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# Confucius Institute project: China's cultural diplomacy and soft power projection

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to apply the theory of cultural diplomacy to explore and explain the role and function of the Confucius Institution project and its implications for understanding of China's soft power projection.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper first presents the theories of soft power and cultural diplomacy as an analytic framework. It then delineates an interpretative illustration of the CI project as a platform for China's cultural diplomacy. The paper concludes with a discussion of the CI project's implications for understanding of China's soft power projection.

**Findings** – The paper argues that the Confucius Institute project can be understood as a form of cultural diplomacy that is state-sponsored and university-piloted, a joint effort to gain China a more sympathetic global reception. As such, the Confucius Institution project involves a complex of soft power techniques. However, it is not entirely representative of soft power capability, because the problems embedded in the project and in the wider society run counter to the Chinese government's efforts to increase the Confucius Institutions' attractiveness and popularity.

**Originality/value** – This article sheds light on Chinese universities in the role of "unofficial cultural diplomats." On this topic, further research may need to explore more fundamental issues that bear far-reaching significance and impact, i.e. the mechanics of Chinese university involvement in Confucius Institutes. Interesting questions arising from this study may help open up a wider spectrum of research topics for understanding the university-state relationship, cross-border higher education, as well as the possibilities and limits of educational globalization. At this stage, this article serves as a start to move scholarship in that direction.

**Keywords** Confucius Institute, Cultural diplomacy, Soft power, China, Universities, National cultures

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Between November 2004 and August 2011, the People's Republic of China (PRC) established a total of 353 Confucius Institutes (CI) and 473 related Confucian classrooms in 104 countries and regions (Chinese Language Council International, 2011a), aimed at "developing Chinese language and culture teaching resources and making [Ministry of Education] services available worldwide, meeting the demands of overseas Chinese learners to the utmost degree, and contributing to global cultural diversity and harmony" (PRC Ministry of Education, 2012). However, the explosive growth of CIs generated heated discussions and debates regarding their purpose, function and the hidden agenda behind the public vision statement. Much attention has been given to the question "Does the expansion of Confucius Institutes represent the rise of China's soft power?"

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A great number of researchers (e.g. Nye, 2005; Kurlantzick, 2007; Gil, 2009; Paradise, 2009; Ren, 2010; Yang, 2010) have employed the theory of soft power to guide their inquiries into this question; however, they neither explore nor explain the rationale and dynamics underpinning the PRC state's diplomatic concern over the CI project's name, administrative structure, operations and functions. This study applies the theory of cultural diplomacy (Cummings, 2003; Cull, 2008) to approach these issues. It provides a supplement to existent literature by filling in the details about how soft power policies are carried out in practice, arguing that the CI project can be understood as a form of cultural diplomacy that is state-sponsored and university-piloted. As such, the CI project involves soft power techniques, but not full soft power capability, because the problems embedded in the CI project and in the wider society run counter to the Chinese Government's efforts to increase the CIs' attractiveness and popularity. To argue this, this paper first presents the theories of soft power and cultural diplomacy as an analytic framework. It then delineates an interpretative illustration of the CI project as a platform for China's cultural diplomacy. The paper concludes with a discussion of the CI project's implications for our understanding of China's soft power projection.

### **Soft power, cultural diplomacy, and CI project**

Soft power theory has been in a great number of discussions and debates (e.g. Nye, 2005; Kurlantzick, 2007; Gil, 2009; Paradise, 2009; Ren, 2010; Yang, 2010) to explore and explain the role and function of the CI project. According to Joseph Nye (1990), who coined the term, "soft power" refers primarily to ways in which a nation's cultural resources constitute a form of power that enhances, or even substitutes for military and economic strength. The term can be seen as an extension and development of Carr's (1954) idea of "power over opinion" and Lukes' (1974) "third dimension of power," both of which shed light on how the attractiveness of a nation's culture, ideals, policies, education and diplomacy give it the capacity to persuade other nations to willingly adopt its goals. The essential part of soft power, as Nye (2004) explains, is the ability to obtain what one wants through co-option and attraction rather than through coercion or payment. Examples of soft power include the attraction of normative values, media, business practices, education, and language.

Nye (2005) regards that the rapid expansion of CIs, along with the increasing popularity of Chinese novels and films, the growing number of Chinese players in the US National Basketball Association and the success of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics, as an indication of the rise of China's soft power. He warns the US Government that, "although China is far from America's equal in soft power, it would be foolish to ignore the gains it is making." Kurlantzick (2007) considers CIs and related cultural and educational exchange activities as soft power techniques used by China to woo the world with a "charm offensive." However, a critical political commentary by Ren (2010) notes that, despite their rapid worldwide growth, CIs have played a limited role in extending China's soft power due to operation problems, such as a shortage of professional teachers and quality teaching programs. Paradise (2009) argues that judging the CIs from the standpoint of expanding Chinese soft power may be the wrong standard for measuring their success, because the real beneficiaries of the CI project could be Chinese universities, which can, through CIs, expand their contacts and exchanges with foreign academic institutions. Based on empirical studies on how CIs enable Chinese universities to develop international exchanges and cooperation with their international peer institutions, Yang (2010) suggests that CIs can be seen as

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a new form of internationalization in Chinese higher education, one which represents China's projection of soft power in international higher education community. However, it is important to note that internationalization of Chinese higher education is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it helps Chinese higher education gain international recognition for its delivery of educational services in the global market and expand Chinese influence worldwide, according to Zhou (2006), the PRC Minister of Education between 2003 and 2009. On the other hand, it has been a cause for anxiety in other countries about getting schooled by Beijing's indoctrination (Little, 2010). For example, a policy directive, dated May 17, sent by the US Department of State to universities that sponsor Confucius states that any academics at university-based institutes who are teaching at the elementary- and secondary-school levels are violating the terms of their visas and must leave at the end of this academic year, in June (US Department of State, 2012). Behind this seemingly practical issue is the political concern that CI are a key piece of the Chinese Government's diplomatic outreach to wield power, even in its softer variants (BBC Reporter, 2012; Fischer, 2012).

The theory of soft power and the aforementioned studies provide useful perspectives on the CI project and its impact on China's standing on the international stage. However, they neither explore nor explain three important questions raising from a historical review of the CI project:

- (1) Why were the institutes named after Confucius, who was reviled by Communist leaders throughout the twentieth century?
- (2) Since the teaching of Chinese abroad dates back to the 1987 establishment of the Chinese Language Council International (*Hanban*), in what aspect does the CI project differ from previous Chinese language teaching projects?
- (3) Given that the CI project is governed and financed by the Chinese Government, why do Chinese universities do most of the work to open new CIs?

Recent studies on cultural diplomacy could be an appropriate analytic framework for analyzing and understanding these phenomena. Cultural diplomacy has a long history as a means of promoting a country's soft power (Nye, 2008; Hartig, 2012). According to Milton C. Cummings (2003, p. 1), who offers a starting definition of the concept, cultural diplomacy can be generally defined as "the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding." The purpose of cultural diplomacy is related to "an actor's attempt to manage the international environment by making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad" (Cull, 2008, p. 33). Recent research undertaken by the Berlin-based Institute of Cultural Diplomacy (2011a) has identified a number of forms of cultural diplomacy used by different groups for different purposes. Examples include:

- (1) state-sponsored cultural diplomacy, which is often used by governments for distinct political purposes;
- (2) independent or semi-independent cultural diplomacy institutions, such as the British Council and the Goethe Institute, which take an informative and exchange-based approach to the promotion of national culture; and
- (3) potential cultural diplomacy channeled by academic institutions or individual artists, academics or professionals involved in academic exchanges and cooperation.

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From this perspective, the CI project could be understood as a form of cultural diplomacy intended to facilitate economic connection, cultural dialogue, and political trust between China and the rest of the world, as the following sections explain.

### **CI project as the state-sponsored and university-piloted cultural diplomacy**

The CI project can be seen as a form of cultural diplomacy that is state-sponsored and university-piloted, based on the project's overall rationale, its close ties to the state, diplomatic concerns over the name given the institutes, the use of CIs to showcase the PRC's diplomacy and foreign policy and the use of Chinese universities to link the CI network around the world.

#### *Rationale for the CI project*

The rationale for the CI project reflects the PRC's recognition of language teaching as a means of building relationships, enhancing socio-cultural understanding and promoting trade and foreign investment. Following its economic reforms and its opening to the west, China worked to increase economic opportunities and attract much-needed foreign investment. However, the state realized that foreigners' lack of Chinese language proficiency and understanding of Chinese culture were barriers that hindered foreign direct investment in China. Beginning in 1987, in an effort to reduce these barriers, the state dispatched Chinese language teachers to foreign countries and established the Chinese Language Council International (*Hanban*) to administer and support, under the guidance of the Ministry of Education, Chinese language programs abroad (Chinese Language Council International, 2007). Since then, *Hanban* has launched several initiatives to facilitate the teaching of Chinese language in foreign countries, including preparing teachers to teach Chinese to non-Chinese speakers, developing Chinese language teaching materials and establishing radio-, television- and internet-based Chinese language distance education programs (The Office of Chinese Language Council International, 2007).

In 2004, *Hanban* launched the CI project for the purpose of "developing Chinese language and culture teaching resources and making its services available worldwide, meeting the demands of overseas Chinese learners to the utmost degree, and contributing to global cultural diversity and harmony" (Ministry of Education, 2012). According to *Hanban*, China's increased engagement in the global economic community led to increased international demand for learning Chinese language and culture. Based on the experiences of British Council, the Alliance Française, Spain's Instituto Cervantes and Germany's Goethe Institute, therefore, China decided to open its own chain of institutes to promote Chinese language and culture internationally (Chinese Language Council International, 2011a). This explanation shows the PRC state's recognition of the cultural dynamics of other countries and its willingness to engage in an international dialogue that may lead to collaboration. Such recognition and willingness to facilitate cultural understanding when engaging in dialogue are important elements of cultural diplomacy (Institute of Cultural Diplomacy, 2011b). However, while other countries' national cultural diplomacy institutions were independent or semi-independent, China's CI maintained close ties to the state.

#### *Close ties between CIs and the state*

The CIs are an extension of state administration tasked with conducting cultural diplomacy, as can be seen from their administrative structure and financial resources. The project's headquarters are in the *Hanban* offices in Beijing, the political heart

of the PRC. When *Hanban* was first set up, it was a Chinese language education agency governed by the Ministry of Education alone; as the years passed, however, the state gradually expanded *Hanban's* functions to include cultural exchanges and placed it under the joint governance of 11 different ministries and commissions collectively responsible for education, culture, foreign affairs and strategic planning for long-term national development. For example, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are responsible for how *Hanban* communicates with foreign governments, liaises with various organizations, associations and educational institutions run by overseas Chinese and co-ordinates with Chinese diplomatic missions abroad to facilitate the establishment and development of CIs worldwide. In addition, under the instruction and supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Hanban* provides Chinese language training for foreign embassies, United Nations representatives and other international organizations, and foreign journalists in Beijing. Thus, *Hanban* is one link in the chain of state administration tasked with cultural diplomacy.

Under this governance structure, CIs are not independent institutions, but agents of the state; *Hanban's* chairman, Li Yandong, is also a PRC state counselor, thus ensuring the state's close, high-level supervision of CIs. In addition, the state, through the Ministry of Education (2012), provides massive financial support to cover CI expenditures worldwide, including US\$150,000 in start-up funds for each CI and 50 percent of their operation and development costs; the remaining 50 percent is borne by the host institutions. In 2010, the PRC allocated Renminbi 800 million (roughly US\$127 million) to support CIs worldwide (Chinese Language Council International, 2011b).

#### *Diplomatic concern over the name*

The CI were named after the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BCE), a somewhat surprising choice, given that Confucius had been reviled by the PRC's Communist leadership throughout the twentieth century. Education in China has been an outgrowth of Confucian ethics and values since Confucius established the country's first school, ca. 521 BCE; by the time of the Qing Dynasty, the main goal of Chinese educational institutions was to impart Confucian ethics and values (Cai, 1994). Because of this historical legacy, Confucius is often seen as the symbol of the long history of Chinese civilization. When the Nationalist Kuomintang government centralized governance of the national education system, in 1929, then President Chiang Kai-shek (1943) prescribed the Confucian moral precepts of "loyalty, filial piety, humanity, love, faithfulness, harmony, and peacefulness (*zhong, xiao, ren, ai, xin, yi, heping*)" as guiding principles for educational institutions throughout the country.

However, The New Culture Movement (1912) led by pioneers of the Chinese Communist Party, such as Li Dazhao and Hu Shi, called for a revolution against Confucianism because of its failure to address China's current problems and transform China into a modern society, and its replacement with a new Chinese culture based on democracy and science. After coming to power in 1949, the Communist Party of China (CPC), in an effort to create an ideal educational environment for the promotion of socialism, initiated ideological remolding movements that denounced Confucianism for its association with feudalism and with education under the Kuomintang. The anti-Confucianism movement reached its peak in the "Criticize Lin Bao and Confucius" campaign (1973), during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) (Chinese Education Yearbook Editorial Board, 1949-1981, 1984).

Despite this, the PRC State Council adopted Confucius as the brand name for its institutes teaching Chinese language and culture overseas. Three important reasons accounted for this decision. First, as Chen Zhili, then a state councilor, argued, Confucius' status as a symbol of Chinese civilization made the choice acceptable (Chinese Language Council International, 2011b). Second, social transformations in contemporary China saw the decline of communism, the rising challenge of western-style liberal democracy and the re-emergence of Confucianism as a political ideology (Bell, 2008). Since the early 2000s, the state has promoted Confucian values (in name, at least) as Chinese virtues. President Hu Jintao (2005) adopted the Confucian notion of "Harmonious Society" (*hexie shehui*) to introduce his signature ideology, the scientific development concept, which envisions China's future socio-economic development as the pursuit, not only of economic growth, but also of overall societal balance and harmony. Thus, Confucius has become a useful symbol by which the CPC-led state justifies its ideological approach to leading and unifying the nation (Bell, 2008). Third, Confucius is an internationally recognized symbol of Chinese culture, one free of the controversy surrounding other prominent Chinese figures, such as Mao Zedong (Reporter of *The Economist*, 2011). Naming the institutes after Confucius is therefore a diplomatic effort to portray China as a civilized and harmonious society, in order to gain international recognition and acceptance.

#### *Chinese universities as unofficial cultural diplomats*

Under *Hanban* rules, CIs are jointly managed by Chinese universities and their foreign partner universities/organizations. *Hanban* offers teaching materials, instructors and start-up funds for the CIs, while foreign partners provide space and facilities. Chinese universities are the vanguard in seeking out new foreign partners and cooperative venues in which to open new CIs. As Paradise (2009) notes, Chinese universities sponsor field trips abroad, negotiate with potential partners, and then "get married" to the ones they select.

The partnership between China and foreign universities gives CIs a starring role on the international academic stage. Between 2005 and 2010, six regional CI joint conferences were held, all hosted by the CIs' partner institutions – including Nanyang Technology University in Singapore, Auckland University of New Zealand, University of Saint Thomas in Chile, London South Bank University in UK, University of Yaounde II in Cameroon and Novosibirsk State University of Technology in Russia (Chinese Language Council International, 2012).

The PRC state expects the China-foreign university partnership to facilitate the inflow of foreign scholars and students into China. According to Liu Yandong (2010), China will increase government funding to finance more international students to study at Chinese universities; support world-renowned foreign universities' and educational institutions' cooperative programs in China; and, sponsor more foreign experts, scholars and academic teams to teach and work in China. This can be seen as a continuation of the state's "brain gain" efforts, its attempt to improve its scientific research and higher education capacity by using foreign-trained human resources (Pan, 2011).

According to cultural diplomacy theory, academic institutions and individual academics have the potential to act as unofficial cultural diplomats involved in cultural exchange, even though their motivation might be purely institutional or personal, such as wanting to develop a greater knowledge base through academic exchange or to demonstrate their work and ideas to a new audience, without any political or economic

agenda (Institute of Cultural Diplomacy, 2011a, b). From this perspective, Chinese universities act as unofficial cultural diplomats, as their prime motivation is the desire to expand their contacts and exchanges with foreign academic institutions. In return, they have benefited from their participation in the ventures which can expand their contacts and exchanges with foreign academic institutions (Paradise, 2009). In addition, the increasing global significance of Chinese has contributed to the rapid increase in the numbers of international students studying in China, giving Chinese universities more international image. Between 2006 and 2010, the number of international students majoring in Chinese language or Sinology at Chinese universities drastically increased from 98,700 (61 percent of 162,695 students) to 165,680 (62.5 percent of 265,090 students) (Ministry of Education, 2007, 2011).

### *Three approaches to cultural diplomacy*

As mentioned above, from the late 1980s to the early 2000s (before the 2004 establishment of the CI project), *Hanban* had launched several measures to teach Chinese language in foreign countries. In comparison, the CI project functions as more than just a provider of language education service; in addition to teaching Chinese language on a considerably larger scale, it also lays a foundation for the PRC to promote China's cultural traditions, way of life and foreign policies, as can be seen by the intensive cultural events organized by *Hanban* through CIs. This paper identifies three approaches adopted by *Hanban* to use CIs as a platform for such events. The first involves engaging with local communities to promote Chinese culture as represented by, for example, Chinese medicine, Kongfu, Qigong, calligraphy, Chinese painting, Chinese songs and dances and Chinese cuisine. According to a keynote speech by Liu Yandong (2010, p. 2) at the 5th Confucius Institute Conference in December, 2010, by that year *Hanban* had coordinated art performances, textbook exhibitions and lecture tours through more than 300 CI in over 50 countries to promote Chinese language and culture. In addition, during "Chinese Language Year" in Russia and Spain, CI in those two countries staged more than 600 cultural events, attracting more than 300,000 participants. These cultural events aimed to "tap into the cultural function of Confucius Institutes, [...] enhance [CIs'] influence in local communities" and "increase the general public's interest in China and understanding of what China is today." This approach can be seen as mass targeted cultural diplomacy.

The second approach targets elite classes, including politicians, university presidents and foreign CI partners. In 2010, *Hanban* invited about 300 university presidents and 2000 CI directors and teachers visit the Shanghai World Expo; some presidents from Asian universities were also invited to visit the Guangzhou Asian Games. International cultural events and sports competitions can function as a form of cultural diplomacy, because they are uniquely able to affect intercultural and interfaith understanding and promote reconciliation (Institute of Cultural Diplomacy, 2011b). This form of cultural diplomacy was confirmed by Liu Yandong (2010, p. 3), who explained that efforts were being made to "strengthen people-to-people communication" and to "lay a solid foundation for more intensified collaborations and cooperation between China and other countries." In accordance, CIs concentrate on a wider, society-facing remit. Their target audience is the mainstream public that mostly does not have any special China knowledge. Activities centered on events promoting Chinese culture, e.g. exhibitions, film screenings, concerts, Chinese weekend schools, and public lecture series on Chinese culture (Starr, 2009). Some universities use



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the CI to provide undergraduate and postgraduate for-credit courses in the Chinese language and culture-related courses, e.g. courses on Chinese tea appreciation, traditional Chinese painting, Chinese chess, and Chinese calligraphy (Zhao and Huang, 2010).

Third, CIs are used to showcase China's diplomacy, foreign policy and harmonious image. Between 2006 and 2010, *Hanban* organized five CI conferences to facilitate exchanges and cooperation among CIs in different parts of the world. At the fifth annual conference, Liu Yan-dong explicitly promoted China's diplomatic policy to the international audience, describing CIs as "important windows showing educational exchange and operation between China and the world [...] China will stick to the path of peaceful development and adopt the opening-door strategy for mutual-benefit in a win-win situation" (Liu, 2010, p. 3). She went on to promote a harmonious image of China stating:

China will adhere to the theme of sustainable development by accelerating scientific and technological innovation, ensuring and improving people's living standards, promoting social fairness and justice, enabling its people to enjoy the benefit of economic growth and ensuring the quality and rapid development of the economic society (Liu, 2010, p. 3).

The state's use of CIs as a platform for China's policy on diplomacy and foreign policy can be seen as a cultural approach using benign activities to counter external pressures associated with the "China threat theory," as the follow section will discuss.

### Discussions and conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that the CI project can be understood as a form of state-sponsored, university-piloted cultural diplomacy. The state is the project's funder and designer. CIs function as agents of the state by relaying knowledge and information regarding China's language, cultural traditions, way of life and foreign policies, in order to fostering international recognition of China as a civilized and harmonious society and to improve its economic and cultural connections in the global community. Chinese universities, for their part, act as unofficial cultural diplomats, making a threefold contribution to the CI project: first, by locating foreign partners and therefore cooperative venues in which to open new CIs; second, by enhancing CIs' academic status by featuring them on the international academic stage; and third, by paving the way for China to increase its international human capital, including academics and students.

The experiences of many countries, including as the US and Egypt, show that "cultural diplomacy emerges at times of crisis" (US Department of State, 2005, p. 14). In the case of China, using CIs as a platform for cultural diplomacy can be seen as an effort to counter the external crisis arising from the "China threat theory." The past two decades have witnessed China's global rise in various areas, including economic strength, military capacity, cultural influence and political power. This rise worries some international observers and policymakers and has aroused anxiety over China as a potential global threat, especially given the possibility of it coming into direct strategic confrontation with the prevailing world superpower, the USA (Maj, 2001). Nye (2005) warns that the rise of China at America's expense is an issue that needs to be urgently addressed.

In this context, the CI project fits well into China's peaceful rise argument, as was made clear at the 5th annual Confucius Institute Conference, when Liu Yandong repeatedly emphasized that peace, development and cooperation are global trends, that

China would continue to follow the path of peaceful development, and that CIs are committed to the promotion of world peace, mutual understanding and tolerance “among nations in order to build a harmonious world featuring sustained peace and common prosperity” (Li, 2010, pp. 3-4).

As a form of cultural diplomacy, the CI project can be seen as a complex of soft power techniques, using language, education, cultural events, conferences and tourism as non-military and non-economic means to exert China’s influence abroad (Kurlantzick, 2007; Wachter, 2007). However, it is not entirely representative of soft power capability. As Nye (2004) defines it, at the core of soft power is the ability to obtain what one wants through co-option and attraction, rather than coercion or payments. The expansion of the CIs around the world, however, heavily relies on payment, specifically massive financial support by the Chinese Government, without which the overseas institutions could be neither established nor maintained.

In a wider society, CIs’ capacity for attraction is also in question, given that they have encountered both domestic criticism and international objections, including organized protests by foreign professors opposed to the establishment of CI at their universities. Underlying such opposition is the concern that CI would interfere with academic freedom, because their close ties to the Chinese Government would inevitably influence what was taught, and how (Maslen, 2007; Wachter, 2007). The Chinese Government has officially expressed its intent to use CIs as a CPC propaganda tool (Wachter, 2007), which has been a cause of American alarm, as seen from the visa flap that arose for Chinese teachers in the USA in 2012 (US Department of State, 2012).

Even though CIs can help China to depict itself internationally as a benign country, these efforts could be derailed by its authoritarian political system and aggressive actions in trouble spots such as Taiwan (Paradise, 2009). Domestic criticism has focussed on the appropriateness of allocating educational funding overseas and worries that the CI’s funding comes at the expense of domestic educational expenditure (Ren, 2010), especially given that *Hanban* aims to open 1,000 CI by 2020 (Xinhua News Agency, 2006). Moreover, despite the project’s quantitative growth, its quality assurance mechanism remains under-developed (Liu, 2010).

These unresolved problems run counter to the Chinese Government’s efforts to increase CIs’ attraction and popularity. It is, therefore, probably far too simplistic to declare that the global expansion of CI represent the rise of China’s “soft power” (Xinhua News Agency, 2006). The success of any country’s soft-power projection, including China’s CI project, ultimately depends on the sources from which its soft power derives – its culture, the attractiveness of its political values and its foreign policies (Nye, 2004). Nevertheless, the CI project demonstrates a new form of cultural diplomacy that is state-sponsored and university-piloted, a joint effort to gain China a more sympathetic global reception.

This paper sheds light on Chinese universities in the role of “unofficial cultural diplomats.” On this topic, further research may need to explore more fundamental issues that bear far-reaching significance and impact, i.e. the mechanics of Chinese university involvement in CI. How involved are they in decision making? How much have they benefited from their participation in the ventures? And, how successful have they been in their “diplomatic” role? If the state is not the only organ for carrying out diplomacy, and if entities other than the state affect a country’s international reputation, a broad analysis of a country is needed. These interesting

questions may help open up a wider spectrum of research topics for understanding the university-state relationship, cross-border higher education, as well as the possibilities and limits of educational globalization. At this stage, this paper serves as a start to move scholarship in that direction.

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