

Confucius Institutes and the Rise of China

Falk Hartig

Published online: 30 November 2011

© Journal of Chinese Political Science/Association of Chinese Political Studies 2011

Abstract Since 2004 China has set up over 700 Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms around the world to promote its language and culture and thereby to shape its image. Despite this impressive number Confucius Institutes are surprisingly understudied, especially in terms of their actual structure, operation mode and activities. This paper uses German Confucius Institutes as a case study to bridge this gap. It first discusses the concepts of public and cultural diplomacy and culture institutes as a conceptual tool to analyze Confucius Institutes. It then turns to the case study to provide empirical data to better understand this instrument of China's image shaping efforts. It argues that Confucius Institutes are connected to the rise of China and a unique member of the family of national culture institutes.

Keywords Confucius Institute · Soft Power · Public Diplomacy · Cultural Diplomacy · China's Image

Introduction: China and Its Image Problems

The images of nations are a crucial factor in international relations (e.g. [1, 2]. Some time ago Hertz noted that “It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that today half of ‘power politics’ consists of image-making” and that with “the rising importance of publics in foreign affairs, image-making has steadily increased” [3:187]. This is especially true for China. Following Rabinovitch, it is “reasonable to assert that image considerations weigh heavily on the minds of Chinese decision-makers” [4:32].

A recent CNN poll found that 58% of Americans believe China's growing economic and military strength is a threat to the U.S. [5:3]. This perception of China,

F. Hartig (✉)

Media and Communication, Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology,
Creative Industries Precinct, Musk Ave, Kelvin Grove, QLD 4059, Australia
e-mail: f.hartig@qut.edu.au

which is reminiscent of the China Threat debate, is partly grounded in rather vague fears of China and partly based on China's actual behavior. It seems safe to assume that China's most recent harsh dealing with western journalists in March 2011, its brash response to the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo in late 2010, as well as the western impression that China was undermining a positive outcome of the Copenhagen Climate Conference in December 2009, all resulted in the situation that China "has to deal with the reactions of sceptical publics across the globe" [6:15]. China is seen as a spoiler of the international environment and as an enemy of human rights at home and abroad as a result of its support for regimes in Myanmar or Sudan (*ibid.*). In addition, the global public perceives China as a threat to people's jobs [7]. Whether all this is true is not important because "the image of a certain nation exists in many people purely as affect with no knowledge basis whatsoever" [2:43].

Some argue that "China's greatest strategic threat today is its national image" and "how China is perceived by other nations [...] will determine the future of Chinese development and reform" [8:12]. Therefore it shouldn't come as a surprise that the Chinese government "has become quite attentive to China's national image in recent years" [9:48]. This attentiveness is not only reflected in concepts such as Peaceful Rise/Development and Harmonious World by which China wants to convince the world of its benign intentions. Beyond that, the Chinese government is increasingly active in practical terms in recent years. One component of this comprehensive "charm offensive" [10] is the internationalisation of Chinese state media. Xinhua, CCTV and China Daily receive vast sums of money to "go out" and explain China's point of view to the world [11]. The second main pillar is the Confucius Institutes,¹ which are set up by the Chinese government around the world to promote Chinese language and culture.

The aim of this paper is to introduce Confucius Institutes as a tool of China's public/cultural diplomacy, which China uses to shape its global image. The paper uses Confucius Institutes in Germany as a case study to analyse the structure, finances, activities, and the criticism Confucius Institutes face. It also describes the relevance of these institutes and argues that Confucius Institutes, as any other culture institute, are to some extent in service of their country's foreign policy goals.

Theoretical Background: Public Diplomacy, Cultural Diplomacy and Culture Institutes

Public diplomacy is considered "one of the most salient political communication issues in the 21st century" [12:ix], nonetheless no generally accepted definition exists [13:73]. Broadly understood, public diplomacy is "a country's engagement and

¹ Next to Confucius Institutes there are also so called Confucius Classrooms which have the same goals and aims, but differ slightly in structural terms. According to Starr they are aimed at secondary education rather than universities [59:71]. The case study in Germany, however, shows that Classrooms can be set up between Chinese partners and local schools, friendship associations or other China related cultural institutions. Germany has three Confucius Classrooms and according to one director Classrooms are not limited to schools. As long as the international partner is not a university the institution becomes a Classroom while some have connections to a Confucius Institute and others do not (15).

communication with foreign publics” [14:3] which “involves the cultivation of public opinion to achieve the desired geopolitical aims of the sponsor” [15:5]. Others define public diplomacy as “an international actor’s attempt to advance the ends of policy by engaging with foreign publics” [16:6].²

One controversial subject concerns the importance of the government as actor of public diplomacy. Tuch defines public diplomacy as “a governments process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies” [17:3]. As the term suggests public diplomacy “is almost always, by definition, an open process” [17:4]. It is obvious that public diplomacy takes place in public and has to be directed at the public, “but for it to be diplomacy, it has to entail a role for the state” [18:8].

In contrast, Gonesh and Melissen emphasise that public diplomacy contains “all of the activities by state and non-state actors that contribute to the maintenance and promotion of a country’s soft power” [19:7].³ While Melissen argues that non-state actors as well as supranational and sub-national players develop public diplomacy policies of their own [20:12], Castells uses a more individual centred approach and describes public diplomacy as “the diplomacy of the public, that is, the projection in the international arena of the values and ideas of the public [...] to harness the dialogue between different social collectives and their cultures” [21:91].

The fact that public diplomacy is initiated by governments leads to the accusation of propaganda. As Richard Holbrook noted: “Call it public diplomacy, or public affairs, or psychological warfare, or—if you really want to be blunt—propaganda” [22:B07]. Governments aim to distinguish both concepts and argue that public diplomacy deals with “the known facts”, while propaganda is based on a mixture of facts and untruths [23:3]. For Nye “good public diplomacy has to go beyond propaganda” [24:101], because “information that appears to be propaganda [...] may turn out to be counterproductive if it undermines a country’s reputation for credibility” [24:100].

Propaganda “in the most neutral sense means to disseminate or promote particular ideas” [25:2], however, in general it has a “highly negative” connotation [26:383]. Jowett/O’Donnell describe this negative and dishonest connotation by listing words “frequently used as synonyms for propaganda [such as] lies, distortion, deceit, manipulation, mind control, psychological warfare, brainwashing, and palaver” [25: 2–3]. For them “propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” [25:7]. This paper applies the negative understanding of propaganda to discuss Confucius Institutes and thus follows Nye that good public diplomacy has to go beyond propaganda to be successful.⁴

The government centred approach is the main feature of public diplomacy in Chinese understanding. Public diplomacy is seen as a diplomatic activity organised

² For a critical overview see for example Kemming [117].

³ As a growing body of literature deals with Chinese soft power (see, for example, 10, 54–56, 118–126), this paper will not engage in this discussion. However, for the sake of completeness, it is noted that “public diplomacy is one of soft power’s key instruments” [20:3], or the tool through which soft power is wielded [127:xiii].

⁴ In the Chinese language the term propaganda (xuanchuan) does not have this sinister connotation.

and conducted by a state government directed at the public in foreign countries [27:186] in order to realize its own national interests and create a favourable international environment [29]. For China, the task of public diplomacy is to introduce China to the world and help foreigners to understand the real China [30]. In this context it aims to enhance friendship through international cultural exchange and communication [32:13]. But there are also voices in China who outline that the government no longer holds the monopoly to conduct public diplomacy. As Zhao/Zhang observe, public diplomacy in China is no longer limited to the diplomatic service. It can be performed by any government department, by the society or even by individuals [33].

Another theoretical issue concerns the distinction between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. Cull for example divides the practice of public diplomacy into five elements: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting [34:31]. For him cultural diplomacy as a subset of public diplomacy is “an actor’s attempt to manage the international environment by making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad” [34:33]. In the case of China he understands Confucius Institutes as the “central project of Chinese cultural diplomacy” [35:12].

Mark on the other hand is of the opinion that cultural diplomacy is not just a “synonym for public diplomacy, nor for international cultural relations, and nor is the practice simply another form of propaganda” [36:65]. One difference between public and cultural diplomacy concerns practical activities. Mark attributes reactive media briefings as an element of public diplomacy, which in his understanding sits “outside cultural diplomacy’s rubric” [36:66], see also [37:23]. As Gienow-Hecht states, it is “difficult to find a common international denominator for an action used internationally in a highly heterogeneous manner” [38:32] and therefore cultural diplomacy “thus can be, but is not necessarily part of, public diplomacy” (ibid.).

In China there is also no definite distinction between public diplomacy (*gongong waijiao*) and cultural diplomacy (*wenhua waijiao*). In general culture and cultural exchange are understood as an important part of a country’s foreign policy [27, 28, 31, 32] and public or cultural diplomacy are seen as the instrument to conduct this exchange. Culture is understood as an effective tool in the struggle of power and interests among nations [39:7] and can be used to attract societies and people of other countries [39:12]. The country whose culture is the mainstream and leading global culture is the “winner in the international power struggle” [39:2]. In this context it is noted that western nations, based on their political, economical and cultural strength, have a dominant position [40]. Li blames the US culture to “wolf down local cultures and to influence local people’s thoughts and behavior” [39:3]. In his understanding US culture is mainly spread via the “brutal information policy” of the “media power USA” (ibid.). It is against this background that Chinese scholars see the danger of cultural imperialism (*wenhua diguo zhuyi*) in relation with western cultural diplomacy [40]. Therefore, the argument goes, it is necessary that China takes part in this cultural competition and promote its culture in the world (ibid.). The tool for these activities is cultural diplomacy as a part of a China’s foreign policy [39:2].

One major instrument for a country to exert its cultural diplomacy is culture institutes. Mitchell [41] identifies three models for culture organizations or institutes.

First, the model of government control in which the government, through a ministry or an official agency, exercises direct control. Examples of this form are France, Italy, the USA⁵ and the developing countries as their culture “occupies a sensitive position in their national identity” [41:72]. The second is the model of non-governmental, autonomous agencies. In this case the government provides money through a ministry but delegates policy control and execution to an independent agency such as the British Council or the Japan Foundation (*ibid.*). The last is a mixed system in which the government retains overall control but funds and contracts non-official agencies to operate independently within their competences. The prime example for this system is Germany with its numerous cultural agencies (*Mittlerorganisationen*) [41:72].

These institutes are mostly set up for rather practical (political) reasons. France started its cultural diplomacy after its defeat in the war against Prussia (1870–1) and founded the Alliance Française in 1883 by “invoking her cultural patrimony as a means of rehabilitation” [41:23]. The British Council was set-up in 1934 as a reaction to the success of official cultural institutions of France, Germany and Italy [42:268] and “to counteract Nazi plans for global cultural hegemony” [43], see also [44:39]. And Germany’s Goethe-Institute was set-up with the initial idea to rehabilitate Germany’s reputation after World War II [45:36]. This, I argue, is also the case with Confucius Institutes, which are not only designed to teach language and promote culture, but are “also aimed at balancing the dominant American (popular) cultural influence” [46:209]. Furthermore, I argue that Confucius Institutes also contribute, at least indirectly, to China’s foreign policy agenda. To better understand this contribution it is first necessary to better understand the actual structure and working mode of Confucius Institutes.

Confucius Institutes as a Tool of Chinese Cultural Diplomacy

Li Changchun describes Confucius Institutes as “a huge element of China’s great plan of international publicity” [47] and for State Councilor Liu Yandong, Confucius Institutes are “an important brand of international Chinese language education and a significant platform for educational and cultural exchanges” [48]. While Chinese officials identify Confucius Institutes as an important tool of China’s international exchange and image shaping, the western academic interest in these institutes is still surprisingly small. Confucius Institutes are mentioned in works dealing with nation image and branding [8, 49], public diplomacy [50–53] and China’s soft power [54–56].⁶ However, most of these works only mention Confucius Institutes without further analysis.

So far only a handful of non-Chinese academic publications have focused on Confucius Institutes [28, 57–61]. Hans Hendrichske, director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Sydney, identifies one weakness of these works when he notes that only “little of this literature [...] is based on actual evidence of

⁵ Mitchell refers to the United States Information Agency (USIA) which existed from 1953 to 1999.

⁶ Various works dealing with China’s international relations also mention Confucius Institute (e.g. 128, 129) even though sometimes they are mistakenly referred to as “Confucian Institutes [130, 131].

activities of Confucius Institutes” (quoted in [62:2]. This is the basis for the present article which deals with the activities, but also with the structure, the finances and the critical issues of Confucius Institutes. Besides the existing literature various documents from the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) are available (mostly online). Both these sources provide a wealth of information, but mostly only in a very general manner which is not sufficient to understand how Confucius Institutes actually work. Therefore the empirical data for this study is based on semi-structured interviews with managers and/or directors of German Confucius Institutes⁷ and the reference materials of Confucius Institutes prepared for the Third and Fourth Confucius Institute Conference held in 2008 and 2009 [63, 64]. The gathered information are tested and contrasted with the more general assumption from the literature.

In 2002 the Chinese government “announced plans to set up institutions overseas to systematically promote Chinese culture and language” [65:114]⁸ and in 2004 China set up the first Confucius Institutes to “develop and facilitate the teaching of the Chinese language overseas and promote educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other international community’s” (Constitution and By-Laws of the Confucius Institutes). At the end of 2010 a total of 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius Classrooms have been put in place in 96 countries and regions [66]. At first glance these numbers are very impressive when taking into account that, for example, the German Goethe Institute maintains 149 institutes in 93 countries. However, one has to keep in mind that first, it seems not all Confucius Institutes/Classrooms are currently in operation. Second, a number of institutes “are said to be one-room offices with a sign and no program” [67:2], and third, many Confucius Institutes’ offices are hardly comparable with Goethe Institute or British Council offices in terms of personnel, equipment or large scale facilities.

The total number of registered students at Confucius Institutes increased by 56% over the year 2010, amounting up to 360,000 and the total number of teachers, part-time and full-time, has reached 4,000, with a net increase of 1,000 in 2010. According to Hanban statistics half are from China and half from the local countries [66].

In March 2004 Chen Zhili, then member of the Chinese State Council in charge of Confucius Institutes, proposed to use the name of the most prominent representative figure of Confucianism—Confucius—to name these institutes after [68, 69:50, 70:81]. According to Wang, Confucius is the representative figure of China’s traditional culture and thus, choosing Confucius as titular saint for teaching Chinese abroad is an indicator for the revival of traditional Chinese culture [71:65]. That might partly be the case, however, it seems more reasonable that the name-giving was “a branding issue” [59:69]. Not discussing the strategic exploitation of Confucius by the CCP here, it is obvious that Confucius is much more famous around the world than Lu Xun and Lao She, let alone Guo Moruo. Furthermore,

⁷ The interviews (I1-I9) with managers or directors of eight German Confucius Institutes and one university without a Confucius Institute were conducted between September and December 2009 during a research stay at the GIGA Institute of Asian Studies, Hamburg. Institutes and interviewees remain anonymous and I only quote by name from material that is already in the public domain.

⁸ Other authors are a bit more reserved and note that China started to develop the idea to set up institutions to promote Chinese language teaching overseas [82, 83, 132].

Confucius has positive associations with teaching and culture, and as Jain/Groot put it: “A ‘Mao Zedong Institute’ probably would not be welcomed in most countries” [72].

The Office of Chinese Language Council International, also known as Hanban, Hanban in Beijing is responsible for Confucius Institutes. Hanban is composed of representatives from 12 ministries and commissions within the Chinese central government [73:1], while the Ministry of Education carries the main responsibility.⁹ Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters is in charge of placing teachers, the development and distribution of teaching materials, and it coordinates the cooperation between the partner institutions in China and abroad which run Confucius Institutes. The headquarters furthermore approves applications for the establishment of new Confucius Institutes and supervises their operations and ensures quality management. The Council of the Confucius Institute Headquarters is currently chaired by Liu Yandong, member of the CCP Central Committee Political Bureau and State Councillor [74].¹⁰

Establishment of Confucius Institutes

The requirements to establish a Confucius Institute include among other things the following: there has to be a demand for learning the Chinese language and culture at the applicant's location; the personnel, space, facilities and equipment for language and culture introduction have to be available; the capital for the establishment has to be in place, and “the sources of funds for operation have to be stable” (Constitution and By-Laws). According to the Constitution and By-Laws, any “corporate entity outside of China capable of facilitating language instruction, conducting educational and cultural exchange activities [...] may apply to the Confucius Institute Headquarters for the permission to establish a Confucius Institute” (Constitution and By-Laws). This statement indicates that international partners take the initiative to establish a Confucius Institute and it is not so much the Chinese side trying to establish institutes around the world. But at second glance it is not that obvious whether international parties or Chinese counterparts initiate the establishment as it is sometimes the case that Chinese universities hold field trips abroad and negotiate with foreign partners to set up such an institute [58:652].

The case study in Germany shows that both ways are possible. Some institutes explained that the first ideas to establish a Confucius came from staff members of their Chinese partner university (I5), which advised its German partner that it could be helpful to set up a CI (I1). Two other managers also said that the “impulse probably emanated from the Chinese side” as well (I6).¹¹ Another German university “was asked from several Chinese universities” whether it would be interested in establishing a CI (I8). Interestingly, while the long time partner university “was a bit

⁹ Ministries and commissions involved include for example the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, or the State Press and Publication Administration and the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television.

¹⁰ The Vice Chairs in early 2011 included: Yuan Guiren: Minister, Ministry of Education; Li Haifeng: Director, Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council; Xiang Zhaolun: Deputy Secretary-General, State Council; Zhang Shaochun: Vice Minister, Ministry of Finance.

¹¹ There is no final confirmation because the interview partners at both institutes were not personally involved in the planning and setting up of the Confucius Institutes there.

hesitant” the Confucius Institute at this particular university was established within the scope of a newly established partnership with another Chinese university (*ibid.*). But there were also German institutions taking the initiative to establish a Confucius Institute (I5, I7).

When Confucius Institutes started, there were ambiguities about the final number of institutes. One German manager for example reveals that speculations made a circuit whether only one institute would be established in Germany (I7). These uncertainties are also reflected in the fact that the Chinese side adjusted the number of institutes several times. At the beginning the plan was to set up 100 of these institutes [75] but this number was already reached in 2007 [76:69]. As the international demand increased dramatically the numbers were constantly revised upwards and one report from Xinhua even noted that the plan would be to establish 1000 institutes by 2020 [67, 77:2]. Whether Hanban will reach this goal remains to be seen as it appears that Hanban is slowing down the number of new inception. Paradise refers to talks with Hanban officials in late 2007, stating that “many inquiries arrive from abroad about setting up Confucius Institutes, and in some cases [Hanban] has not been able to approve applications” [58:652]. This is echoed by Xu Lin, Chief Executive of the Confucius Institute Headquarters, who noted in early 2011 that Hanban receives three applications each day, but “we cannot confirm every enquiry. There are financial constraints and we are short of teachers who could work in these regions” (quoted in [78]).

Structure of Confucius Institutes

One unique feature of Confucius Institutes is their structure. Starr identifies three operation modes for Confucius Institutes: wholly operated by Hanban; with local partners as joint ventures; and “wholly locally run offices licensed by the Beijing headquarters” [59:70]. The joint venture seems to be the most common one and it is the principal form of organization for Confucius Institutes in Germany. They are managed by Chinese universities and local partners, mainly also universities, while Hanban as the umbrella organization is also involved. The local partner mostly provides local personnel and the rooms and facilities, while the Chinese university normally sends a co-director and teachers and Hanban provides books and further financial support.

According to Guo the selection of international partner universities is relatively “random” [79:31]. That might be the case elsewhere, however, in Germany most institutes are based on previously existing ties between a university in China and the German host university. On the Chinese side certain universities are responsible for more than one Confucius Institute: one university in Shanghai cooperates with two German Confucius Institutes, while one university in Beijing even works with three German partners.

Within this joint venture structure both sides are looking for benefits. The German side appreciates the benefits for language courses. The institutes provide language classes for students of Sinology who want to improve their Chinese (I5), or filling the gap for universities without a Chinese department (I2). Another manager summarizes the advantages upfront: “For universities it is interesting for two obvious reasons: it earns money and in general projects with China also earn prestige” (I6). This is also one benefit for Chinese universities. Cooperation with international

universities helps Chinese universities to improve their domestic academic relevance, which is important because “international exchange” is an index for evaluation of Chinese universities and colleges [79:32, 16].

Another benefit for China results from the structure itself. The cooperation with international universities is a huge advantage for Confucius Institutes because they benefit greatly from the credibility and reputation of their host universities. Above of that, local partners are contributing financially to Confucius Institutes and thus co-financing the People’s Republic’s cultural diplomacy.

Yet another advantage of this joint venture for China is worth mentioning: the Chinese government is still restrictive regarding foreign cultural institutes in China. Until now there are only a few foreign cultural institutions in Beijing. Germany’s Goethe Institute is the oldest, present since 1988, followed by the French in 2004 and the Spanish in 2005. Currently the political principle is “one country, one cultural institute” [80:17]. China avoids these self-imposed difficulties altogether because Confucius Institutes in Germany are formally registered associations in Germany and therefore formally not Chinese institutions. Therefore China can easily establish more than one cultural institute in a certain country, without impinging official cultural treaties and agreements.

Nevertheless, this structure is not without its weaknesses. Some international partners are too careless and do not do adequate research whether there is a serious demand for an institute [81:181] and thus “haphazardly establish a Confucius Institute [83:55]. But also Chinese universities lack comprehension and sometimes do not understand the needs of foreign partners and the regional characteristics properly. Furthermore, Li suggests that some Chinese universities want to turn Confucius Institutes mainly into a “cash cow”, “poster child” and an “opportunity to travel abroad” (ibid.).

Some Chinese scholars are especially critical about the selection process for Chinese universities, particularly the less prestigious ones. While there are rules and regulations for the foreign partner universities, according to Liu, the selection of Chinese universities should follow a stricter policy [68:146], also [81]: the universities should have an institute for education administration, they should already have started to develop international cooperation with some success, these universities should have a branch or department for teaching Chinese as a foreign language and they should have a department related to Chinese traditional culture, such as Traditional Chinese Medicine, music, architecture, eating or travel/tourism. Furthermore these universities should have a stable contingent of teachers and, last but not least, should have a good social prestige [68:146; 69].

Financing of Confucius Institutes

This Joint Venture structure also affects the financing of Confucius Institutes and makes it a comparatively budget-priced tool of China’s cultural diplomacy. In 2008 the Straits Times stated that “Hanban’s annual budget is reported to be US\$ 15 million” [84:S8] and another study reveals that the Chinese government had spent US\$ 26 million on Confucius Institutes worldwide by the end of 2007 [85:31]. Yet another report says that Hanban’s annual budget was “US\$145 million in 2009” [67:2].

According to Xu Lin, the funding for the institutes in 2009 “from both China and abroad [...] has increased to 119,000,000 US dollars in total, showing a 50–50% share from both sides” [86:18], which means Hanban spent almost US\$60 million for Confucius Institutes in 2009. However it should be kept in mind, that the annual budget of the British Council is about US\$1billion [67:2] and the budget of Germany’s Goethe Institut in 2010 was about 334 million Euro with roughly 223 million Euro donation from the German Federal Foreign Office [87].

How much money each individual institute eventually receives remains somewhat vague. Xu Lin reported that the average budget for each institute in 2009 was “over 400.000 U.S. dollars” [86:18]. Some report that institutes get a “starting budget of €850,000 and an operational budget of €200,000 per year” [88], while another study reveals that several institutes in Japan had annual budgets of over US\$ 200.000 [73:1]. The institutes in Germany, however, receive US\$100.000 [76, 89] on average, and institutes can apply for extra project money (I3, I5).

The general rule, as one manager explained, implies that both partners should contribute roughly half of the necessary money (I6). This means that although Hanban provides money to local partners, these partners have to invest as well. The biggest amounts of expenditure are costs for local staff and premises which are provided by the local partner institution. Taking into account the average figure of about US\$100.000 a year,¹² it comes as no surprise that institutes around the world are looking for further financial support. In 2007 Chen Zhili indirectly promoted this approach when she said Confucius Institutes should increasingly conform to market mechanisms [85:32]. Almost every institute in Germany has external sponsors, some provide a certain amount of start-up funding (I3) and others provide support in the form of donated items (I6).

A related issue concerns the question of how long Hanban subsidizes the institutes. According to one report, Hanban aids newly established institutes partly or sometimes fully for 3–5 years, depending on the local financial situation [85:31]. The case study reveals a certain change in thinking within Hanban about the financial support for the institutes. In the early stage, until 2007/2008, most institutes in Europe received start-up annual funding of US\$100.000 for the first 3 years, which led to uncertainties and concerns about the future of the Confucius Institute project [76:70]. It seems likely that the authorities in Beijing took the concerns of local partners seriously. This assumption is backed by the interviews in Germany. One manager mentioned that the initial 3 year limitation was cancelled and the plan now is to fund institutes in a long ranging manner (I5). A concrete result of these reflections might be the fact that newly established institutes in Germany have a starting contract period of 5 years (I7, I9). In general, the way how contracts are extended is described as very informal, unproblematic and straightforward (I2, I6).

One indicator for this change in thinking, according to Weigl, is the fact that Confucius Institutes are included in the current Ten-year plan of the Ministry of Education [90:35]. The so called “National Outline for Medium and Long-term

¹² Due to the shifting exchange rate from US Dollar to Euro this sum could easily shrink to only 79.000 Euro (I5) or only even 67.000 Euro (I7).

Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)” states the necessity to “enhance the quality and level of Confucius Institutes [teaching]”, and in the section about “Major Projects and Pilot Reform Projects” it states in the context of international educational exchange to “support the establishment of Confucius Institutes” [91]. As Confucius Institutes are mentioned in this plan, there is more confidence regarding the financial situation and one manager in Germany is sure “the funding is safe at least until 2020” (quoted in [90:35]. One manager on the other hand is of the opinion that “institutes are evaluated and roughly 100 institutes will remain and will get funding. This is the tendency [...], it won’t be that much subsidies no longer” (quoted in [90:35]. People in charge of German Confucius Institutes also doubt whether there is such an enormous demand for Chinese language and culture, which also leads to the assumption that maybe not all institutes will survive in the long run (15).

Various interview partners praised the flexibility of Hanban to take the objections and suggestions from partner institutions into account (13, 15, 17), and it seems as Hanban is willing to adapt its rules and regulations to some extent. Apparently the awareness evolved that it is very difficult—if not impossible—for a cultural institution to survive without any subsidies. But I argue that this is not only an economic question. At a second glance it is obvious that it cannot be Hanban’s goal that all institutes operate financially completely free and independent. If there is no more money coming from Beijing, there would be no need to listen to “guidelines and assessments” anymore. Or more to the point: Hanban would no longer have bearing on what happens at the institutes.

Activities of Confucius Institutes

Confucius Institutes provide opportunities for people all over the world to learn about Chinese language and culture. Their target audience is the mainstream public that mostly does not have any special China-knowledge (18). Another group of attendees are students from the host university who practice and improve their Chinese (*ibid.*). Based on the interviews, analysis of institutes’ programs and “The Confucius Institute Conference Reference Materials” from 2008 and 2009, it can be concluded that the main tasks of Confucius Institutes are (fee required) language courses for various levels and reasons (Business Chinese, Tourism Chinese), as well as cultural events like exhibitions, film screenings, readings, concerts and lectures [63:187]. The schedules differ from institute to institute and different institutes have different priorities, but generally all offer more or less the same content.

The emphasis and demands for language and culture¹³ varies from institute to institute across Germany. In one institute fewer people attended Chinese classes (in one semester six to eight classes with four to 13 people), but up to 60 people

¹³ The separation between culture and language follows the practical understanding in the context of the course offerings at Confucius Institutes and not so much academic discussions. A proper definition of culture would go way beyond the scope of this paper as it is “perhaps impossible to define culture to everyone’s satisfaction” [133:422]. Beside other aspects, language is one of the most important aspects of culture, because “language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in the contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways” [134:3]. Here it should be added that language obviously is a precondition to promote a country’s culture abroad.

attended the various China lectures. One reason is that the lectures are free of charge (I3).¹⁴ This is echoed by another manager: “Many people cannot or do not want to learn Chinese because they have to pay for, but many people want to know more about various China topics” (I5). Yet another manager describes the emphasis in a 70–30 ratio between culture and language (I6). In 2009 about 1200 people attended various language courses at this institute, including a free calligraphy course and free experience course during the Open Day, while almost 3000 people attended “Chinese language and culture promotion activities” such as concerts, readings, exhibitions and movies [64:219–20].

One director explains that “language is definitely our main business” (I2). 385 people attended 1032 instruction hours at this institute [64:232], while 1500 people attended “Chinese language and culture promotion activities” [64:233] and 180 visitors came to three talks by “distinguished scholars” (ibid.). Another manager confirms that the focus is on language: “Of course language teaching is the essential task. By means of language one gets to know more about culture. And while our resources are limited we cannot do everything” (quoted in [90:65]).

Another important aspect of the Confucius Institutes programs are the mentioned lectures featuring distinguished scholars. Lectures included topics such as “Traditional Chinese Medicine”, “The Silk Road” [64:220], and readings with writers like Duoduo and Wolfgang Kubin [64:233] or Yu Hua [64:240]. Besides teaching Chinese and hosting lectures, two more activities evolved in recent years: education of local Chinese teachers (I6, I3, [64:263], and “In China programs including summer camps, educator delegation and teacher training” [64:221, 234, 246].

International Skepticism and Criticism

Although the official aim of Confucius Institutes is to teach Chinese language and culture and thus “to promote friendly relations with other countries” [92], these institutes are not without their critics. Generally speaking, there are two groups of people discussing these institutes, namely the critics who see Confucius Institutes as “a sinister attempt to extend Chinese political control activities to Western universities, [and] most foreigners actually involved in the programme [who] reject these fears” [59:79].

At least three points of criticism can be identified. Because of the structure and their links to the Chinese government via Hanban, more often than not Confucius Institutes are labeled as one of “China’s foreign propagandists” [93:159] which, the argument goes, the Chinese government uses “in its drive for global dominance” [94]. Another concern is that Confucius Institutes might influence the teaching activities at their host universities [95:33; 96, 97:124]. According to Chey:

“The Institute campaign is welcomed by many academics in the Chinese Studies field as a way to save their disciplines from being axed and as a way to strengthen their teaching by bringing in language teachers from China. These

¹⁴ In this context it is worth mentioning that there is no tradition to pay for education in Germany. There were intense discussion about tuition fees in Germany and some Länder introduced those fees. However, currently only a handful of Länder charge a maximum of 500 Euro per term.

considerations apparently outweigh concerns about potential loss of academic freedom” [95:44].

Another critic, David Matas,¹⁵ claims that

“informally [Confucius Institutes] become a vehicle that the Chinese government uses to basically intimidate the academic institutions to run according to their guise and also as a vehicle for infiltration and spying into campuses to find out what’s going on hostile to their interests” (quoted in [98].

Other critics accuse the Communist Party of China of wishing to “establish Confucius Institutes around the world to spread communist party culture in the name of Chinese culture. None of the Confucius Institutes offers the Confucian teachings, but in language courses communist propaganda is spread” [99].¹⁶ The critics note that “through the teaching material, Beijing propagates its ideology of patriotism for the Communist Party and China, autocratic culture, and nationalism” and thus “Beijing Chinese language schools brainwash students overseas” [100:B2].¹⁷

Beyond these seemingly at least partly ideologically driven criticisms, there are also voices who question the whole value of these institutes. For example François Jullien, a prominent French Sinologist and Philosopher, takes the view that Confucius Institutes basically present cultural stereotypes, which do not fulfill the complexity of the Chinese civilization [76:70]. Accordingly, there are also western scholars who refuse to establish Confucius Institutes. In 2007, Mette Halskov Hansen, professor of Sinology at the University in Oslo explained: “We don’t believe that establishing a Confucius Institute would be the best way to create good academic relations to Chinese institutions and lecturers” (ibid). One German university with a respected department of Sinology was asked several times to establish a Confucius Institutes, but “under the offered conditions it was out of question for us” (14). Interestingly enough there were “no ideological reservations” but much more practical reasons like to work load for a potential German director and the biggest problem was space and premises which the university would have had to supply (ibid.).

The Joint Venture structure, which is part of the reason for the critics to assume that Confucius Institutes are a propaganda tool, is on the other hand seen as a benefit by the people involved in these institutes. “It is advantageous that both sides are financing the project and therefore both have a say in the work” (13). According to several managers, this structure actually prevents the institutes from becoming a pure propaganda tool. “China needs the international partners because if the international partner quits, the project cannot survive” (17), which implies if there is too much pressure coming from Beijing, the German partners might quit. Or as one manager points out: “I’m doing this on a voluntary basis, so I could quit the job just at anytime” (11).

¹⁵ A senior legal counsel, Matas represented Lai Changxing in his extradition proceedings and co-authored “Bloody Harvest: Revised Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China”

¹⁶ A writer and essayist, Xu, according to her own website, “feels [her]self called upon to actively resist against the terror regime” because according to her, “Red China is a threat for the world” (<http://xu-pei.lila-lotus.de/>, access 24.2.2010).

¹⁷ Quoted in The Epoch Times, a newspaper founded by practitioners of Falun Gong.

Furthermore China “has to adopt itself to local circumstances and thus we have some influence on the Chinese side” (I7). The strategy to establish institutes with international partners leads to an active involvement of non-official foreign partners, who promote Chinese culture [51:38]. Liu therefore describes Confucius Institutes as the most “open minded institutions China ever had” [85:31]. This is echoed by local staff in Germany. “The whole project is a learning process for the Chinese staff. They are going back with a different view” (I1). Managers of German Confucius Institutes are also confident that the whole project might have some ripple effects within China. “If you are going global, you have to be open-minded and accept things you normally wouldn’t accept that easy. And China is forced to be open for things like this” (I2).

All interviewees assured that until now there was no interference from the Chinese side and no attempts to push topics in a certain direction.

“We are no executive organ of the Chinese Ministry of Education. Of course who is giving money may try to have a say, but as far as I can see it none of the institutes connected to a university would allow an intervention in its independence (I6).

“Actually Hanban doesn’t impinge on our daily work at all” (I9) is a statement heard from almost any staff member at German Confucius Institutes. Accordingly “Hanban is much more like an offer platform. You can choose various parts and structural elements to integrate in your own program” (ibid.). Another revealing point is the following argumentation: “Hanban is much more an administrative body which is not so much interested in questions of content. Besides, there are too many institutes around the world and [Hanban] cannot have a close look at everyone” (I5).

All this sounds like the old Chinese saying after which the sky is high and the emperor far away, however, there are critical issues and there are limitations for Confucius Institutes [136]. And people in charge of Confucius Institutes are fully aware of the problems. “Of course everybody knows about topics you cannot really do, this is definitely a disadvantage” (I3). This is the general understanding throughout the institutes. “When it comes to precarious topics the independence is limited. If topics like Tibet or Taiwan would be handled too critical, this could be an issue” (I3).

However, the case study in Germany indicates that it partly depends on the local personnel¹⁸ what happens at Confucius Institutes and what does not. “If we would do critical topics, it should be in a balanced manner and with the necessary respect towards sensitivities in China” (I3). Another director noted that he “didn’t ask anyone what we can do or not. Insofar I surely square it with my conscience or with what I know about China, what we can do and what we cannot do” (I7).

In this context another interviewee admits that the local institute “couldn’t probably exhibit Ai Weiwei but I guess we could hold a discussion with the Tibet Initiative”¹⁹ (I6). Yet another one admits that “it would be very interesting to see

¹⁸ All German Confucius Institute staff at the managing level has academic and working experience with China. Most of them are Sinologists, be it as former students or lectures. The few who did not study Sinology have working relations with China, mostly in the academic field.

¹⁹ Tibet Initiative Deutschland e.V. describes itself as “the largest and oldest political Tibet Support Group in Germany.” It tries to “influence the People’s Republic of China with all nonviolent means to put an end to arbitrariness, torture, political and cultural oppression in Tibet.” (http://www.tibet-initiative.de/eng/tid/about_us/, access March 3rd 2010.)

what happens if someone would really invite dissidents. It would be interesting to see how far one could go and how this would be handled” (I9). But the general understanding is as follows:

“Confucius Institutes are not an institute for anti-Chinese organizations, like dissident groups or Falun Gong. It would be dewy-eyed to affirm this. We know where we stand and I think we make full use of the space we have. But that Falun Gong appears here, that’s a physical impossibility “(I2).

However, it seems Hanban does not really trust its international partners. At the Third Confucius Institutes Conference in 2008, it turned out, that the topics Tibet, Falun Gong and Taiwan “are not very welcomed” [90:36].²⁰

The accusation of propaganda in textbooks is rejected by Confucius Institutes personnel in Germany for one simple reason: “Most of the textbooks are only in Chinese and English and many people coming to our institute are not that fluent in English so we have to use German materials as well” (I9). But it is not only a language problem. “Many of the Chinese teaching materials miss the point regarding habits and taste of German learners” (I3). In general, Confucius Institutes in Germany all confirm that they are “very autonomous in the usage of teaching materials” (ibid.). Although Hanban has published teaching materials and reference books in 45 languages [66], most of the institutes in Germany combine teaching materials offered from Hanban with German books and resources and are even starting to design their own teaching materials. Not only German Confucius Institutes are designing own materials, but about 104 Confucius Institutes have developed and published 77 local Chinese language-teaching materials and have thus greatly alleviated the pressure of textbook shortage [66].

Practical Issues of Confucius Institutes

Apart from this partly ideologically driven skepticism in the West, Confucius Institutes face several practical problems. At the joint Conference of European Confucius Institutes in Belgium in late 2009, Xu Lin highlighted two major issues: first the “shortage of teachers who are proficient with local languages”, and second the “insufficient supply of tailor-made teaching materials” [101:17]. To solve the teacher problem Hanban started recruiting university graduates regardless of their majors, who are trained for one year to become language teachers [102]. This method obviously raises the question of teaching quality and thus questions the effectiveness of Confucius Institutes as a whole. In the case of Germany, one specific issue concerns teachers who do not speak German (I2, I3, I6).

Another issue raised is that institutes in Germany should cooperate more closely to use resources more efficiently [64:250]. At the time of the interview, one institute proposed the launch of an annual conference and wanted to set up a website for all German institutes, but that eventually did not occur (I3).²¹

²⁰ This was confirmed by one interviewee via e-mail after the talk with the author.

²¹ In the meantime a joint website for all German institutes was set up: <http://www.konfuzius-institute.de/index.php>

Another problem affects the recruitment of new students. For some institutes it is harder to find enough students than for others. In some German Länder Chinese is not taught at schools, or Chinese is only regarded as a hobby which limits the potential audience for some Confucius Institutes [64:257]. Another weak point concerns the library which at most institutes consists mainly of books sent from Hanban. “The quantity of books is still quite small [63:227/228] and the readability does not yet meet local standards and therefore the books do not attract more readers (ibid.). Therefore some institutes started to upgrade their library with books bought with budget money (15).

The Relevance of Confucius Institutes

Paradise is of the opinion that “only time will tell whether the Confucius Institutes can help spark a more sympathetic understanding of China and usher in a more benign view of it” [58:664] and Gil assumes that “the benefits China gains from this project are currently limited” [57:67]. This caution is reasonable, but nevertheless Confucius Institutes have a certain importance for China.

While the Chinese side emphasizes that Confucius Institutes are “purely academic and cultural” [103], I argue that next to the promotion of language and culture, Confucius Institutes have also more far reaching political purposes, at least indirectly. In practical terms Confucius Institutes should help China to do business and open markets [82:46/47]. Duan Yi, a former Hanban employee, explains that Confucius Institutes are among other things an effective mechanism for the scientific contribution to economic globalization [104:51]. For China’s economy and trade Confucius Institute can provide competitive advantages through language and cultural support and assistance (ibid.). In this context, the Chinese culture is understood as a pathfinder for Chinese economy abroad (ibid.).²²

In more strategic terms the establishment of Confucius Institutes is not just to internationalize education, but furthermore Confucius Institutes are a special representation of China’s soft power which is an important contribution to enforce the good image of China [69:51]. Chen and Zheng argue similarly, stating that Confucius Institutes are not a passive reaction to western cultural domination, but much more “a pro-active expansion [...] to change China’s image” [105:74].

In the Chinese understanding various countries nowadays promote their language and culture globally which leads to an “intense competition” in the field of international culture promotion [81:181]. As mentioned earlier, the promotion of culture in the international area also happens for concrete foreign-policy reasons. Organizations like the Goethe Institute or British Council, even though they are acting independently, are to a certain degree working for their governments and their foreign policy goals. “The British Council plays a crucial role in building overseas influence for the UK [...]. Our activity and programs delivers benefits for Britain at

²² Duan mentions two Confucius Institutes which are involved in cooperation with the business world: The Confucius Institute in Poitiers, France, is teaching French staff of the Chinese communications company ZTE Chinese and the Confucius Institute in Thailand, with its partner Southwest University, is helping the company Chongqing Motorbike to enter the Thai market [104:51].

home and abroad" [106:2]. The German Goethe Institute, "acting on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany [...], promotes various issues of foreign cultural and educational policy" [135]. The German Federal Foreign Office defines this field of diplomacy as "a contribution to crises prevention, protection of human rights and democracy promotion" [107:4] and also emphasizes that "our cultural work abroad is not simply neutral, but is value orientated" [108:1]. These examples illustrate that not only "cultural work can support foreign policy goals" [109:25], but furthermore that the utilization of culture is "an intrinsic aspect of foreign policy" [41:67]. For Belanger this leads to the "problem of the 'politicization' of culture by foreign policy" [110:678] and he correctly argues that "cultural diplomacy has never been apolitical, even if in general, and quite naturally, it claims to be so" (ibid.).

And this, I argue, is also the case with China. For example, the Ministry of Culture outlines, that even teaching Chinese as a foreign language "is of strategic significance [...] to enhance the friendship and mutual understanding as well as the economic and cultural co-operation and exchanges between China and [...] the world and to elevate China's influence in the international community" [111]. Furthermore Confucius Institutes are meant to show a friendly and cosmopolitan China, to shape a favourable global surrounding for China and, as outlined, they should pave the way for the Chinese economy. All this is without a doubt essential for China's development in the coming years and thus the development of Confucius Institutes has a political dimension. In addition, Confucius Institutes "devote themselves [...] to construct a harmonious world" [112], which also has political implications.

The concept of a harmonious world implies multilateralism to realize common security, mutual beneficial cooperation to achieve common prosperity, inclusiveness where all civilizations coexist harmoniously, and lastly a reform of the United Nations [113]. In this context it "emphasizes on harmonious coexistence among countries with different cultures and systems in contrast to Samuel P. Huntington's discourse on 'the clash of civilisations'" [114:46]. A harmonious world "accepts that power politics continues to exist and the democratization of international relations has yet to be realized; but dialogue, exchanges and harmonious coexistence have become the mainstream in international relations, and mutual respect and equality among states have emerged as the consensus of the international community" (ibid.). Although the concept is meant to show "no intention to challenge the existing U.S. centric international system" however it can be assumed that its political implications "are directed, in part, at the U.S." [6:5]. This is echoed by Men [115] who notes, that "[w]ithout mentioning the name of the United States, China made it clear that such policy of multipolarity was to counterbalance against it" (31).

Conclusion

As the analysis reveals "cultural diplomacy is very much a political activity designed to serve national interests in an ostensibly cultural guise" [116:80] and China with its Confucius Institutes/Classroom is no exception here. Basically there is nothing to criticize about this as many countries maintain government sponsored or supported organizations to promote their language and culture abroad. The Chinese

government is well aware of the importance of image and reputation in the international arena and is acting in a rather sophisticated manner.

Taken together, it can be argued that the Chinese approach is as strategic as it is efficient. By utilizing the current global fascination with Chinese language and culture, the Chinese government has found interested international partners to co-finance the Confucius Institutes and thus partially fund China's "charm offensive" [10]. Or as Xu Lin puts it, this cooperative model guarantees that Confucius Institutes are an instrument that helps the Chinese government to obtain huge effects with the least amount of money (quoted in [85:33]).

As with any other culture institute, the Confucius Institutes are committed to their government at home. In this way there are no differences between Confucius Institutes and its equivalents in Great Britain, Germany, France, Spain or elsewhere. The big difference, however, springs from the authoritarian nature of the Chinese political system. This leads to the situation that Confucius Institutes lack one crucial component of other culture institutes, which is the detachment from the state (*Staatsferne*). Therefore Confucius Institutes are basically not supposed to approach topics which are labeled sensitive from the official Chinese point of view. However, it should also become clear, that Confucius Institutes are not merely a propaganda tool in the sinister sense of the word as they neither propagate China's Scientific Development Concept or the Three Represents nor actively telling lies. But when it comes to sensitive topics Confucius Institutes turn quiet or even silent [136:11]. Therefore it is safe to say that concerns regarding Confucius Institutes "are not completely unfounded, but may not be totally warranted" [67:1].

The analysis of Confucius Institutes reveals that China's cultural institutes abroad differ in various aspects from its counterparts. The described joint venture structure plays a crucial role here. The involvement of local scholars (mostly familiar with China) prevents by and large a misuse of these institutes. As the case study also shows, to a certain degree it is up to the people in charge what is happening at Confucius Institutes and how far they might go to test the limits. This limitation of possibilities is an issue of which people in charge are well aware of. There cannot be any final judgment whether these circumstances might lead to a form of self-censorship, but it is also argued that staff members or members of Confucius Institutes councils—which mostly are recognized scholars—wouldn't probably risk their reputation for doing Chinese propaganda.

Precisely because of the joint venture structure I argue that Confucius Institutes might be—in the long run—a more successful tool of China's charm offensive than China's 'going out' media, which are under the complete control of the Chinese government.

But all efforts to shape China's image are hampered by one basic issue. Cull, as most others, observes that China's international image "still faces severe problems [and] the reputation of China is hostage to the reputation of its exports" [50:133]. Therefore all efforts to shape China's image in the world hit the wall because no Confucius Institute can "blot out the cause of Tibet in the western mind, or erase the memory of the repression of the Tiananmen protests, or counterbalance stories of censorship and religious persecution" (*ibid.*). Against this background, "all Beijing can do is try frantically to distract attention from these issues by presenting alternative stories and rebuke the world's media for accentuating the negative"

(*ibid.*). How successful Confucius Institutes can be in this regard remains to be seen, but the growing number of about 700 institutes right now seems to prove the Chinese government right with its Cultural Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics.

Acknowledgment The author thanks all the interviewees and acknowledges useful comments from Terry Flew, Karsten Giese, Henry Li, Wang Dandan, and the anonymous reviewers. He also thanks the Asian Studies Association of Australia for its financial support for participating and presenting parts of this research to the 18th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia in Adelaide, 5–8 July 2010.

References

1. Jervis, R. 1970. *The logic of images in international relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
2. Kunczik, M. 1997. *Images of nations and international public relations*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
3. Hertz, J.H. 1981. Political realism revisited. *International Studies Quarterly* 25(2): 182–197.
4. Rabinovitch, S. 2008. The rise of an image-conscious China. *China Security* 4(3): 32–46.
5. CNN Opinion Research Corporation. 2010. *CNN POLL*, November 17 2010.
6. Blanchard, J.-M.F., and S. Guo. 2008. Introduction. In *Harmonious world: And China's new foreign policy*, ed. J.M.F. Blanchard and s Guo, 1–20. Lanham: Lexington Books.
7. Sieren, F. 2005. *Der China Code: Wie das boomende Reich der Mitte Deutschland verändert [The China Code. How the booming Middle Kingdom is changing Germany]*. Düsseldorf: Econ.
8. Ramo, J.C. 2007. *Brand China*. London: The Foreign Policy Centre.
9. Wang, H. 2003. National image building and Chinese foreign policy. *China: An International Journal* 1(1): 46–72.
10. Kurlantzick, J. 2007. *Charm offensive how China's Soft Power is transforming the world*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
11. Sun, W. 2010. Mission impossible? Soft power, communication capacity, and the globalization of Chinese media. *International Journal of Communication* 4(2010): 54–72.
12. Snow, N., and P.M. Taylor. 2009. *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*. New York: Routledge.
13. Gilboa, E. 2008. Searching for a theory of public diplomacy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616(1): 55–77.
14. Wang, J. 2011. Introduction: China's Search of Soft Power. In *Soft Power in China. Public Diplomacy through Communication*, ed J. Wang, 1–18. New York.
15. Osgood, K., and B.C. Etheridge. 2010. Introduction: The New International History meets the new cultural history: Public Diplomacy and U.S. Foreign Relations. In *The United States and Public Diplomacy new directions in cultural and international history*, ed. K. Osgood and B. Etheridge, 1–25. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
16. Cowan, G., and N.J. Cull. 2008. Public diplomacy in a changing world. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616(1): 6–8.
17. Tuch, H.N. 1990. *Communicating with the World. U.S. public diplomacy overseas*. New York: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University.
18. McDowell, M. 2008. Public diplomacy at the crossroads: Definitions and challenges in an 'open source' era. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 32(3): 7–16.
19. Gonesh, A., and Melissen, J. 2005. *Public diplomacy: Improving practice*. Clingendael Diplomacy Papers No.5, The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael.
20. Melissen, J. 2005. The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice. In *The new public diplomacy. Soft Power in international relations*, ed. J. Melissen, 3–27. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
21. Castells, M. 2008. The new public sphere: Global civil society, communication networks, and global governance. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (1): 78–93.
22. Holbrooke, R. 2001. Get the message out. *Washington Post* October 28: B07.

23. Wolf, C., and B. Rosen. 2004. *Public diplomacy. How to think about and improve it*. Santa Monica: Rand Cooperation.
24. Nye, J.S. 2008. Public diplomacy and soft power. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616(1): 94–109.
25. Jowett, G.S., and V. O'Donnell. 2006. *Propaganda and persuasion*. London: Sage.
26. Walton, D. 1997. What is propaganda, and what is actually wrong with it? *Public Affairs Quarterly* 11(4): 383–413.
27. Yang, C. 2010. *Waijiao Xue [Diplomacy]*. Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe.
28. Yang, R. 2010. Soft power and higher education: An examination of China's Confucius Institutes. *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 8(2): 235–245.
29. Lau, B. (undated). *Shenme shi gonggong waijiao [What is Public Diplomacy]*. Xuexi Shibao online. <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/zhuanti/xxsb/919200.htm> [accessed 10 October 2009].
30. Zhao, Q. 2009. Zhongguo qianhua gonggong waijiao de biyaoxing [The necessity for China to strengthen Public Diplomacy]. *Journal of Shenyang Normal University (Social Science Edition)* 6 (33): 1–2.
31. Zhang, Q. 2009. Wenhua waijiao: suzao guojia lianghao xingxiang [Cultural Diplomacy: developing a good image of the nation]. *Zhongguo wang*. http://www.china.com.cn/international/txt/2009-09/10/content_18501006.htm[accessed 4 September 2010].
32. Zhang, W. 2009. Tuozhan you zhongguo tese de gonggong waijiao [Expanding Public Diplomacy with Chinese characteristics]. *Guoji wenti yanjiu* 4/2009: 12–16.
33. Zhao, X., and J. Zhang. 2010. Dui dangqian jieduan zhongguo gonggong waijiao de zai renshi [The reconsideration of China's Public Diplomacy at the current stage]. *Xiandai Zhuanbo* 6(2010): 58–61.
34. Cull, N.J. 2008. Public diplomacy: Taxonomies and histories. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616(1): 31–54.
35. Cull, N.J. 2009. *Testimony before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission hearing: China's Propaganda and Influence Operations*. 30 April 2009. United States-China Economic And Security Review Commission, 5–17. Washington.
36. Mark, S.L. 2010. Rethinking cultural diplomacy: The cultural diplomacy of New Zealand, the Canadian Federation and Quebec. *Political Science* 62(1): 62–83.
37. Bound, K., et al. 2007. *Cultural Diplomacy*. London: Demos.
38. Gienow-Hecht, J.C.E. 2010. The Anomaly of the Cold War: Cultural Diplomacy and Civil Society since 1850. In *The United States and public diplomacy. New directions in cultural and international history*, ed. K.A. Osgood and C. Etheridge, 29–56. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
39. Li, Z. 2005. *Wenhua waijiao. Yi zhong chuanboxue de jiedu [Cultural Diplomacy – An interpretative model of communication]*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
40. Bian, Y. 2009. Wenhua waijiao zai guoji waijiao zhanlüe zhongde shuangchong xiaoying ji qishi [The dual effects of Cultural Diplomacy in international diplomatic strategy and the implication]. *Lilun Qianyan* 13/2009: 30–31. Here: <http://www.cntheory.com/news/Llwxy/2009/720/0972014111026G3H61F9G32CIK1K5B9.html>.
41. Mitchell, J.M. 1986. *International cultural relations (Key concepts in international relations 3)*. London: Allen & Unwin.
42. Cohen, J. 2004. *A Pan-American life. Selected poems and prose of Muma Lee*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
43. Macintyre, B. 2008. Don't mess with our madrigals, Vladimir. The British Council is a superb propagandist for our way of life and culture *The Times* 19 January 2008. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/ben_macintyre/article3212020.ece [accessed 23 May 2009].
44. Miller, T., and G. Yudice. 2002. *Cultural policy*. London: Sage.
45. Kathe, S.R. 2005. *Kulturpolitik um jeden Preis [Cultural Policy at any cost]*. München: Martin Meidenbauer.
46. Cabestan, J.-P. 2008. Learning from the EU?: China's changing outlook toward multilateralism. In *China and the new international order*, ed. G. Wang and Y. Zheng, 203–217. London/New York: Routledge.
47. Xinhua. 2007. “Li Changchun: Zhashi zuohao hanyu guoji tuiguang gongzuo [Li Changchun: Enhancing the promotion of Chinese language globally] 24 April 2007. http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2007-04/24/content_6022792.htm [accessed 20 December 2009].
48. Chen, J. 2009. Confucius opens path for martial arts display. *China Daily*, 14 December 2009. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/200912/14/content_9168693.htm (accessed 23 March 2010).
49. Anholt, S. 2010. *Places: Identity, image and reputation*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

50. Cull, N.J. 2008. The Public Diplomacy of the Modern Olympic Games and China's Soft Power Strategy. In *Owning the olympics: Narratives of the New China*, ed. M. Price and D. Dayan, 117–144. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
51. d'Hooghe, I. 2007. *The rise of China's public diplomacy*. Clingendael Diplomacy Papers No.12, The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael.
52. d'Hooghe, I. 2010. *The limits of China's Soft Power in Europe. Beijing's public diplomacy puzzle*. Clingendael Diplomacy Papers No.25, The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael.
53. Zhang, J. 2008. Making sense of the changes in China's public diplomacy: Direction of information flow and messages. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 4(4): 303–316.
54. Ding, S. 2008. *The Dragon's hidden wings. How China rises with its Soft Power*. Landham: Lexington Books.
55. Li, M. 2009. *Soft Power: China's emerging strategy in international politics*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
56. Li, X., and V. Worm. 2011. Building China's soft power for a peaceful rise. *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16(1): 69–89.
57. Gil, J. 2009. China's Confucius Institute project: Language and soft power in world politics. *The Global Studies Journal* 2(1): 59–72.
58. Paradise, J.F. 2009. China and international harmony the role of Confucius Institutes in bolstering Beijing's soft power. *Asian Survey* 49(4): 647–669.
59. Starr, D. 2009. Chinese language education in Europe: Confucius Institutes. *European Journal of Education* 44(1): 65–82.
60. Hoare-Vance, S. 2010. *The Confucius Institutes and China's evolving foreign policy*. Saarbrücken: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
61. Zhao, H., and J. Huang. 2010. China's policy of Chinese as a foreign language and the use of overseas Confucius Institutes. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice* 9(2): 127–142.
62. Sharp, A. 2010. Confucius Institutes adopt a sage approach to cultural understanding. *Asian Currents*, May 2010: 1–4.
63. CIHQ (Confucius Institute Headquarters). 2008. *The Third Confucius Institute Conference Reference Materials – Europe 1*. Beijing: Hanban.
64. CIHQ (Confucius Institute Headquarters). 2009. *The Fourth Confucius Institute Conference Reference Materials – Europe, Hanban, 211–299*. Beijing: Hanban.
65. Cheng, X. 2009. Education: The Intellectual Base of China's Soft Power. In *Soft Power: China's emerging strategy in international politics*, ed. M. Li, 103–119. Landham: Lexington Books.
66. Liu, Y. 2010. *Working together towards the sustainable development of Confucius Institutes*. Key-note Speech at the 5th Confucius Institute Conference, 10 December 2010. Beijing.
67. Siow, M.W-S. 2011. China's Confucius Institutes: Crossing the river by feeling the stones. *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, No.91, January 6, 2011:1–2.
68. Liu, L. 2007. Zhongwai hezuo lijian Kongzi xueyuan de wenti yu duice [Problems and Solutions for Confucius Institutes established by China and Foreign Countries]. *Journal of Shenyang Normal University (Social Science Edition)* 31(3): 145–147.
69. Liu, W. 2007. Kongzi xueyuan: hanyu he zhongguo jiaoyu guojihua de xin jucuo [Confucius Institute: new method for the internationalisation of Chinese language and Chinese education] *World Education. Information* 2007(8): 50–52.
70. Zhou, H. 2007. Faguo Kongzi Xueyuan Zhaji [Notes of Confucius Institutes in France]. *Faguo Yanjiu [Studies Francaises]* 2007/3: 81–84.
71. Wang, P. 2006. Cong kongzi xueyuan de sheli kan zhonghua wenhua yu waiyu jiaoxue [Confucius Institute: Traditional Chinese Culture and Foreign Language Teaching]. *Journal of Zhaoqing University* 27(6): 65–67.
72. Jain, P., and Groot, G. 2006. Beijing's 'soft power' offensive. *Asia Times online*, May 17, 2006, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HE17Ad01.html> [accessed 10 October 2008].
73. Ren, Z. 2010. Confucius Institutes: China's Soft Power? *Sigur Center For Asian Studies Policy Commentary* – June 2010. The George Washington University, The Elliot School of International Affairs.
74. Confucius Institute Online. 2009. *Council of the Confucius Institute Headquarters*. http://college.chinese.cn/en/article/2009-12/28/content_97121.htm.
75. Mai, M. 2007. Konfuzius an der Spree [Confucius by the river Spree]. *Die Tageszeitung* 3 May 2007. <http://www.taz.de/1/archiv/archiv/?dig=2007/05/03/a0055> [accessed 20 May 2008].

76. Hartig, F. 2007. Wie Konfuzius Europa erobert [How Confucius conquers Europe]. *KULTURAUUSTAUSCH Zeitschrift für internationale Perspektiven* III/2007: 69–70.
77. Xinhua 2006. Confucius Institute: promoting language, culture and friendliness http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-10/02/content_5521722.htm [accessed 13 September 2008].
78. Liu, X. 2011. Chinesische Kultur: Verbreitung in Zeiten der Globalisierung [Chinese culture: spreading in times of globalisation] *CROnline Deutsch* (March 11 2011), <http://german.cri.cn/1833/2011/03/11/1s153517.htm> [accessed 17 March 2011].
79. Guo, X. 2008. *Repackaging Confucius PRC public diplomacy and the rise of Soft Power*. Asia Paper, Stockholm: Institute for Security & Development Policy.
80. Ammelburg, T. 2008. Im Gespräch mit Michael Kahn-Ackermann [A conversation with Michael Kahn-Ackermann]. *DianMo Zeitung Leipziger Sinologie-Studenten* 3/2008: 14–19.
81. Guo, Y. 2009. Kongzi xueyuan de fazhan wenti yu guanli chuangxin [Development problems of Confucius Institutes and new ways of administration]. *Academic Forum* 2009/6: 180–183.
82. Li, J. 2008. Jintian women ruhe pingjia kongzi? Jian tan kongzi xueyuan xianxiang [How do we assess Confucius today? Debating the Confucius Institute phenomenon]. *Forum of Social Science* 1 (5): 41–47.
83. Li, R. 2008. Haiwai Kongzi Xueyuan Fazhan Qianxi [Short Analysis of the development of overseas Confucius Institutes]. *Overseas Chinese Journal of Bagui* 3(1): 52–56.
84. Kam, L.W. 2008. Projecting soft power, the Confucius way. *The Straits Times*, 26.7. 2008: 8.
85. Liu, H. 2008. Die chinesisch-afrikanischen Beziehungen aus dem Blickwinkel der Kultur [Chinese-African relations from the point of view of culture]. *China aktuell* 3/2008: 10–44.
86. Xu, L. 2010. Report on the 2010 work plan of the Confucius Institute Headquarters. *Confucius Institute* 6(1): 16–19.
87. Goethe Institut. 2010. Jahrespressekonferenz [Annual Press Conference]. <http://www.goethe.de/prs/prm/a010/de6938255.htm> [accessed 15 January 2011].
88. Le Corre, P. 2011. China's charm offensive. *Europe's World*, Spring 2011. http://www.europesworld.org/NewEnglish/Home_old/Article/tabid/191/ArticleType/ArticleView/ArticleID/21784/language/en-US/Default.aspx [accessed 2 March 2011].
89. Hartig, F. 2009. Mit Konfuzius ins 21. Jahrhundert: Chinas Auswärtige Kulturpolitik [With Confucius in the 21st century: China's Foreign Cultural Policy]. In *Kultur und Außenpolitik – Handbuch für Studium und Praxis [Culture and Foreign Policy – Handbook for Study and Practice]*, ed. K.-J. Maaß, 401–410. Baden-Baden: Nomos.
90. Weigl, A. 2009. *Auswaertige Kulturpolitik der Volksrepublik China – Eine Untersuchung kultureller Programme der Konfuzius-Institute in Berlin, Hamburg und Hannover* [Foreign Cultural Politics of the People's Republic of China – an analysis of cultural programs of the Confucius Institutes in Berlin, Hamburg and Hannover]. Master Thesis University Hildesheim.
91. Ministry of Education. Undated. *Guojia zhongchangqi jiaoyu gaige he fazhan guihua gangyao (2010–2020)* [National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)]. http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2010-07/29/content_1667143.htm [accessed 13 November 2010].
92. Communications New Brunswick. 2007. *Confucius Institute to be established in New Brunswick*, News Release February 5, 2007, <http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/edu/2007e0145ed.htm>.
93. Brady, A.-M. 2008. *Marketing dictatorship. Propaganda and thought work in contemporary China*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
94. The Canadian Press 2007. CSIS say: Confucius part of Chinese bid to win over western hearts. *The Monitor* 28 May 2007. <http://www.themonitor.ca/article-cp69319033-CSIS-say-Confucius-part-of-Chinese-bid-to-win-overwestern-hearts.html> [accessed 23 May 2009].
95. Chey, J. 2008. Chinese 'Soft Power', cultural diplomacy and the Confucius Institutes. *The Sydney Papers Summer* 2008: 32–46.
96. Malsen, G. 2009. Global: 'Soft Power' China expands language centres. *University World News* 9 August 2009. <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20090807100013824> [accessed: 13 August 2010].
97. Simcox, R. 2009. *A Degree of Influence - The Funding of Strategically Important Subjects in UK Universities*. London: The Centre for Social Cohesion.
98. Steffenhagen, J. 2008. Has BCIT sold out to Chinese propaganda? *The Vancouver Sun*, 2 April 2008. <http://forums.canadiancontent.net/news/85292-close-confucius-insittute-bcit-vancouver.html>. [accessed 20 September 2009].
99. Xu, P. 2008. Privilegien und Menschenrechte in Rot China [Privileges and Human Rights in Red China] 21 April 2008. <http://www.berlinerjournalisten.com/blog/2008/04/21/privilegien-und-menschenrechte-in-rot-china> [accessed 20 September 2009].

100. Yuan, M, Liu, F., and Kemker, R. 2009. Beijing Chinese Language Schools Brainwash Students Overseas. *The Epoch Times*, 8 July 2009: B2.
101. Xu, L. 2009. *Presentation at the Joint Conference of European Institutes*. Leuven, Belgium, 18 October 2009.
102. People's Daily 2007. *China moves to meet surging demand for Chinese language teachers* 20. 3. 2007. <http://english.rednet.cn/c/2007/03/27/1165633.htm>. [accessed: 1 August 2008].
103. The Brunei Times. 2009. *Interview by The Brunei Times with Her Excellency Mme. Tong Xiaoling, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Brunei Darussalam, on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China* 21. September 2009. <http://bn.china-embassy.org/eng/lszn/t585622.htm> [accessed 1 December 2010].
104. Duan, Y. 2008. Ying shili-ruan shili lilun kuang jia xia de yuyan-wenhua guoji tuiguang yu kongzi xueyuan [International Promotion of Language and Culture and the Confucius Institutes under the theoretical framework of Hard Power – Soft Power]. *Fudan Education Forum* 6(2): 48–51.
105. Chen, Q., and G. Zheng. 2007. Cong 'Zhongguo Nian' dao 'Kongzi Xueyuan' – wenhua chuanbo yu guojia xingxiang de rouxiang suzao [From 'China Year' to 'Confucius Institute' – cultural communication and the deterritorialization of China's image]. *Journal of China University of Petroleum (Edition of Social Science)* 23(1): 73–76.
106. Davidson, M. 2008. *Foreword by the Chief Executive. British Council Corporate Plan 2008–11* 2–3. London: British Council.
107. Auswaertiges Amt 2003. *Auswärtige Kultur- und Bildungspolitik [Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy]*. Berlin: Edition Diplomatie.
108. Auswärtiges Amt. 2000. *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik – Konzeption 2000 [Foreign Cultural Policy – Conception 2000]*. Berlin.
109. Maaß, K.-J. 2009. Überblick: Ziele und Instrumente der Auswärtigen Kulturpolitik [Overview: Goals and Instruments of Foreign Cultural Policy]. In *Kultur und Außenpolitik – Handbuch für Studium und Praxis [Culture and Foreign Policy – Handbook for Study and Practice]*, ed. K.-J. Maaß, 25–32. Baden-Baden: Nomos.
110. Belanger, L. 1999. Redefining cultural diplomacy: Cultural security and foreign policy in Canada. *Political Psychology* 20(4): 677–699.
111. Ministry of Culture. 2003. *Formulation and development of External Cultural Exchange*. http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_exchange/2003-09/24/content_36939.htm [accessed 20. December 2008].
112. Constitution and By-Laws of the Confucius Institutes (undated). http://english.hanban.org/node_7880.htm.
113. Xinhua 2005. Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World 16 September 2005. <http://china.org.cn/english/features/UN/142408.htm>. [accessed 20 December 2009].
114. Cheng, J.Y.S. 2010. China's Foreign Policy after the Seventeenth Party Congress. In *Dancing with the Dragon: China's emergence in the developing world*, ed. D. Hickey and B. Guo, 23–52. Lanham: Lexington Books.
115. Jing, Men. 2007. Changing ideology in China and its impact on Chinese Foreign Policy. In *New dimensions of Chinese foreign policy*, ed. Guo Sujian and Hua Shiping, 7–39. Plymouth: Lexington Books.
116. Taylor, P.M. 1997. *Global communications, international affairs and the media since 1945*. London/ New York: Routledge.
117. Kemming, J.D. 2009. *Nation brand management in political contexts: Public diplomacy for Turkey's EU accession. Dissertation*. Giessen: Justus Liebig University.
118. Groot, G. 2006. Soft Power in the Asia-Pacific Post 9/11: The Cases of Japan, China and India. In *Asia-Pacific and a new international order: Responses and options*, ed. P. Jain, F. Patrikeeff, and G. Groot, 53–69. Hauppauge: Nova Science.
119. Ding, S. 2008. To build a "harmonious world": China's soft power wielding in the global South. *The Journal of Chinese Political Science* 13(2): 193–213.
120. Wang, Y. 2008. Public diplomacy and the rise of Chinese soft power. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616(1): 257–273.
121. Wang, H., and Y.-C. Lu. 2008. The conception of soft power and its policy implications: A comparative study of China and Taiwan. *Journal of Contemporary China* 17(56): 425–447.
122. Wuthnow, J. 2008. The concept of soft power in China's strategic discourse. *Issues & Studies* 44(2): 1–28.

123. Suzuki, S. 2009. Chinese soft power, insecurity studies, myopia and fantasy. *Third World Quarterly* 30(4): 779–793.
124. Keane, M.A. 2010. Re-imagining China's future: soft power, cultural presence and the East Asian media market. In *Complicated currents: Media flows, Soft Power and East Asia*, ed. D. Black, S. Epstein, and A. Tokita, 14.1–14.13. Clayton: Monash University ePress.
125. Zhang, W. 2010. China's cultural future: From soft power to comprehensive national power. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 16(4): 383–402.
126. Breslin, S. 2011. *The soft notion of China's 'Soft Power'*. *Asia Programme Paper: ASP PP 2011/03*. London: Chatham House.
127. Nye, J.S. 2004. *Soft Power – The means to success in world politics*. Cambridge: Public Affairs.
128. Lampton, D.M. 2008. *The three faces of Chinese power*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
129. Lanteigne, M. 2009. *Chinese foreign policy: an introduction*. London/New York: Routledge.
130. Chan, G. 2008. China joins global governance. The 10 conundrums. In *China and the new international order*, ed. G. Wang and Y. Zheng, 168–184. London/New York: Routledge.
131. Zhang, W. 2007. Tapping Soft Power: Managing China's 'Peaceful Rise' and the Implications for the World. In *New dimensions of Chinese foreign policy*, ed. S. Guo and S. Hua, 109–132. Lanham: Lexington Books.
132. Nie, Y. 2008. Kongzi xueyuan gaishu [Overview of Confucius Institutes]. *Observe and Consider* 2008/3: 35–38.
133. Pedersen, P. 2002. *Counselling across cultures*. London: Sage Publications.
134. Kramsch, C. 1998. *Language and culture Oxford introductions to language study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
135. Goethe Institut. Undated. Who We Are. <http://www.goethe.de/uun/org/enindex.htm> [accessed 15 January 2011].
136. Hartig, F. 2010. *Confusion about Confucius Institutes – Soft Power Push or Conspiracy?* Paper presented to the 18th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia in Adelaide, 5–8 July 2010.

Falk Hartig holds a M.A. in Sinology and Journalism from University of Leipzig and is currently a Ph.D. student at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, working on China's Public Diplomacy. Before his Ph.D. he worked for the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations in Berlin and was a visiting fellow at Xinhua News Agency in Beijing.