 30 years when it comes to film production"²⁶⁸. When considering the top-20 grossing Chinese features since 2005, less than 1 percent of their total revenue came from overseas. Over the same period, American blockbusters earned 35 percent of their revenue from foreign markets. This trend is especially significant when considering that many of the highest-grossing movies in the world are either produced or co-produced by American studios.²⁶⁹ Obstacles to China's cultural diplomacy through media exchange also came from the recipient's side. In September 2016, 18 members of the US Congress, including the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, penned a letter to the US Government Accountability Office highlighting their "growing concerns about China's efforts to censor topics and exert propaganda controls on American media." Members of the U.S. House of Representatives also urged the government to take action against Chinese investments in Hollywood. A variety of factors failed to reflect an optimistic environment for China's cultural diplomacy to generate attraction through media exchange.

Within Xi's presidency, China's educational exchange with the United States experienced rapid growth in the number of exchange students, educational exchange projects and Confucius Institutes, and had a particular focus on seeking premier quality China-U.S. joint universities. Traditional Chinese culture is often used as the key resource corresponding with the growing cultural confidence through a number of 'the Chinese Dream' themed exchange activities to correspond with the Chinese Dream, which is similar to Japan and Russia. However, unlike underscoring historical disputes in the case of Japan or highlighting an unthreatening and friendly partnership in the case of Russia, China's use of educational exchange for cultural diplomacy tends to be passive and quiet, as little defense has been mounted when facing challenges from the United States. Furthermore, substantial governmental efforts have been made by Xi and Obama to boost the expansion of cultural exchange between the two countries in various fields. It argues that a more complicated narrative of modern China's economic success mixed with its long history and traditional cultural heritage in correspondence with the Chinese Dream has been presented to American people throughout the implementation of China's cultural exchange toward the United States.

Despite all of these efforts for cultural diplomacy, China is still suffering a severe deficit of soft power compared to the United States. According to Portland's global ranking of soft power (2018), China's soft power was listed 27th among 30 sample countries, while the United States was 4th. Davide Shambaugh (2013) also pointed out that, although the Chinese government and Chinese companies are actively engaged in a large and growing number of cultural activities abroad, these activities have had little

influence on global cultural trends. Fundamentally, the U.S. government currently views China as a major competitor who has the intention of shaping a world antithetical to U.S. values and interests (The White House, 2017). China has undergone many reforms in areas such as anti-corruption and developed progressively since Xi took power. However, China's authoritarian regime, which has been consolidated by Xi through extending the presidency period from 10 years to an unlimited period, is often perceived as less attractive to America's liberal democratic political system, even "as a potential threat to the liberal international order" (Portland, 2018, p25). Together with other issues such as human rights, Taiwanese independence, the South China Sea disputes and China-Tibet tension, different political values and clashing national interests have become the key obstacles and constantly undermine the development of the China-United States relationship, which also makes it very difficult to generate attraction in the eyes of American. Within Trump's presidency, China's cultural diplomacy toward the United States is likely to encounter more serious challenges in its pursuit of soft power.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter argued that there was a high level of correspondence between China's contemporary cultural diplomacy toward the United States and the foundational ideas of the Chinese Dream paradigm. This correspondence promoted a favourable image in the eye of American people and features new trends and distinctive features in the realm of media, education and cultural exchange. In the realm of media, there have been significant attempts to rebrand China as a powerful and responsible global player, with a growing confidence in both hard and soft power. In education, traditional Chinese culture was often used as the key resource for echoing China's growing cultural confidence within a number of 'Chinese Dream' themed exchange activities, albeit providing little resistance to the challenges from the United States. However, cultural exchanges with the United States were presented through a complicated narrative of modern economic success and traditional cultural heritage. Overall, this analysis of China's cultural diplomacy practices in the U.S. suggested that there was a high level of correspondence between China's contemporary cultural diplomacy and the Chinese Dream paradigm in promoting a favourable image toward the U.S., featured with new trends and distinctive features in the realm of media, education and cultural exchange.

Conclusion

Summary of the thesis

This thesis provided an engagement with literature on soft power through a study of Chinese practices of cultural diplomacy. It specifically has sought to explore the correspondence between overarching ideological guidance of the Chinese Dream and practices of cultural diplomacy toward the case study countries Japan, Russia, and the United States. A central focus was on the extent to which contemporary practices reflected the recently articulated 'Chinese Dream', and points of similarity and difference in operationalization through the case study relationships. The thesis contributed to the literature on soft power by extending ongoing attempts to add analytic precision to the concept. In addition to positioning cultural diplomacy as a significant area of soft power politics, a three-dimensional framework was developed, focusing on media, educational exchange, and cultural exchange as important aspects of cultural diplomacy. By offering three country case studies of Chinese practices of cultural diplomacy, the thesis overall demonstrated that there was significant correspondence between practices and overarching Chinese Dream ideology, but with significant between-country difference.

Chapter 1 presented an overview of the debates within the literature on soft power and cultural diplomacy and the overall theoretical/empirical contributions of the thesis. From Nye's work, it situated 'attraction' and 'persuasion' as important mechanisms through which cultural diplomacy builds soft power. It argued that cultural diplomacy refers to a broad set of practices that overlap substantially with working understandings of soft power, which represents an example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power. Accordingly, it introduced a three-dimensional analytic framework of cultural diplomacy to analyse the mechanism of soft power, which allowed for a holistic and structured analysis within a field where the focus of much literature was either under-defined or somewhat narrow. The case study developed a comparative review of Chinese cultural diplomacy with three significant global and regional powers, namely Japan, Russia, and the United States. This comparison specifically sought to explore the correspondence between contemporary practices by focusing on three pillars of China's cultural diplomacy (education, cultural exchange, and media), and the 'Chinese Dream' framework that purportedly guides foreign policy action.

Chapter 2 chapter traced the rise and development of China's cultural diplomacy from ancient times to the beginning of the 21st century. It provided the background

information by exploring the mainstream classical schools of Chinese political thought and China's early cultural exchanges in ancient times, as well as China's cultural diplomacy since the establishment of the PRC. It argued that Chinese traditional philosophy and early cultural exchange activities had a substantive influence on guiding contemporary policy-making processes in Chinese cultural diplomacy. More importantly, it provided China with a vast range of cultural and historical resources that were often mobilized in the practice of China's cultural diplomacy. Overall, China's cultural diplomacy, featured a top-down administrative structure with various branches and offices undertaking different responsibilities, has been used as a key tool in China's foreign policy within the CCP regime.

Drawing upon historical analysis and discourse analysis, Chapter 3 identified the key ideology guidance of the Chinese Dream and China's cultural diplomacy within Xi's presidency. It contributed to the existing literature by providing a historical perspective for the cultural background of the Chinese Dream and a clarification of the relationship between the Chinese Dream and cultural diplomacy within Xi's presidency. It argued that by using the word 'rejuvenation', the Chinese Dream demonstrated that there was a process of self-acknowledgement and self-awakening based on the understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture: it aimed to not only continually build on this cultural legacy, but to remind the rest of the world of China's prosperity in ancient times and its ambition to achieve the great rejuvenation in the modern era. Furthermore, it argued that an abundance of Chinese traditional cultural resources that convey Chinese values, norms and beliefs have been implemented into Xi's cultural diplomacy in order to generate a positive image of China. Overall, the Chinese Dream acted as an ideational strategy orienting China's cultural diplomacy, with the main purpose of cultural diplomacy being to create a stable, peaceful, and favourable international environment to propel the achievement of the 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'.

Beginning with an overview of Sino-Japanese cultural relations, Chapter 4 explored the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan through media, educational, and cultural exchanges, and its correspondence with the overarching guiding ideology the Chinese Dream. Focusing on the most updated research data, it contributed to the existing literature by linking China's cultural diplomacy and the Chinese Dream in the context of. This analysis of China's cultural diplomacy practices in Japan suggested that in the realm of media, there have been significant attempts to rebrand China as an economically strong and culturally attractive country through projecting visions of Chinese citizens' and corporations' successes, albeit in a manner that commonly acknowledges the presence of social and political tension. In the realm of education, attempts at convincing Japanese youth to accept the Chinese narrative regarding historical disputes have been made despite strong political interference being the main obstacle. In the realm of cultural exchange, there have been various activities aiming to cultivate a favourable, friendly, and strong image of China toward Japan, along with some uncertainties of political dissent. Overall, there was a high level

of correspondence between China's contemporary cultural diplomacy in Japan and the foundational ideas of the Chinese Dream paradigm.

Beginning with an overview of Sino-Russian cultural relations, Chapter 5 explored the case of Russia. Rather than assessing or comparing China's soft power with Russia's approach, it contributed to the existing literature by taking a different track to identify the most updated implementation of China's cultural diplomacy during the Chinese Dream through the lens of soft power theory. In the realm of media, it argued that despite the low number of media exchanges corresponding with the Chinese Dream, a strong message of presenting China as a genuine global player through demonstrating China's recent economic development and political reform was clearly embedded within certain media exchange activities and initiatives. Moreover, by demonstrating a growing cultural self-confidence, the adoption of traditional Chinese culture echoed closely with the concept of rejuvenation. In the realm of educational exchange, traditional Chinese elements were often used as the key cultural resources to create a favorable image of an unthreatening neighbour with a grand cultural heritage. In the realm of cultural exchange, China's exchanges with Russia aimed at presenting China as a positive and friendly neighbouring country through the mobilization of traditional Chinese culture and the memory of a shared communist history.

Beginning with an overview of Sino-American cultural relations, the last chapter explored the case of the United States. It contributed to existing literature by providing an updated and systematic analysis of China's efforts to enhance its soft power toward the United States through the implementation of cultural diplomacy within the Chinese Dream period. In the realm of media, it argued that substantial effort has been made to rebrand China as a powerful and responsible global player with a growing confidence in both hard and soft power. In the realm of education, traditional Chinese culture was often used as the key resource echoing with the advancement of China's cultural confidence with a number of 'the Chinese Dream' themed exchange activities, however providing little resistance to challenges from the United States. In the realm of cultural exchange, a more complicated narrative of modern China's economic success mixed with traditional cultural heritage has been presented throughout the implementation of China's cultural exchange toward the United States. Overall, this analysis of China's cultural diplomacy practices in the U.S. suggested that there was a high level of correspondence between China's contemporary cultural diplomacy and the Chinese Dream paradigm in promoting a favorable image toward the U.S., featuring with new trends and distinctive features in the realms of media, education and cultural exchange.

Broadly speaking, China's cultural diplomacy has dramatically expanded through a series of media, education and cultural exchange practices since the beginning of the 21st century. This expansion could be seen from the increasing numbers of the Confucius Institutes, joint universities and student exchanges, the expansion of media

exchange and cooperation, and the growth of cultural exchange events and activities within the three case study countries. Attempts at cultivating an economically strong image of a modern China through a series of cultural diplomacy practices revealed the fundamental content of the Chinese Dream to be the improvement of common people's material living standards. More importantly, the adoption of the traditional Chinese culture demonstrated that there was a high level of correspondence between the practices of China's cultural diplomacy toward the three case study countries and the overarching ideological guidance of the Chinese Dream. Traditional Chinese culture has been mobilised as the key resource for generating a favourable image of China throughout the practice of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan, Russia and the United States in the Chinese Dream era. The mobilization of elements from traditional Chinese culture, such as Confucianism, Chinese traditional literature, Chinese traditional art and sport, and Chinese ancient history, showed that China's cultural diplomacy has reflected growing cultural confidence that echoed with "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", a process of self-acknowledgement and self-awakening based on the understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture. On the other hand, by highlighting the history and cultural heritage, it corresponded with the "rejuvenation" of the Chinese Dream: neither modern China nor the Chinese culture is rising from nothing, what it pursues now is the status of where it used to be economically and culturally.

However, instead of adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, both the narratives of the Chinese Dream and the practices of China's cultural diplomacy varied in different cases, depending on the target country's culture, political values, and their unique cultural relationship with China. For example, in the realm of media exchange, China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan featured many of documentaries that reflected the changes of common people's lives, which was a strong contrast compared to the low level of media exchange with Russia. In the realm of educational exchange, China's cultural diplomacy toward Russia has featured a particular increase in joint universities while the focus has already been shifted to seek for a better educational quality when it comes to the United States. Furthermore, although cultural affinity was adopted as an essential element in the implementation of China's cultural diplomacy, the key focus varied in different cases: in the case of Japan, traditional cultural affinity under the East-Asian cultural sphere has been mobilised as a key point in facilitating cultural diplomacy activities in order to generate a favourable image of China; in the case of Russia, the political cultural affinity of a shared communist history became a key resource within Sino-Russian cultural exchanges.

The narratives of the Chinese Dream also varied in different cases based on the target country's distinctive cultural and diplomatic relationship with China. For example, there was a clear shift in presenting Japanese people pursuing a better life in China through a series of media resources. The focus of the Chinese Dream toward Japan was to present Japanese audiences with images of an economically strong and culturally prosperous neighbouring rival. When looking at Russia however, few media

resources reflected the recent changes in contemporary Chinese society and the real lives of Chinese people. The focus of cultural diplomacy toward Russia was to create an image of China as both economically strong and beneficial, but at the same time an unthreatening neighbour. In the case of the U.S., the Chinese Dream was reflected in China's use of cultural diplomacy to rebrand China as a powerful and responsible global player who does not challenge American hegemony. Interestingly, we also observed how China's cultural diplomacy reacted differently in different cases when confronted with challenges and criticism. In the case of Japan, the attitude of the Chinese government regarding the historical disputes was rather assertive, as seen in the attempts at convincing young Japanese people to accept the Chinese 'narratives' that have been put forward in the practices of cultural diplomacy. In comparison, China's cultural diplomacy tended to be passive and quiet when confronted with challenges from the United States.

Overall, it argued that the practices of China's cultural diplomacy toward Japan, Russia, and the United States broadly corresponded with Xi's Chinese Dream. Practice and paradigm both demonstrated a broad commitment to more confident leadership and the projection of Chinese leadership within international politics. Instead of adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, both the Chinese Dream paradigm and the practices of China's cultural diplomacy varied in different cases depending on the targeted country's culture, political values, and the unique cultural and diplomatic relationship with China.

Contribution to International Relations literature on soft power

Considerable debates have taken place regarding the two elements of soft power: attraction and persuasion. (Mattern, 2005; Li, 2009; Gallarotti, 2011; Rothman, 2011; Gallarotti, 2011; Kearn, 2011). Within existing literature on soft power, we saw prominent calls for high levels of specificity and disaggregation (e.g. Breslin, 2011; Bar, 2011; Gallarotti, 2011; Kearn, 2011). This thesis highlighted that 'attraction' fundamentally relies on certain cultural resources of soft power, which are inherently attractive, influential, and alluring in nature. Furthermore, soft power rests on the ability of framing and persuasion as a means by which to generate particular perceptions within its audiences. Given the diversity of the audiences, it is necessary to strategically understand the differences between specific targets before putting forward any message or policy. Therefore, observing 'persuasion' requires us to distinguish different targets in specific contexts, which brings out the significance of case study research.

Within existing literature, considerable attention has been paid to the observation of soft power through the lens of public diplomacy (Wang, 2011; Hayden, 2012; D'Hooghe, 2015). By pointing out that there was often a distinct lack of clarification of cultural diplomacy within the soft power sphere, this thesis extended the existing soft power theory by stating that cultural diplomacy an example of states' attempts to

cultivate soft power. It argued that cultural diplomacy can be deployed as a means of mobilizing soft power by the states. Here 'mobilizing' means both generating and wielding soft power. More specifically, generating soft power involves the integration of soft power resources that a country possesses and the strategy of framing an agenda to maximize the possibility of wielding soft power. Whereas wielding soft power includes the process of persuading and influencing either other states or the citizens of those states in order to achieve one's foreign policy goals. On the one hand, cultural diplomacy can be more explicitly related to issues of security and foreign policy. On the other, cultural diplomacy also strives to build commonalities by interpreting the resources of culture, values and institutions inside the home. Therefore, it is crucial to consider cultural diplomacy as an example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power, and by focusing on these practices we can shed light on soft power promotion in particular countries.

This thesis contributed to IR literature on soft power by introducing a three-dimensional analytic framework for analysing cultural diplomacy, with the aim of bridging the literature of both soft power theory and cultural diplomacy. This framework explored manifestations through the spheres of media, (e.g. film, book and publishing, internet, television, and broadcast), education (e.g. education exchange programmes, language institutes), and cultural exchange (e.g. culture, music, art, sport exchange initiatives and activities). The creation of this three-dimensional framework of analysis provided a key contribution to this thesis, which allowed for a holistic and structured analysis within a field where the focus of much literature was either under-defined or somewhat narrow.

Overall this thesis aimed to extend existing IR literature on soft power theory. This aim was accomplished by first providing a high level of specificity and disaggregation regarding 'attraction' and 'persuasion' that highlighted the significance of case study research; secondly, by pointing out cultural diplomacy as an example of states' attempts to cultivate soft power, which bridged the gap between literature on both soft power and cultural diplomacy; and thirdly, by offering an analytic framework for studying cultural diplomacy that focused on media, educational, and cultural exchange dimensions, which allowed for a holistic and structured analysis.

Contribution to Chinese studies literature

Existing literature on Chinese studies has paid considerable attention to China's foreign policy and diplomatic relations with the three case studies countries, namely Japan (e.g. Iriye, 1990; Rose, 2000; Yahuda, 2006; Hagström, 2008; Sun, 2012; Mori, 2013; Beeson and Li, 2014; Yang, 2015; Men, 2016, Zhao, 2016), Russia (e.g. Nolan, 1995; Lo, 2002; Popov, 2014; Eder, 2014; Wijk, 2015) and the United States (e.g. Nye, 2005; Callahan, 2008; Steinfeld, 2010). More recently, existing literature on China's soft power and cultural diplomacy has placed a greater focus on either comparing or assessing China's soft power with those three countries. (Japan: e.g. Heng, 2010; Sun,

2012; Russia: e.g. Nye, 2013; Shambaugh, 2013; Wilson, 2015; Rawnsley, 2015; United States: Nye, 2004; Callahan, 2017). Furthermore, some studies also explored China's soft power by paying particular attention to certain initiatives, such as the development of the Confucius Institutes and the recent Belt & Road initiatives (e.g. Wang, 2011; Hughes, 2014; Hartig, 2014; Hartig, 2015; Lahtinen, 2015; Gil, 2017) or specific fields such as film cooperation, joint education, student exchange and tourism (e.g. Lao, 2012; Smirnova, 2016; Peng, 2017, Yang, 2017; Song, 2018). For example, Chao (2016) provided an overview of Sino-Japanese film and television cooperation from the 1980s to the beginning of the 21st century. Fan and Zhang (2017) took the Confucius Institute at Ritsumeikan University as a case and analysed China's public diplomacy in promoting diplomatic relations with Japan. Valeev and Alikberova (2011) presented a detailed analysis and evaluation of Sino-Russian cultural exchange policies, education programmes and events, the main results, trends, and prospects of Russian-Chinese relations in the field of culture between the 1990s to 2000s.

A great deal of attention has been drawn to the Chinese Dream, particularly within IR academia (Mohanty, 2013; Link, 2015; Liu, 2015; Zhao and Gan, 2015; Kerr, 2015; Barr, 2015; Callahan, 2017; Ho, 2018). Some work examined how the system of Chinese diplomacy has changed within Xi's Chinese Dream era since the 18th CCP's National Congress by looking into Xi's key statements and strategic ideas. (Zhao and Gao, 2015, p.43). Some work focused on the comparison of the Chinese Dream with other countries such as the United States (Callahan, 2017), Japan, Russia, and India (Zheng, 2013). Furthermore, some research pointed out the key barriers and limitations of the Chinese Dream. (Barr, 2015; Kerr, 2015; Servaes, 2016; Callahan, 2017). For example, Kerr (2015, p.5) argued that the Chinese state's unwillingness to share political and legal authority with a civil society was the largest single barrier to achieving the goal of good governance on which the goal of national rejuvenation would depend. Barr (2015, p.7) stated that there was little prospect of bringing back traditional Chinese values to everyday life due to China's people becoming part of the modern world, and therefore the promotion of Chinese traditional values was more to do with managing the manifold problems and dislocations of Chinese modernity.

However, existing literature provided a low level of analysis of a historical exploration regarding the Chinese Dream discourse and China's cultural diplomacy. Elements such as traditional Chinese culture, Chinese history, and Chinese political values have been largely neglected or unclarified in the existing literature surrounding China's soft power and cultural diplomacy. In order to understand how ideology works in the Chinese social context and how it is reflected in practice, it argued that a more systematic clarification of the Chinese mentality based on a deep understanding of Chinese history and Chinese culture is necessary. More importantly, little work has been done to systematically examine the comparison of how the Chinese Dream ideology corresponds with the practice of cultural diplomacy, particularly within the three case study countries. Rather than simply observing it within a domestic scope, the analysis of the Chinese Dream in correspondence with cultural diplomacy toward

distinctive countries could shed light on existing research regarding this notion.

This thesis contributed to Chinese Studies literature by developing a comparative review of Chinese cultural diplomacy with three significant global and regional powers, namely Japan, Russia, and the US. This comparison specifically sought to explore the correspondence between the ideas embedded in the 'Chinese Dream' that purportedly guided foreign policy action and the practices of cultural diplomacy in these case study countries. There was a particular focus on three pillars of China's cultural diplomacy (education, cultural exchange, and media). A large number of resources were used in order to systematically investigate the evolving pattern in official discourse and how they framed the relationship between China and each particular country. The resources included not only official documents, speeches, reports, but also comprehensive readings on soft power analysis, Chinese culture and foreign policy studies, which included scholarly articles and books, media reports, and various texts both in Chinese and English. It contributed to the existing literature by providing an updated and holistic analysis of China's efforts to enhance its soft power toward the three case study countries within Xi's presidency. More importantly, rather than simply observing China's overall use of soft power, summarizing the distinctive features of China's cultural diplomacy allowed us to see the similarities and differences between China's cultural diplomacy toward three different case studies countries. Therefore, it allowed us to deeply understand the new trends of China's pursuit of soft power within the Chinese Dream era.

In sum, this thesis aimed to extend the existing literature on Chinese Studies by providing a holistic analysis of the Chinese Dream and China's cultural diplomacy in cross-culture and cross-country studies. This aim was accomplished by first providing a high level of historical exploration of the Chinese Dream and China's cultural diplomacy, and secondly by developing a comparative review of the interplay between ideas, namely articulations of the Chinese Dream ideology, and practices of cultural diplomacy within three significant global and regional powers.

The question of the impact of Chinese soft power and cultural diplomacy is raised within prominent contributions to the field (e.g. Ding, 2006; Zhang and Guo 2017; Schneider 2009). Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that there is significant variation in the form and content of Chinese cultural diplomacy across the studied partner states, and that underlying this variation there is a broad adherence to the key pillars of the 'Chinese Dream' as articulated by the current leadership. These findings suggest that leadership exerts significant over practices of cultural diplomacy. Iris Shaw (2010) suggests that, in general terms, China's attempts to project soft power through cultural diplomacy has been particularly effective wherein generating favourable popular attitudes in countries that display higher levels of nationalism, and that are non-Western.²⁷⁰ These findings suggest that the studied cases provide potentially fruitful foundations for impact from cultural diplomacy interventions. Specifically, all three cases are typically held to exhibit relatively strong nationalism amongst domestic populations, and the Japanese and Russian cases are typically

classified as non-Western. This thesis suggests that China is engaging in a form of customised cultural diplomacy, shaping interventions according to the specifics of the pre-existing relationship with the case study country and country-specific characteristics. The question of whether such customised cultural diplomacy is further enhancing the impact of Chinese cultural diplomacy is worthy of further study.

Abbreviations

ACJC= Association of China-Japanese Communication
APEC= Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
BRI= Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS= Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CCP=Chinese Communist Party
CCTV= China Central Television
CGTV =China Global Television Network
CI=Confucius Institute
CICA= China International Culture Association
CICC= China Intercontinental Communication Centre
CICEC= International Culture Exchange Centre
CIPG= China International Publishing Group
CNC= China Network Corporation
CNS= China News Service
CPAFFC= Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries
CPIFA= Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs
CRI= China Radio International
CSULB= California State University, Long Beach
DICE= Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges
GDP= Gross Domestic Products
ICONRTA= International Cooperation Office of National Radio and Television Administration of China
INCP= International Network on Cultural Policy
IR= International Relations
JASSO= Japan Student Services Organization
MSU-BIT= Moscow State University-Beijing Institute of Technology
NAS= National Association of Scholars
NGO= Non-governmental Organization
PRC=People's Republic of China
ROC= Republic of China
SCIO= State Council Information Office of China
SCO= Shanghai Cooperation Organization
TCMCI= Traditional Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute
U.S.= United States
UN= United Nations
UNESCO= United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA= United Nations General Assembly
WNU= Weinan Moscow Institute of Arts
WTO= World Trade Organization
WWII= World War Two

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