

# Has China's Use of Soft Power Been Effective?

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# Has China's Use of Soft Power Been Effective?

*We should increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's message.*

Xi Jinping, Chinese President

# I. Introduction



# I. Introduction

- Any discussion of China starts with a map





# I. Introduction



## China

- Population 1.3 billion, most populous in the world
- 3.7 million square miles
- 23 provinces
- Two administrative regions: Hong Kong and Macau
- Governing concept of "one country, two systems"
  - Two systems or ideologies (socialist and capitalist) can coexist
- Culture plays a important role in China
  - Colors
  - Numbers
  - Symbols
  - Beliefs
  - Philosophers: Confucius, Sunzi, Laotzu,
  - Calligraphy
  - Language: Mandarin, Cantonese
  - Traditions



## II. Soft Power Overview



- Soft power is a concept used in foreign policy development.
  - First used by Harvard Professor Dr. Charles Nye in 1990.
  - Nye was the dean at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government
- 
- Nye defined power as the ability to affect others to get the desired results or outcomes.
  - Soft power is defined as the capacity to persuade others to do what one wants by utilizing intangible resources such as: culture, ideology, institutions and political values.
  - Also interpreted as the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion.

## II. Soft Power Overview

- In contrast, hard power is based on more coercive means like military intervention, coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions.
- It relies on tangible power resources such as armed forces or economic means, such as an embargo.
- Nye felt successful states or countries need both soft and hard power capabilities to coerce others, as well as the ability to shape their long term attitudes and preferences.
- Soft power may take longer. Hard power compels action, while soft power induces voluntary action.
- Many believe soft power is more effective and efficient concept in contemporary politics because of its endurance and sustainability.



## II. Soft Power Overview

- China uses soft power regularly.
- Experts believe Beijing is trying to convince the world of its peaceful intentions, and to secure the resources it needs to continue economic growth.

# III. China's Transition to Soft Power

- China was isolated during the reign of Ma Zedong, until 1949
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was not a priority
- Change began after Mao died in 1976 and Deng Xiaoping took over
- 1979-Diplomatic relations with the U.S. established
- 1986-1990 China's Open Door Policy
- 2001 China Joins the World Trade Organization (WTO)
- 2002-2012, Hu Jintao as president
  - 2007 Tells Party Congress China need to build soft power

# III. China's Transition to Soft Power

- Chinese government recognizes importance of being a global player
- Desires to improve its global image
- 2007 China's government declares a new goal:  
*to build "soft power," as a complement to its rapidly growing economic and military strength*
- Soft power in Chinese is *ruan shili*
- *Perceived as a key ingredient in Mr. Xi's Chinese dream of the great revival of the Chinese nation (the Chinese dream).*

# III. China's Transition to Soft Power

- 2013-Xi Jinping elected President and CCP General Secretary
- First 5 year term accomplishments:
  1. Asserts and expands Chinese interests overseas
  2. Copes with a slowing economy
  3. Purges corrupt officials (high and low)
  4. Heightened tensions over Hong Kong's future
  5. Ended the one child policy
- Addresses 19th National Congress in October 2017

# III. China's Transition to Soft Power

- Chinese President Xi Jinping elected to a second 5 year term
- Quote from the 19th Party Congress held among 2,200 delegates in October 2017:

*“China will become a global leader in innovation by 2035, with rule of law in place and much greater soft power globally. In the 15 years after that it will become prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful.”*

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## Overview

- Goal is to show the positive influence of China, as a country
  - aspects of its people, culture, progress and willingness to help countries around the world
- China's use of soft power has been consistent to help shape its global image
- China does not want war and does not want to use "hard power" (force)
- Direction is coming from the top of government



# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## Implementation Examples

### 1. Confucius Institutes

- Confucius was condemned by Mao as a peddler of feudal thought, but now being promoted as a sage with a message of harmony
- Started in 2004 by The Chinese Ministry of Education. China has opened 500 government funded "Confucius Institutes" in 140 countries
- Overseen by a Chinese government agency Hanban, which signs agreements with colleges and universities globally
- These institutes offer teaching Chinese language, calligraphy, holiday celebrations, culture, traditions and Chinese art classes.

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## 1. Confucius Institutes (con't)



At Rutgers University's Confucius Institute, New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

- Murfreesboro, Tennessee, USA



# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## Implementation Examples

### 2. Media-China investing heavily in foreign language media

- Xinhua, the government's main news agency opened approximately 40 new foreign news bureaus between 2009-2011 (total of 162)

- December 2016, rebranded its international media service to China Global Television Network from its prior name CCTV.

- It broadcasts in six channels, two in English, and others in Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish

- Mr. Xi says: *"tell the China story well spread China's voice and showcase China's role as a builder of world peace."*

- China Radio International broadcasts programming in 38 languages, using more than 30 radio stations in fourteen countries.

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## 2. Media Con't)

- 2016 the government launched a free, English language website called "Sixth Tone." It tries to sell China's message by being more sassy, and sometimes more critical, than other state media.
- Chinese conglomerates are trying to buy or merge with Hollywood movie studios
- Dalian Wanda, large media company, has finalized deals to partner with Sony Pictures and Legendary Entertainment, which produced movies such as: Godzilla, Jurassic World and Interstellar
- China also advertises in Times Square, New York City, maximizing its visibility (since 2011)

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## Media (Con't)





# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

- Times Square, New York City, USA



The Soundings Group, November 2017

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## 3. Infrastructure-The One Belt, One Road Initiative

- Oct. 2013, soft power calls for generating regional connectivity.

- Recreating a Silk Road Economic Belt and a Maritime Silk Road through a network of: railways, roads, pipelines, ports and tele-communications.

- Will promote economic integration through China, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe, affecting 68 countries in total.

- China contributed \$50 billion to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, \$40 billion to the Silk Road Fund and \$25 billion to the Maritime Silk Road, among other funds.

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power



# IV. China's Tools Of Soft Power

## 3. Infrastructure





# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## 4. Hosting Olympic Games

- China held the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, the 2010 Shanghai Expo and plans to host the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing
- These venues expose China to the world through the global media. It allows China, its athletes and locations to be featured on TV
- China is showcased, as a way to instill patriotism and domestic pride.
- It is a way to build national branding, like other products and services. It helps to increase awareness and generate a positive image.

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

- 2008 Summer Olympics Opening Ceremonies





# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

Beijing, China 2022 Winter Olympic Games



# IV. China's Tools for Soft Power

## 5. Promoting Foreign Trade Leadership

- With the U.S. pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) China has a new initiative for regional trade, called the Regional Comprehensive Economic Program (RCEP)
- China also seeks separate bilateral deals with countries which were set to join the TPP.



# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## 6. The Creation of Chinese Think Tanks

On May 4, 2017, nine Chinese ministries jointly issued an "Opinion on the Healthy Development of Social Think Tanks." The key priorities of these Think Tanks include serving the Party, promoting government policies and strengthening the Party's leadership. The government will support these "social" or non-governmental think tanks in five ways:

- Allow social think tanks to participate in government consultations
- Develop pipelines for interactions between the government and social think tanks
- Broaden financial channels for social think tanks
- Recruit talents with international backgrounds and ensure their benefits
- Support social think tanks to carry out international exchanges

The Chinese government further clarifies its think tank goals:

*Encourage and support qualified social think tanks...to participate in public diplomacy and global governance, to tell good Chinese stories, to spread a good Chinese voice, to enhance national soft power, and to help China have a strong international say.*

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## 7. Implement Chinese Brands Day

- Chinese brands Day was held for the first time on May, 10, 2016 and will be observed every May 10<sup>th</sup> in the future
- Reflects President Xi Jinping's China Dream
- Represents a message to Chinese companies. The government wants companies to focus on branding
- Represents efforts to improve the quality of domestic brands
- Promotes "Made in China"
- Chinese Brand Day will publicize brands owned independently by Chinese companies, tell brand stories and raise brand awareness and recognition

# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## 7. Implement Chinese Brands Day (Con't)



China  
Time-honored  
Brand  
中华老字号



# IV. China's Tools of Soft Power

## B. Electric Vehicles (EVs)

- China has taken a leading role in planning to ban sales and the production of all fossil fuel autos
- It's also supporting the construction of lithium ion battery manufacturing plants in China
- Analysts believe these initiatives are not only intended to reduce pollution but to take a leadership role in electric vehicles and electric battery technology, and production



# V. Soft Power Effectiveness

## I. Overview

- China's soft power efforts have clearly helped raise awareness of Chinese culture
- These efforts increase learning about China
- The presence of successful Chinese global companies such as Alibaba and Lenovo have legitimized Chinese business efforts
- Sustainable Chinese foreign direct investments provide confidence in doing business with China
- Efforts to modernize China through implementing new infrastructure projects will help attract foreign trade partners, investors and customers
- Xi Jinping's leadership, international travel and public presence provide a notion of stability and vision for the future

# V. Soft Power Effectiveness

- These soft power efforts translate to an improved or more favorable image for China.



- A new Pew Research Center study finds that China is closing the gap with the United States when it comes to global perceptions of economic power (Source: U.S. News & World Report, July 13, 2017)
- Additional findings from same study:  
The U.S. and China engender roughly the same level of goodwill. (Source: Pew Research Center, August 23, 2017)



# V. Soft Power Effectiveness

## B. Effectiveness of Chinese Soft Power

- Difficult to measure
- Perceptions of China differ by country, populations and business communities
- African and South American nations may praise China for their efforts there, while some Asian countries (Myanmar and Sri Lanka) may resent China's growing influence
- Various opinion polls in Germany and the U.S. show China's favorable image has declined
- In any case, China's achievements, especially in the past 5-10 years are impressive

# V. Soft Power Effectiveness

## B. Effectiveness of Chinese Soft Power

- Where Confucius Institutes operate successfully, the youthful population seems engaged and interested in learning about China
- Learning about foreign cultures helps to create better communication and build positive relationships

# V. Soft Power Effectiveness

- Summer trip to China Sponsored by the Confucius Institute at the University of Wyoming (USA)



# VI. Barriers to China's Soft Power

## Potential Barriers to China's Soft Power

### Effectiveness include:

- Continuing environmental pollution in China
- Political tensions regarding suppression of free speech in places like Hong Kong or other areas of China
- China's controversy with the sovereignty of islands in the South China Seas
- Mainland China's sword rattling and goal of taking over Taiwan
- Food safety and human rights issues

# VII. Summary and Implications

## I. Summary

- Soft power's effectiveness cannot be accurately measured but efforts in China qualitatively appear to contribute to China's image as a world player.
- Soft power endures and is used by other countries
- Soft power is explicit in China's future 5 year plan
- Soft power will continue to evolve in China
- This will in turn help attract FDI (Foreign Direct Investment), visitors and create demand for Chinese management globally.

# VII. Summary and Implications

## II. Implications

- A challenge will be how China will use future soft power in an autocratic government
- Pollution and human rights issues need to be addressed to attract more satisfied workers to urban centers
- Can China determine ways to measure the effectiveness of future soft power efforts?
- Can reducing corruption be seen as soft power or interfering with its success?
- How can China better leverage and use its future global influence in so many countries?



# VII. Summary and Implications

## II. Implications (Con't)

- Soft power has provided a foundation to build on for trade, education and learning about China
- Are China's soft power plans counter to its goal about acquiring Taiwan?