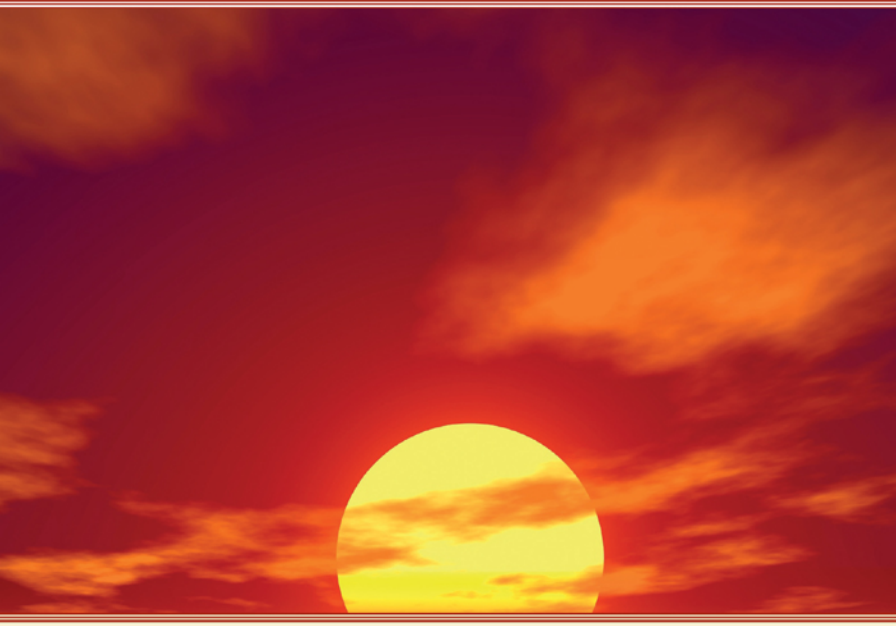
SOFT POWER IN CHINA

Public Diplomacy through Communication



Edited by
Jian Wang



Palgrave Macmillan Series in
GLOBAL PUBLIC DIPLOMACY



Soft Power in China

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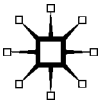
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PREFACE

The idea of soft power figures crucially in the story of China's re-emergence as a major global power. This book describes and explains the scope of China's pursuit of soft power through public diplomacy. There is certainly no shortage of commentary and analysis on China's "soft power." Yet, robust inquiries into its specific communication programs and practices remain conspicuously absent. This volume is a modest attempt to fill that void.

The book provides a glimpse into how China has tried to tell its story to the world. The introduction chapter outlines the broader context for the examination of Chinese public diplomacy. It discusses some of the emerging themes concerning the spirit and practice of the country's image-building efforts. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the trends and developments in Chinese public diplomacy, and discusses how China's authoritarian system has benefits as well as drawbacks for its soft power pursuits.

In the next three chapters, we examine some of the major Chinese external propaganda and communication platforms, including *Beijing Review*, CCTV International (renamed CCTV News in April 2010), and government news conferences and spokespersons. Through a longitudinal analysis of *Beijing Review*, opinion polls, and policy statements, Chapter 3 explores the extent to which China's projected image is consistent with the perceptions of the international public, and whether it has affected Chinese foreign policy over the years. Chapter 4 looks at CCTV-9, a major platform for China's international broadcasting. It traces the channel's development path and discusses the challenges it faces to reach the broader international audience. Chapter 5 depicts the growth and institutionalization of the spokesperson system among the various branches of the Chinese government. It provides an account of the evolution of the practice within the Chinese political and media

contexts, including a discussion of the selection criteria and the training and development of spokespersons.

Chapter 6 takes on a relatively new topic of the increasing role of Chinese corporations in the process of public diplomacy. It examines the complex interplay between corporate branding and nation branding in the example of a leading Chinese company's corporate social responsibility engagement in Africa.

The ensuing two chapters cover China's image promotion related to the Beijing Olympics from two different vantage points. Chapter 7 discusses the promotion of the Olympics to the Chinese domestic public, who were expected to be model citizens helping to deliver a positive image of China during the Games. This can be viewed as a case of how "charm offensive" begins on the home front. Chapter 8 sheds light on the role of the ever more active Chinese diaspora in national image management through its mobilization in defense of China's image during the international leg of the Olympic torch relay.

To provide some historical context to the discussion of China's contemporary endeavor, Chapter 9 examines how the conception of "international propaganda" was formulated and institutionalized in early twentieth-century China. It highlights the role of Chinese intellectuals in promoting China's international communication. Our last essay explores higher education as a site of image-construction. It reflects on how American college students read and evaluate China based on their perspectives and news sources. It ends with an imaginary dialogue between a Chinese journalist and an American journalist on mutual misperceptions, and possibilities for change, providing an "enjoyable and hopeful" conclusion to the book.

The topics in this volume are wide-ranging, and each of the essays has its own approach and conceptual lens. The book is by no means all encompassing. Understandably, some worthy topics are not covered here for a variety of reasons. Future studies could look into, among others, the cultural resources for China's public diplomacy (e.g., panda, Chinese opera, Confucius), China's international outreach at the local level (e.g., provinces and cities), the changing communication style of China's top leaders in the media limelight, China's engagement with global strategic communication firms in managing its image, and the role of digital and social media in its public diplomacy. Granted, many more questions concerning the country's practices remain unexplored and unanswered. We hope the volume lays the groundwork for further inquiry into this area.

I wish to thank Kathy Fitzpatrick and Phil Seib, the global public diplomacy series editors, and Farideh Koohi-Kamali at Palgrave Macmillan for taking an interest in the project. Many thanks to Robyn Curtis for guiding me through the production process. I am particularly grateful to the Dean's office at the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism for the funding support. Daniel Lee and Junzhou Chen provided able assistance to the project. Special thanks to David for his patience and encouragement during the project. This being a collaborative effort, most important, I would like to thank all the contributors for their participation.

Jian Wang

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: China's Search of Soft Power

Jian Wang

Countries, large and small, are now keenly aware that their image and reputation can be vital strategic resources in world affairs. In this regard, China is no exception. In fact, perhaps nowhere else has the idea of "soft power" been as widely discussed, embraced, and appropriated as in China.[1]

As Robert Jervis wrote some time ago, in international relations a desired image and reputation can often be "of greater use than a significant increment of military or economic power."[2] Joseph Nye extended E. H. Carr's notion of "power over opinion" and advanced the term "soft power," which he defines as a country's ability to get what it wants through appeal and attraction.[3] Likewise, based on Amiti Etzioni's conceptualization of the three dimensions of power—coercive, remunerative, and normative—David Lampton put forward the concept of "ideational power," that is, the power to create and disseminate knowledge and ideas, as a broader and slightly different theoretical construct from "normative power" or "soft power."[4] All in all, there is general agreement that how a country is perceived abroad is a crucial element in the symbolic domain of national power. At the core, it signifies the presence or absence of international legitimacy accrued to a certain nation.[5] Given its pivotal role in global relations, countries naturally do their utmost to maintain and maximize this soft side of power.

This book is about how China strives to (re-)build and project its soft power through communication. It recounts China's efforts by exploring and examining a set of public diplomacy tactics and

programs in its pursuit of a "new" and "improved" global image.[6] Implicit in the current volume is the premise that China believes it not only has a story to tell to the world, but it is imperative for the country to do so more effectively. This is not merely because the world seems to be always watching China these days, with its dramatic rise in global prominence, but because the Chinese public are paying greater attention to how their country is perceived and judged overseas. It's a question of their collective identity, prestige and, arguably, China's face (*mianzi*) in the increasingly connected global society. Peter Hays Gries aptly points out, "The zero-sum nature of face and China's history of victimization at the hands of the West combine to make many contemporary Chinese view diplomacy as a fierce competition between leaders who win or lose face for the nations they embody."[7] It is no surprise, therefore, that in the contemporary political and information environment, which demands and facilitates transparency, any perceived misstep or failure by China on the international stage has the potential of undermining the legitimacy of its leadership and government domestically. In this respect, the late Chinese premier Zhou En-lai's statement that there are no small matters in foreign affairs (*waishi wu xiaoshi*) seems ever more poignant.

China's ongoing grand strategy is to promote "security and shape a secure, economic, and political environment" for its development.[8] This is reflected in two pressing and interrelated challenges facing the Chinese leadership: how to ensure domestic social stability in light of rising expectations and rapid changes, and how to manage the international environment for China's continuing growth.[9] This book addresses issues under the broad rubric of the second set of challenges. Although China's impressive economic growth over the last several decades has surely increased its "hard power," there is a clear perception among Chinese elites and the masses alike that it lacks the kind of "soft power" to support and sustain its development strategy. China has ramped up its efforts in recent years in "external communication" (*duiwai xuanchuan*) and public diplomacy (*gonggong waijiao*) in hopes of creating a more desirable international opinion environment for its policies and actions.[10]

So, how does China actually pursue these outreach and communication programs? What kinds of images does China want to refashion and project? What is the role of the government vis-à-vis that of other institutional and social actors in these efforts? What kinds of tensions and pressures has China experienced? Where do

the programs stand in terms of their impact on the country's image? What do all these efforts mean to the broader discussion on the study and practice of public diplomacy and national image management? This volume represents a collaborative effort to address these questions.

Public diplomacy, in this context, is broadly defined as a country's engagement and communication with foreign publics.[11] It can take the forms of monologue, dialogue, and/or collaboration.[12] It has three main components—news management, strategic communication, and relationship building—and encompasses the broad, interrelated objectives of promoting a country's goals and policies, communicating about its ideas and values, and building common understanding.[13] Attempting to analyze all the public diplomacy instruments would be an impossible task. Here we focus on both the familiar categories of public diplomacy (e.g., international broadcasting) and a few less-discussed engagement types (e.g., corporate diplomacy). Within each broad category, we select and focus on a particular aspect or event for analysis and illustration. Through the breadth of the case topics in this volume, we shed light on the complexity inherent in the enterprise of national image building. These chapters probably raise more questions than provide answers. Nonetheless, it is our invitation for a more enriched, spirited debate on the instruments of soft power.

Understanding how China pursues global communication is critical for assessing its growing "soft power." Collectively, we hope these case studies accomplish three things. First, they weave the micro-level case analysis of Chinese national image building practices with the idea of China's "soft power" at the macro-level. Second, although many of the examples in this volume have been commented on in the popular press and some have been accorded research attention, this set of tactics and programs has not been analyzed and interpreted in the context of a larger whole. In other words, this volume provides new perspectives on China's global outreach by helping the reader see and understand these programs as part of an interactive, interdependent and historical system, rather than in their own vacuum. Third, and perhaps most important, as a "re-emerging" power (rather than the commonly referred to "emerging" power), China is indeed on a trailblazing path of reintroducing itself and reengaging with the world. In this respect, China is in a unique, unprecedented situation. That's why this story of how China manages its international communication in such an unpredictable context is significant and fascinating.

China Rising

All numbers and statistics associated with China are simply staggering. A typical Chinese self-conception of the country highlights several key figures: 5,000 (years of civilization), 960 million (square kilometers of territory), and 1.3 billion (people). Underlining these numbers is a powerful narrative within China of the "great revitalization" (*weida fuxin*) of the country and people. In the Chinese mind, the "rising" of China is an unfolding story of a historic comeback.

China, of course, was a great power. The Tang dynasty (from the seventh century to the tenth century) is commonly viewed as a "golden era" in Chinese history. The Marco Polo tales of its riches and wonders in the thirteenth century captured the world's imagination for a long time to come. China boasted almost one-third of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) in the early nineteenth century.[14] On a per capita basis, its GDP was on par with Europe's as late as the eighteenth century, and only began to decline and fall behind thereafter.[15]

The last several decades have witnessed stunning material growth and social development in the country. By most estimates, GDP growth since 1978 has averaged between 9 and 10 percent (the global growth rate for the same period was around 3 percent). According to the International Monetary Fund, China's GDP in 2008 ranked third after the United States and Japan, and came in second after the United States, if adjusted for purchasing power.[16] China's dynamic role in today's world economy is evidenced by its third largest trade volume (behind the United States and Germany in 2008) and its status as a major destination for foreign direct investment.[17]

Meanwhile, China's military prowess has also increased considerably. The U.S. Department of Defense's annual report to Congress in 2009 indicates that between 1996 and 2008 China's military expenditure grew by an average of 12.9 percent.[18] China's military spending in 2008 had reached $60 billion, about one-seventh of the U.S. defense budget.[19]

China has made dramatic improvements on the social development front, ranging from poverty reduction and literacy, to infant mortality and overall living standard. Perhaps one of the telling signs of a country's attractiveness to the international community is inbound foreign student population. In 1978, there were only about 2,000 foreign students studying in China, with the vast majority of them sponsored by the state. In 2007, the number had jumped to 200,000, and 95

percent of them were self-financed.[20] China's growing "soft power," especially in developing countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, has been documented by a number of authors and research organizations.[21]

Admittedly, what China has accomplished in the last several decades is indeed remarkable, but it has also extracted a high cost in myriad areas, with some far-reaching implications and consequences. The country faces grave challenges, from resource shortage and environmental degradation, to corruption, and social and economic injustices. As Zheng Bijian, a leading Chinese policy adviser, puts it, China suffers from the so-called "multiplication" (*chen*) and "division" (*chu*) problems—any small problem becomes enormous when multiplied by 1.3 billion, whereas any lump sum of capital becomes miniscule when divided by 1.3 billion.[22] Susan Shirk has made an illuminating case about the fragility of China as a rising power, given the internal and external constraints and uncertainties.[23]

Moreover, despite its growing national power, the Chinese leadership perceives an imbalance (or "disharmony") between its hard power and soft power. The consensus seems to be that China may have acquired more economic and military strength since the reform began in the late 1970s, but has remained weak in its symbolic power. China doesn't command the appeal and respect of other nations among foreign publics. This lack of "soft power," as often expressed in the global public's anxiety and apprehension over China's resurgence, is viewed by Chinese policy makers to possess the potential of hampering China's development strategy going forward.

A Divided Image

One key challenge facing China in the "soft power" realm is its divided popular perceptions. This has three manifestations. First, it is demonstrated in the divergence between how China sees itself and how the world sees China. A 2009 BBC World Service poll revealed that, though an overwhelming majority of the Chinese (92 percent) view their country's global influence positively, more countries than previously appear to hold a darker view of China. Although the developing countries in Africa and Latin America generally remained positive about China's role, China's image had deteriorated among the European countries surveyed, and in Japan only 8 percent expressed favorable views of the country.[24] Such a disconnect is also found in the Pew Global Attitudes

Survey project. Its 2008 survey showed that, against the backdrop of the Beijing Olympics, more than three-quarters of the Chinese said that their country was greatly liked abroad, but many other countries did not seem to share this rosy view.[25] In Joshua Cooper Ramo's "Brand China" report, this divergence between China's self-image and external perceptions on various country attributes was also clearly evident.[26] Even in Africa, where China has historically been well received, anti-Chinese feelings are surfacing and, in certain instances, have become rampant.[27]

Country image being a multidimensional concept, people may like certain aspects of a country while detesting others.[28] So the second aspect of China's divided image is that there appears to be a divergence in perception between China as a polity and China as a society.[29] Both anecdotal evidence and research findings suggest that Chinese culture and tradition tend to be liked and admired by foreign publics, whereas its politics and governance are at a much lower standing. The Chicago Council of Global Affairs survey in 2008 found that, though China's overall soft power pales in comparison to that of the United States in Asia, among the five categories (political, economic, diplomatic, cultural, and human capital), China has a much stronger showing in its cultural soft power, especially in Southeast Asia.[30]

Third, there is also at times a diverging pattern of mutual perception between Chinese and Americans. The Chicago Council survey mentioned above found that, whereas the Chinese hold mostly positive views of the United States (61 on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 representing very warm, favorable feelings), most Americans appear to see China in a negative light (only 35 on the same scale).[31] Among all the world's countries, China probably cares the most about its image in the United States. According to the favorability tracking polls by Gallup over the last two decades, except for a few isolated time periods, the proportion of Americans holding positive views of China hovers around 40 percent, whereas those with unfavorable perceptions is about 50 percent.[32] In general, American views of China lean slightly toward negative. Such a pattern of opinion has been quite stable over the years and is corroborated in other national surveys.[33] On the other hand, the Chinese view of the United States has remained generally more positive.[34]

This snapshot of opinion polls only provides a partial picture of China's contemporary international image, but a revealing one nonetheless.[35] Not coincidentally, the critical image of China

(especially among countries in the West) is underscored by three popular discourses governing how foreign publics are making sense of China's ascent and its global implications—"China threat," "China collapse," and "neo-colonialism," with the "China threat" thesis most prevalent.[36] The first two perspectives are essentially the two sides of the same coin: one emphasizes China's strengths and the other its weaknesses. China's expanding presence and involvement in developing countries (particularly in Africa) for natural resources, for instance, is sometimes viewed through the prism of its reproducing Africa's past relationships with Western colonial powers.[37] According to these interpretations, the "rising" of China challenges and destabilizes the existing international structure in the realms of security and economy as well as along the lines of soft power. As Yong Deng observes, "[f]or Beijing, these unpalatable views may not directly lead to advocacy of a specific policy inimical to Chinese interests, but they nonetheless tarnish China's image, leading to China's estrangement from its neighbors and other major powers."[38] Joshua Cooper Ramo puts it more bluntly that "China's greatest strategic threat today is its national image."[39] He contends, "For one of the few times in its history, this famously inward-looking nation is vulnerable to how it is seen abroad. How China is perceived by other nations—and the underlying reality that perception reflects—will determine the future of Chinese development and reform."[40]

The Chinese discontent is often reflected in the sweeping characterization of the West's attempt to contain China's development. In both official rhetoric and public discourse, the prevailing view is that, among foreign publics and the media, there is a genuine lack of understanding of China's past and present, stemming from either pure ignorance or inherent biases, and that China has so far failed to do an effective job in describing and explaining itself to the outside world. On the latter point, journalist James Fallows is perceptive in his observation on the clumsiness of the Chinese government in presenting itself, as he writes "China, like any big, complex country, is a mixture of goods and bads. But I have rarely seen a governing and 'communications' structure as consistent in hiding the good sides and highlighting the bad."[41] Others point to the more fundamental structural and systemic problems of domestic control of information, the lack of transparency, and the inaptitude of Chinese bureaucrats (especially at the local level) as the root causes of China's poor performance in external communication.[42]

China Talks Back

For years, China has shied away from the global limelight. Its relatively modest approach in international affairs was guided by Deng Xiaoping's principle of "biding one's time while building up capability" (*taoguang yanghui*). The central argument of this principle is that China should cultivate a stable, peaceful environment for its economic development by maintaining a low profile and avoiding confrontation. The rationale underlying this lay-low approach is the belief that only with economic prosperity can the Chinese Communist Party maintain its legitimacy among the people and can the vision of a "revitalized China" returning to its rightful place internationally be realized.

But with China's expanding international presence, such an approach becomes less and less tenable. The country is visible and vocal more than ever in the global arena to advance its agenda and interests. To counter the international perception of the looming China threat, since 2003 the Chinese government has promulgated several "big ideas," including "Peaceful Rise" (*heping jueqi*), "Peaceful Development" (*heping fazhan*), and "Harmonious Society" (*hexie shehui*), as China's metanarrative about its ascent.[43] Outside the official discourse, there have been varied discussions and debates in the media and among academic circles on the Chinese developmental model, encapsulated and popularized by proponents of the "Beijing Consensus," as an alternative to the "Washington Consensus."[44]

The Chinese leadership is now vigorously pursuing the country's "soft power," which they believe should be commensurate with its growing "hard power." The centerpiece of this undertaking is developing "cultural soft power" (*wenhua ruanshili*), formally proclaimed as a key national initiative at the Seventeenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2007. Chinese President Hu Jintao pointed out in his work report to the Congress, "Enhancing cultural soft power is a basic requirement for realizing scientific development and social harmony. It is necessary for satisfying rising demands for spiritual culture and national development strategy."[45] In this respect, departing from Joseph Nye's original conceptualization, the Chinese usage of "soft power" is applied to international relations as well as to domestic policies, hence unifying domestic and international considerations into an "organic whole."[46] Internationally, the overall goals as outlined by Hu are to make the country more *influential* politically (*yingxiangli*), more *competitive* economically (*jingzhengli*), more *appealing* in its image (*qingheli*), and more *inspiring* morally (*ganzhaoli*).[47] At the practical level,

for instance, aside from hosting attention-getting forums and events within the country (such as the Olympics), China's cultural soft power endeavor is underlined by the "go abroad" (*zouchuqu*) approach in areas including arts and culture, media and entertainment, publishing, and language learning.

At the central government's working meeting for external communication in August 2009, Li Changchun, the top Chinese official responsible for propaganda and communications work, reiterated the importance of China's global outreach to gain more understanding and support for the country in the international community.[48] In her interview with the Xinhua News Agency, Fu Ying, former Chinese ambassador to the United Kingdom and currently vice minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasized the need for China to "take the initiative to conduct public diplomacy to help the outside world know about China."[49] China is hence busy investing in both capacity- and capability-building, given its inadequate international communication infrastructure and its outdated operational framework, a direct outgrowth of domestic propaganda. The major state-owned media properties, such as China Central Television, the *People's Daily*, and Xinhua News Agency, have all been expanding their international presence and offerings. To make its communication more palatable to international audiences, the Chinese propaganda and communication authorities have promulgated the so-called three "close-to" principles (*santiejing*)—close to Chinese realities, close to the information needs of foreign audiences, and close to their information habits and minds.[50] That is to say that media content and format should reflect not only Chinese conditions but also the needs of international audiences. Practically, for instance, it means to implement a "localization" strategy in content production, presentation, and distribution as well as in staff hiring.

However, some question the value of such an assertive approach of relying on the expansion of official channels of communication. As Wang Jisi, a noted Chinese international relations scholar, commented in an interview with an influential Chinese news magazine, the fundamental issue of China's national image should be domestic self-image, driven by the level of satisfaction of the Chinese people concerning their own well-being. Without that, he maintained, no amount of external communication will do much to help lift the image of China.[51] Likewise, skeptics also point out that China's domestic media and communication enjoys little credibility, so how is it then possible for the country to gain the trust of international

audiences in its official external communication? Others believe that the endeavor to enhance external communication can have positive impact internally by exposing Chinese media professionals to international ideas and practices, which in turn furthers communications work domestically.[52]

While the debate on the intentions and merits of China's global outreach continues, China has embarked on its quest for an image makeover. Zhao Qizheng, the former head of the State Council Information Office, wrote in the *People's Daily*, "China must present an accurate picture of itself to the world. The expansion of reform and opening up is necessary for the nation's peaceful development. In this regard, China should not only listen, but talk back."[53]

Emerging Themes

Although much is desired in terms of theorizing, data collection, and analysis in the examination of public diplomacy by any individual country, based on the chapters in the volume, we can at least discern several important themes underlying contemporary Chinese practices.

Beyond Party-state Propaganda

First, although China's image-building project remains largely a state-centric endeavor, non-state actors are increasingly getting involved, echoing the shifting dynamics in state-society relationship in the country. As elsewhere, Chinese public diplomacy has been conventionally conceived, institutionalized, and practiced as part of its foreign affairs apparatus. However, with China's expanding presence and growing influence, the image of China is driven by an ever broadening array of factors and developments. Thus, the original, primarily political project of national image management in the early years of the People's Republic now intersects with, and sometimes confronts, the powerful imperatives of business and national identity, and the dynamics in this enterprise are fluid and complex.

As the chapters in this volume suggest, on the one hand, the Chinese government seems intent on furthering efforts to upgrade some of its state-led platforms, such as international broadcasting (chapter 4) and the government spokesperson system (chapter 5). It is making improvements by adapting and adopting international norms and standards, and strengthening skills training and personnel development. On the other

hand, as Ingrid d'Hooghe illustrates in her overview of the Chinese public diplomacy system in chapter 2, there is a widening range of non-governmental, quasi-governmental actors involved in building and maintaining China's image abroad.

For instance, the case study by Lu Tang and Hongmei Li of Huawei's experience in Africa (chapter 6) illuminates the tensions and opportunities in managing the intersection between corporate reputation and country image. The case of the Chinese diaspora communities' response to the anti-China movement during the international leg of the Beijing Olympic torch relay (chapter 8) demonstrates how a transnational network of overseas Chinese was mobilized to contest the pro-Tibetan forces and to defend the image of China at a critical juncture. It is evident that the actions of the Chinese diaspora were driven not by any directives from the Chinese state but rather by popular passion and, more specifically, the emotionally fraught ideas and ideals of national and cultural identity.

These cases highlight the necessity of examining China's international image-building beyond the state system. Alongside the continuing efforts orchestrated by the state are these bottom-up, localized actions. In the cases discussed here, the political interests of the state are aligned with the imperatives of business and collective identity. Such developments reflect and reinforce the broader contention that, when looking at contemporary China, it is important to expand from a binary "state-vs.-society" perspective to a more nuanced "state-in-society" approach.[54]

Historical Coherence

Second, soft power being culturally and historically constituted, contemporary Chinese public diplomacy is shaped and influenced by its historical precedents and lineage. Yong Z. Volz in chapter 9 traces the origins of China's first systematic pursuit of international propaganda during the early decades of the twentieth century. As she points out, "perceiving a deep bias in Western coverage of China, they [Chinese intellectuals and journalists] openly criticized foreign [Western] correspondents and endorsed the position that a modernizing China had to defend itself and influence world opinion through its own means." Here, one cannot help noticing striking continuity over the years in the justifications for China to develop robust international communication in order to convey its perspectives.

Moreover, certain practices for China's international engagement predate the founding of the People's Republic. For instance, using the panda as a tool of public diplomacy was not the Communist government's original idea. The Chiang Kai-shek government gave two pandas to the United States in 1941 to boost the American public's support for China's war efforts.[55] The centerpiece of China's current soft power strategy is the development of "cultural soft power," reflecting yet another recurring theme in the Chinese narrative about the glory and continuity of its culture and civilization. The international performance tours (Japan, the United States, and the Soviet Union) by the famed Peking opera star Mei Lan-fang in the 1920s and 30s were quintessential cultural diplomacy events.[56] In short, as we examine contemporary Chinese public diplomacy—its goals, processes, and tactics—it is crucial that we take into account China's historical experience.

Domestic Dimension

Third, intertwined with its taken-for-granted international orientation, the domestic dimension of public diplomacy cannot be overlooked or underestimated. In foreign relations and communication, the compartmentalization of the "domestic" and the "international" is perhaps only meaningful at an analytical level, but certainly not in practice. Examples abound of international policies and actions as extensions of domestic situations, as well as felt influences of international relations on domestic dynamics. The new and emerging media platforms have brought about instantaneous communication and unprecedented transparency between the two realms, further diminishing and even eliminating the demarcations between internal and external communications.

As Jeroen de Kloet and his colleagues show in chapter 7, China's domestic promotion of civilized manners to its citizenry before and during the Beijing Olympics was an integral part of its effort to showcase a better country image to the world. Similar campaigns have also been launched to support the World Expo in Shanghai in 2010, and to cultivate "civilized behavior" of the Chinese tourist-public as they start to travel internationally en mass.[57]

Furthermore, the domestic dimension of public diplomacy is manifested in the debate within the country triggered by its image-building efforts overseas. The rapidly growing Confucius Institute project, for instance, has ignited domestic discussions on the merits of such an approach alongside the debate in host countries. The high-profile "Made-in-China" television campaign outside China in 2009 to counter

negative perceptions of Chinese product quality and misunderstandings of outsourcing issues also drew critical attention within China. While China pursues its efforts to lift the country's image globally, these debates and discussions can produce outcomes either unifying or alienating.

The other way to look at the domestic aspect of Chinese public diplomacy was well articulated by Hongying Wang in chapter 3 that "the main effect of image project abroad is to be found in the domestic context." That is favorable perceptions of the country and the people overseas will help boost the credibility and legitimacy of the Chinese government among its domestic constituents.

The Fog of Evaluation

If there is a holy grail in the study of public diplomacy, it will probably be finding the solution to the evaluation predicament. Among the myriad challenges in assessing the impact of public diplomacy, two issues stand out. One is how to impute effectiveness, or the lack thereof, from the individual initiative level to the aggregate level of country perception. Without establishing proper conceptual and practical linkages between the two levels, we are likely to be drawing spurious conclusions and implications for future actions. The long-standing problem of evaluation in public diplomacy work, though not addressed directly in this volume, is touched upon or implied in several chapters.

A tougher challenge facing public diplomacy research, as illustrated in chapter 3 and chapter 10, concerns the enduring stereotypes people hold of other countries, in spite of the transformations in the global and national contexts. This points to a more fundamental question whether there is any possibility for change in how people perceive other countries and cultures, and, if so, how the role of public diplomacy should be conceived and practiced. As Hongying Wang argues in chapter 3, effective image projection is particularly hard for China to accomplish when its target audiences in the United States already hold negative views of the country and profound cultural differences exist between the two sides. Using the classic text *Scratches on our Minds* by Harold R. Issacs, Judy Polumbaum in chapter 10 makes a similar observation about the seemingly intractable nature of Americans' perception of China through the years and decades.

To sum up, although this is a one-country story about its image-construction, the four themes outlined above are relevant to the broader study and debate on public diplomacy and national image

communication. If we use Eytan Gilboa's framework of public diplomacy along the three time dimensions (i.e., immediate, intermediate, and long), we can glean from this volume examples from China in all three realms in terms of time horizons, purposes, actors, and instruments.[58] For instance, China's increasingly sophisticated government spokesperson system and its expanding international broadcasting illustrate the immediate functions of public diplomacy, which require that the government effectively monitor and respond to news developments on a 24/7 basis. The Huawei case best exemplifies the intermediate level of public diplomacy, which involves a non-state player and the employment of strategic tools, such as public relations, for the purposes of advocating better international relations that ultimately serve the corporate and national interests alike. The site of higher education, as discussed in Judy Polumbaum's chapter, demonstrates the long-term range of public diplomacy and its potential for building mutual understanding and relationships.

Needless to say, how public diplomacy is practiced at these various levels will be conditioned by the institutional and ideological imperatives and contexts. In the China case, its historical experience will be particularly important to our analysis of its conceptions and practices of public diplomacy. As we have pointed out earlier, the contemporary rise of China is underscored by the discourse of its return to global prominence. It is about China's path of reclaiming international recognition and prestige. And only in this context can China's public diplomacy and international communication efforts be properly analyzed and understood.

Notes

1. For summaries of the discussions in China, see Bonnie S. Glaser and Melissa E. Murphy, "Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics: The Ongoing Debate," in *Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States: Competition and Cooperation in the Developing World*, ed. Carola McGiffert (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), 10–26; Mingjiang Li, ed. *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books). In China, there have also been rankings of Chinese cities on their "soft power."
2. Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 6.
3. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

4. David M. Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
5. Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, "The sources of American legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 6 (2004): 18–32.
6. Much has been discussed and debated about what constitutes Chinese soft power and how China wields and projects its soft power, especially in developing countries. For books on Chinese soft power, see Sheng Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with Its Soft Power* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2008); Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Mingjiang Li, ed., *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009). For research articles, see, for instance, Yong Nam Cho and Jong Ho Jeong, "China's Soft Power": Discussions, Resources, and Prospects, *Asia Survey* 48, no. 3 (2008): 453–472; Bates Gill and Yanzhong Huang, "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power," *Survival* 48, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 17–36; Hongying Wang and Yeh-chung Lu, "The Conception of Soft Power and Its Policy Implications: A Comparative Study of China and Taiwan," *Journal of Contemporary China* 17 (August 2008): 425–447; Joel Wuthnow, "The Concept of Soft Power in China's Strategic Discourse," *Issues & Studies* 44, no. 2 (June 2008): 1–28. For research reports, see Carola McGiffert, ed., *Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States: Competition and Cooperation in the Developing World* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009); Thomas Lum, Wayne M. Morrison, and Bruce Vaughn, *China's 'Soft Power' in Southeast Asia* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2008).

   There is also an emerging body of research that aims to describe and illuminate China's policies and structures in the area of its external communication and public diplomacy. See, for instance, David Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy," *China Journal* 57 (January 2007): 25–58; Yiwei Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 616 (March 2008): 257–273; Anne-Marie Brady, "Combating Hostile Forces: China's Foreign Propaganda Work since 1989," in *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham: MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 151–174.
7. Peter Hays Gries, "Identity and Conflict in Sino-American Relations," in *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, ed. Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 322.
8. Zhang Yunling and Tang Shiping, "China's Regional Strategy," in *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics*, ed. David Shambaugh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 48.
9. See Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power*, 26.
10. Realizing its negative connotation in English, China has phased out the use of the word "propaganda" in its translation of *xuanchuan* by instead adopting "communication" or "information." Over the years, the nature and content of China's international communication have become more variegated than yesteryears' straightforward propaganda. So, in this context, I generally use "external communication" as the translation of "*duiwai xuanchuan*" in this chapter.
11. Sources of "soft power" are myriad, generally including political values, domestic and international policies, economic engagement, developmental aid, culture, and so on. Public diplomacy is only one of the many instruments of "soft power." For an overview of the definitions and study of public diplomacy, see Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 616 (March 2008): 31–54; Etyan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 616 (March 2008): 55–77.

12. Geoffrey Cowan and Amelia Arsenault, "Moving from Monologues to Dialogue to Collaboration: The Three Layers of Public Diplomacy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 616 (March 2008): 10–30.
13. Mark Leonard, *Public Diplomacy* (London, UK: Foreign Policy Center, 2002).
14. Angus Maddison, *Chinese Economic Performance in the Long Run: 960–2030 A.D.*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Organization For Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007).
15. Ibid.
16. *World Economic Outlook* (Washington, DC: The International Monetary Fund, 2009).
17. See press release by the World Trade Organization on March 23, 2009, available at http://www.wto.org
18. U.S. Department of Defense's annual report to Congress, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*.
19. Ibid.
20. Jin Yongjing, ed., *Shuzi Zhongguo* (*China Figures*) (Beijing: People's Press, 2009), 403–409.
21. See, for instance, Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*; McGiffert, ed. *Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States*; Lum, Morrison, and Vaughn, *China's'Soft Power' in Southeast Asia*.
22. Zheng Bijian, "China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (September/October 2005).
23. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
24. BBC World Service Poll, "Views of China and Russia Decline in Global Poll," February 6, 2009. Report available at www.bbc.co.uk
25. The Pew Global Attitudes Project, "The 2008 Pew Global Attitudes in China." Report available at www.pewglobal.org
26. Joshua Cooper Ramo, *Brand China* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2006).
27. See Serge Michael and Michel Beruet, *China Safari: On the Trail of Beijing's Expansion in Africa* (New York: Nation Books, 2009).
28. Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, "Varieties of Anti-Americanism: A Framework for Analysis," in *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 9–38.
29. This is in some way similar to the situation the United States has been in, where it is often viewed by foreign publics less positively in its policies than its culture and people.
30. Christopher B. Whitney and David Shambaugh, "Soft Power in Asia: Results of a 2008 Multinational Survey of Public Opinion," The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2008.
31. Ibid.
32. The relevant Gallup poll results are available at www.gallup.com
33. For instance, when asked to characterize China's relationship with the United States using one of the four options of "a close ally," "friendly but not a close ally," "unfriendly but not an enemy" and "unfriendly and an enemy," Americans tend to view China as unfriendly but not an enemy. The Harris polls over the last two decades provide rather consistent findings on this. The relevant poll results (as of August 7, 2007) are available at www.harrisinteractive.com. The most recent BBC World Service poll in April 2010 found that 51 percent of the American public held a negative view of China (http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/).
34. According to some research, the Chinese view of America has also fluctuated. For instance, based on a survey of Beijing residents from 1998 to 2004, there appeared to be a decline of amity toward the United States. See Alastair Ian Johnston and Daniela Stockmann, "Chinese Attitudes toward the United States and Americans," in *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 157–195.

35. Granted, public opinion polling is not a tidy business. Results and their interpretation depend on a variety of factors, such as sampling type and quality, how questions are constructed, and the broader social and historical context in which the polls are undertaken. The polls in China are typically taken in major cities, thus only representing Chinese citizens from urban centers. Nevertheless, when conducted well and over a long period of time, polls are useful for helping us understand the basic contours and patterns of public attitudes and sentiments. China's image can also be understood by studying press coverage of the country, its representations in popular culture, and other forms of media.
36. For a discussion of the "China threat" theory and how China has reacted to it, see Yong Deng, "Reputation and the Security Dilemma: China Reacts to the China Threat Theory," in *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, ed. Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 186–214.
37. See Michael and Beruet, *China Safari*, 254.
38. Deng, "Reputation and the Security Dilemma," 199.
39. Ramo, *Brand China*, 9.
40. Ibid.
41. James Fallows, "Their Own Worst Enemy," *Atlantic Monthly*, November 2008, 74.
42. For instance, Du Ping makes this argument in his article titled "zhongguo waixuan gongzuo zhide fansi" (China's External Communications Work Needs Reflection) posted on his blog http://blog.ifeng.com/article/1976867.html#
43. The concept of "Peaceful Rise" was first pronounced by Zheng Bijiang at the Boao Forum in November 2003, and the Chinese top leaders began to use the term afterward. In April 2004, President Hu Jintao used the phrase "Peaceful Development" instead of "Peaceful Rise." Hu first propounded the notion of a Harmonious Society at a United Nations speech in 2005. For an overview of these developments, see Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of 'Peaceful Rise'," *China Quarterly* 190 (June 2007): 291–310.
44. Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004). Some in the Chinese media and academia have even been promoting the notion of the "Chinese Dream" (*zhongguomeng*) (in contrast to the "American Dream") to suggest that the country is also a construct underscored by certain distinguishing values, ideals, and opportunities. For instance, there have been symposia held in Beijing on the topic of the Chinese Dream. In the U.S. media, *Washington Post* ran a story titled "Chasing the Chinese Dream" on October 21, 2007 that describes recent emigration to China from places such as Iraq.
45. See the report highlights at http://news.xinhuanet.com on November 9, 2007.
46. See Glaser and Murphy, "Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics," 20.
47. Hu made the comments to the delegates to the 11th Conference of Chinese Diplomatic Envoys in July 2009 (http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2009–07/20/content_11740850.htm).
48. http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/1024/2461137.html
49. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009–07/26/content_11776991.htm
50. http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/1024/2461137.html
51. http://news.sina.com.cn/c/sd/2009–07–06/190018165272.shtml
52. See Judy Polumbaum's testimony before U.S. Congress's U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission's hearing, April 30, 2009.
53. Zhao Qizheng, "Better Public Diplomacy to Present a Truer Picture of China," *People's Daily* online, March 30, 3007.
54. See Frank N. Pieke's argument in his book *The Good Communist: Elite Training and State Building in Today's China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
55. See "Zoo Gets Panda: Debut Is Formal," *New York Times*, December 31, 1941.

56. Zhang Hui, "Meilanfang zai hai wai yan chu jiqi qizhi" [Mei Lan-fang's International Performances and Their Implications], *International Communications*, no. 6 (2009): 17–19.
57. For instance, in 2006, the Chinese Communist Party Central Civilization Office and the National Tourism Administration, in a high-profile campaign, called the public's attention to the "ugly" behavior in Chinese tourists when they travel abroad.
58. Etyan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 616 (March 2008): 55–77.

CHAPTER TWO

The Expansion of China's Public Diplomacy System

Ingrid d'Hooghe

Public diplomacy has become part and parcel of China's foreign policy strategy. China's leaders invest a huge amount of money and effort into projecting their images of China, and have rapidly developed public diplomacy skills and policies. This chapter provides an overview of China's public diplomacy system and discusses where China's rapidly expanding public diplomacy succeeds and where it fails.[1] China's public diplomacy is gradually involving a more varied group of actors. An increasing number of Chinese individuals and civil society groups participate in global networks with public and private actors, bringing new dynamics and more legitimacy to China's public diplomacy. But the state still initiates most of China's public diplomacy, and the lack of legitimacy and credibility in public diplomacy messages remains a big obstacle.

Although China's public diplomacy strategies are becoming more comprehensive and sophisticated, they do not automatically lead to a more positive image of China. China's high favorability rating in the Western world at the beginning of this decade rapidly declined after 2006.[2] It has become increasingly clear that the content and conduct of China's public diplomacy are suffering from structural problems that cannot simply be "fixed" by intensifying and expanding public diplomacy activities. This chapter looks at how China's public diplomacy both benefits and suffers from the authoritarian regime's far-reaching control over society.

The Concepts of Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in China

Public diplomacy in this chapter is understood as "the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented."[3] This definition goes beyond the more traditional interpretations that describe public diplomacy as a state-centered process of communication with foreign audiences. This "new public diplomacy" is part of the view that in the world of postmodern transnational relations, the roles and responsibilities of actors in international relations are no longer clearly delineated and most actors are not nearly as much in control as they would like to be.[4] China's foreign policy establishment is struggling with these developments, as it is no longer in full control of China's diplomacy. The new public diplomacy is about engaging publics, not just informing them; it is about establishing long-term relationships that will build trust—a concept not unfamiliar in Chinese culture. It is also about a domestic understanding of other cultures and values so that public diplomacy actions by both state and non-state actors can be attuned to the (local) context of the issue at stake. Finally, public diplomacy is about acting in line with one's words. No matter how sophisticated a country's public diplomacy strategy, it will not succeed unless it is supported by a country's policies.

In China, the terms "public diplomacy" (*gonggong waijiao*) and "soft power" *(ruan shili*) have found their way into official speeches and documents, illustrating a growing awareness among China's policymakers of these concepts' possibilities. Academic circles have rapidly expanded research on public diplomacy and soft power.[5] The general Chinese understanding of public diplomacy largely coincides with China's state-centered and strategic approach, but this does not mean that diplomacy by non-state actors is not part of the picture. Chinese policymakers and academics increasingly acknowledge that non-state actors such as civil society organizations, business communities, universities, research institutions, and individuals of standing have a role to play.[6] In China, the term "public diplomacy" is often also used to refer to public affairs: informing domestic audiences about China's foreign policy and diplomacy.[7] The Chinese Foreign Ministry gives lectures, organizes conferences and Internet discussions, and invites citizens from all walks of life to visit the Foreign Ministry.[8] Although primarily developed to increase the domestic legitimacy of China's foreign policy, these activities may actually contribute to a more successful public diplomacy. The

more that domestic audiences know about China's foreign policies, the better they can support and promote them as citizen diplomats.

China's Public Diplomacy System

The Growing Diversity of Public Diplomacy Actors

In most countries, foreign ministries are the most important state actors in public diplomacy. In China, however, the State Council Information Office (SCIO) and the Communist Party's Office of External Publicity have the primary roles in developing and deciding on China's public diplomacy activities.[9] These two offices are responsible for developing public diplomacy plans and guidelines, monitoring foreign media, and guiding and censoring domestic media, including the Internet.[10] The guidelines for publicity work, such as permission for when and how to write on specific issues, are published in the classified *Internal Report* (*neibu tongxun*) by the Party's News Department of the Central Publicity Department.[11] The Office of External Publicity is a highly secretive organization.[12] As is common in China's political system, many officials serve simultaneously in both SCIO and the Office of External Publicity, alternately wearing government or Party hats. The exact division of work and mandates between the two offices is unknown, but one can safely assume that the Office of External Publicity sets the rules of the game and that it also has the final say in major decisions.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is a third player in the public diplomacy policy-making field. Although the MFA does not take the lead in developing the strategies, it, of course, plays a major role in implementing them. Public diplomacy is one of the MFA's "main responsibilities"[13] and ministry officials often refer to it in speeches.[14] The MFA has established a Public Diplomacy Office under the Department of Information and has rapidly expanded and improved its conduct of public diplomacy. It is giving its embassies more freedom to get involved with foreign audiences and to address the foreign press. An increasing number of embassies have developed detailed public diplomacy strategies, fine-tuned to the local situation.[15] Furthermore, the new generation of Chinese diplomats is well trained for public diplomacy tasks. The MFA is, however, often hampered in its work by lack of information and influence within the central leadership. It has lost ground to the Ministry of Commerce and organizations such as the People's Liberation Army (PLA), China's unified military forces, which have never trusted it. The MFA is not always part of consultations

on major policy decisions or actions that affect foreign relations. Even worse, it is not always provided with the timely information it needs to do its work properly. Other important state actors involved in making policy for and conducting public diplomacy include the ministries of Culture and Education, and the PLA.[16]

In addition to state and Party organs, a growing number of groups in Chinese society are involved in China's diplomacy and public diplomacy—or at least in reinforcing its soft power—whether they consciously realize it or not. They include academics and (transnational) epistemic communities;[17] nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), overseas Chinese communities, friendship associations such as the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) (both of which are responsible for activities labeled as "people-to-people diplomacy"),[18] twin sister organizations, students, bloggers, tourists, and foreigners. These groups and individuals participate in global networks with public and private actors. They take part in informal international dialogues, where they exchange ideas and work together with other nationalities, and, in doing so, increase mutual understanding. Most of these "non-state" actors, however, are not fully independent. This is particularly the case for China's NGOs.[19] Yet, in spite of government control, these "representatives of society" are better trusted by the international community than China's government officials. They play a role in softening the rough images of Beijing's policies and strengthening the image of a country that is moving toward accepting and working with internationally established norms. Furthermore, a growing number of NGOs are able to exert influence on policymaking, either directly by advising the government or indirectly via national or international media. This is particularly true in the environmental and public health fields.[20]

Academics at China's top universities and intellectuals at think tanks and (transnational) epistemic communities play a similar role in enhancing China's image. These groups are engaged with international academic networks. They attend international conferences, frequently speak before foreign audiences, and participate, often rather openly, in international debates and exchanges of information. They publish in international journals and are interviewed by, or cited in, major Western press. At home, they are invited to advise the government and increasingly influence foreign policymaking. Abroad, they spread the image that academic freedom is growing in China, demonstrating a plurality of thinking on international issues, and a view of China's academe as an intellectual and scientific force to be reckoned with.[21]

The Chinese and international business communities play a growing role in public diplomacy as well, not only in the field of commerce, but also by initiating or supporting cultural events.[22]

Overseas Chinese communities are both actors and targets of public diplomacy. They are an enormous and diverse group: there are more than 40 million Chinese living in more than 100 countries outside China.[23] They are a target group, because Beijing wants to keep the Chinese diaspora on its side and encourage them to invest in China. But they are also a tool, as they play a role in promoting Chinese culture and lobbying for Chinese political interests. China's leaders regularly call on the overseas Chinese to promote specific issues, such as peaceful reunification with Taiwan or China's modernization drive.[24] They have established pro-China associations among overseas communities around the world and have supported the convening of regional conferences in a drive to form a united global network of such organizations.[25] Furthermore, Beijing sponsors and promotes a great number of economic, educational, and cultural activities through such organizations.[26]

Two other groups that deserve mention as new actors are bloggers and volunteers. There are millions of Chinese bloggers. Most of their blogs are in Chinese, so their international networks are often limited to overseas Chinese and China specialists, but a growing number of international Web sites in English are translating excerpts of Chinese blogs or reporting on the Chinese blogosphere.[27] Some Chinese bloggers or blog items have become well known internationally and thus contribute to the image of China as a country with a vibrant culture. China's Youth Volunteers—idealistic young Chinese who are sent on long-term volunteer service projects to developing nations such as Ethiopia, Laos, and Myanmar[28]—contribute more directly to promoting the nation's image.

The role of these non-state groups and individuals is limited, but their increasing number and growing contribution to a more favorable Chinese image show that the scope of China's public diplomacy has broadened. They spread a more diverse image of China that international audiences will consider more interesting and more genuine. In return, they take international concepts and values back to China and discuss them with colleagues or friends or, in cases where they advise the government, with policymakers. To what extent these developments will continue remains to be seen, because there are strong indications that the Chinese government is tightening its control over society rather than loosening it.[29]

China's Public Diplomacy Goals

In the pre-Deng Xiaoping period, China's public diplomacy strategies had the relatively limited goal of creating a favorable image of an otherwise closed and autarkic country. However, since Deng put forward his "open door policy" at the end of the 1970s, the task of public diplomacy has become more complex and demanding.

Currently, four major goals of China's public diplomacy stand out. First, China seeks understanding for its political system and policies. It wants to portray itself as a country that strives to build a harmonious society and that works hard to give its people a better future. The image it tries to convey is that of a developing country in the middle of a slow but fundamental economic transition, confronted with enormous challenges to which no easy responses exist. In other words, the world should not expect China's leaders to take radical steps in political and economic reform, because rash policies will destabilize the country and bring misery to its people. In this context, Chinese leaders have coined the terms building toward a "harmonious society," and more recently "scientific development." These terms illustrate that China is seeking a more comprehensive, balanced, and sustainable economic development without sacrificing the people's needs for the sake of growth.

Second, China wants to be seen as a stable, reliable, and responsible economic partner, a rising economic power that the international community does not have to fear. This is the goal of China's good-neighbor policy and the "harmonious world" and "peaceful rise" strategies. These strategies demonstrate the economic and security benefits countries could reap by cooperating with China, as opposed to the headaches inherent in conflict and opposition.

Third, Beijing wants China to be seen as a trustworthy and responsible member of the international political community, capable of and willing to contribute actively to world peace. Last but not least, China wants to be acknowledged and respected as an ancient, but vibrant, culture.

Public Diplomacy Assets and Liabilities

Assets: China's Sources of Soft Power

Projecting soft power is the major component of a country's public diplomacy strategy. Countries derive their soft power from their culture, political and social values, and foreign policies.[30] In China's

case, the economy should be added to the list.[31] China's leaders consider China's culture its most important soft power source.[32] However, they seem to be ambivalent when it comes to utilizing culture as soft power.

Although China's policymakers say that both traditional and contemporary Chinese culture should be used as tools to promote international relations and tourism, in practice they mainly focus on traditional culture. Traditional culture is considered apolitical and, in that sense, harmless. A good example is the more than 500 Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms that have been established in over 80 countries so far. They focus entirely on promoting Chinese language and traditional culture.[33] At the same time, a new generation of Chinese artists, writers, filmmakers, and actors who combine traditional arts with modern ideas and developments are conquering the world. They are attracting and dazzling foreign audiences and winning international prizes overseas. But at home their works are often denounced as subversive, and Chinese officials certainly do not yet consider them public diplomacy assets.

Many of China's domestic policies and values cannot be considered sources of soft power—indeed, they are actually liabilities for public diplomacy—but there are a few exceptions. China's domestic economic development and integration into the world economy have made China into an economic powerhouse, inspiring admiration and attraction. Being a winner is always appealing, and China's growth offers many economic opportunities for international business. The current financial crisis has further strengthened this image. China's rapid economic recovery and continued high growth rates have contributed to Beijing's leverage and confidence to assert itself as a global player.

Two other areas that inspire international admiration—and concern—are China's scientific progress and environmental policies. China is now the second-largest producer of scientific knowledge, and the quality of its research is rapidly improving.[34] In 2003, China became the third country in the world to launch a manned space flight. In 2007, it sent a spacecraft on its first orbital flight around the moon. Although analysts worry about the military and security implications of China's space program, the image portrayed to the general public is that of a country with an advanced level of science and technology. The international community is increasingly recognizing China's environmental policies as bold steps toward addressing climate change, and has already put China in a front-runner position in areas such as renewable energy. The two messages of China's advanced scientific

level and concern for the environment were also part of the public relations strategy of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and are key themes of the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai.

Other sources of soft power, though limited, are China's diplomacy and foreign policy, including development aid. Over the past two decades, China's foreign policy and diplomacy have seen rapid developments that have led to a more pragmatic, constructive, and sophisticated style of diplomacy and a dramatic increase in China's bilateral and multilateral relationships. These developments have raised China's profile in international affairs to an increasingly relevant power. Since the mid-1990s, China has been cultivating bilateral relations all over the world, but with special focus in Asia and the developing world. China stepped up its development aid and business activities to developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, areas sometimes neglected or deliberately isolated by the United States and Europe because of their repressive regimes.[35] At the same time, China became active at the multilateral level. It shifted from a passive stance to participating actively in multilateral forums (e.g. ASEAN+3, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, G-20) and found that those forums could be used to expand influence and pursue Chinese interests. Multilateralism has proven to be an important tool to counter the perception that China poses a threat and to add to China's image as a responsible global player. China's contributions to multilateral peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention are often mentioned in this respect.

China's diplomacy can be characterized by a collaborative approach and growing flexibility. China's leaders listen closely to their partners' interests and do not ask tough questions. They are creative in finding win-win solutions and deals, using economic and political incentives when needed. With this "soft" approach and the willingness to maintain relations with regimes isolated by the Western world, Beijing avoids antagonizing partners and creates time and room to maneuver in complex diplomatic situations. In some parts of the world, this approach to international relations is received with much applause. A number of countries in Africa, Central Asia, and Latin America are interested in China's pragmatic and authoritarian domestic model, which shows that one can have economic development without far-reaching political reform. But they also appreciate China's noninterference in their domestic affairs and "no-political-strings-attached" foreign aid and trade. Former Foreign Editor of *Time* magazine and China analyst Joshua Cooper Ramo calls it the "Beijing Consensus,"[36] in contrast to the "Washington Consensus" of the World Bank and the International

Monetary Fund (IMF). Many have written about the appeal of this Chinese model and how it encourages countries to rethink their own development paths.[37] Coupled with Beijing's comprehensive aid policies, China's image in developing countries is mostly positive. African leaders feel treated as equals by the Chinese and assert that China is investing in areas, such as infrastructure, that are important to Africa's future but that are often avoided by Western aid and investment.[38]

Even Westerners are increasingly recognizing China's diplomatic style as effective and, in some cases, useful for the international community, because it makes China suitable as a mediator in conflicts with isolated regimes. Examples are China's role in the Six-Party Talks on North Korea and the international appeals for China to help solve the crises in Sudan and Myanmar. China does not, or cannot, always deliver what the international community expects. It is significant, however, that China increasingly comes to mind when crises involving isolated regimes occur. Furthermore, these appeals to China to take its responsibility in international affairs *do* have an effect on Beijing's behavior, because they push China's leaders to take action, publicly or by using quiet diplomacy.[39]

Liabilities: Issues to Be Addressed by China's Public Diplomacy

China's biggest public diplomacy liabilities lie in the political realm—the country's human rights situation, the Tibet issue, and China's close relations with corrupt regimes. Opinion polls show that these issues are the main causes of negative feelings about China.[40] China's growing military might contributes to international concerns as well. Although most analysts agree that China's military power is still limited, policymakers and the general public in many countries are concerned by China's rapidly growing military budget, its enormous army, and the lack of transparency in Chinese military affairs.

China's economic rise is not only a source of soft power; it also makes many governments and business leaders around the world nervous, fearing they will lose industries and jobs to China and face growing trade deficits. They are anxious about Chinese strategic investments in resources that could lead to undue control of access . They are frustrated by Beijing's currency policy, the continued violation of intellectual property rights, and the slow progress in opening up China's domestic market and improving investment rules. In some Asian capitals, policymakers are concerned that China's economic strength could encourage it to dominate the region or even to assert its power militarily. Fears

also are increasing in Europe that China will pose an economic threat, and recently several African countries have expressed concerns about China's motives for its African policies.[41]

Various other international concerns are closely linked to China's fast growth—the rising need for energy and resultant energy policies, the serious environmental degradation taking place in China, public health issues, and the safety of China's food exports. The environmental crisis is a special case. It represents a major, long-term challenge as well as an opportunity for China's public diplomacy. The pollution created by China's rapid growth contributes heavily to climate change, making it a global threat. But, as previously mentioned, China is taking steps to address the issue and create the image of a country that is seriously investing in the environment.

How Successful Is China's Public Diplomacy?

Opinion polling is an important tool to gauge a country's image in the world. In spite of their limitations—often small samples and superficial questions—poll results are useful to confirm or contradict other indicators, such as press coverage or public response to events. Recent international polls show that China's popularity in the West has recently fallen after years of steady increases.[42] People are no longer willing to be patient with China or give the country the benefit of the doubt. The idea that political reform will automatically follow economic reform in China is losing support. These pessimistic views dominate in Europe, Turkey, and the United States. But African and some Middle Eastern countries still view China favorably.[43]

A more unanimous view exists about China's economic rise to power. People worldwide expect China to catch up with the United States economically, and that is not necessarily viewed negatively. But when it comes to politics, a majority of publics do not trust China to act responsibly in the world.[44] A poll commissioned by BBC World revealed that 70 percent of respondents identified population growth, bureaucracy, corruption, and lack of democracy as China's biggest impediments to growth. China's huge population and low labor costs were identified as its biggest assets to economic growth.[45]

If tourism statistics, the high number of exchange students, growing foreign investment, and increased international scientific and economic cooperation are any indication, many foreigners have a favorable image of China. Interestingly, people in some other countries seem

to be dreaming of building a better life in China. Two articles in *The Washington Post* describe how the idea of a "Chinese Dream," China as a "symbol of potential prosperity," is taking hold with ordinary people in African countries and Iraq, claiming a place once held by the United States and some European countries.[46] The increasing number of African business visits to China is also reflected in the growing number of visas issued to nationals of various African countries.[47] The American Dream has become unrealistic, but the Chinese Dream seems to be attainable. The question is to what extent this is based on daily reality. China only sparsely issues "green cards" to foreigners without Chinese roots,[48] and Chinese society and local authorities do not always welcome Africans in China.[49] The chances are actually small that this development will really take off.

The Limits of China's Public Diplomacy System

China's authoritarian regime lies at the root of both China's successes and shortcomings in public diplomacy. On the one hand, public diplomacy instruments enable China's leaders to design and attune messages and actions carefully and to make sure that they are carried out as dictated. On the other hand, these messages lack legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of many recipients. Civil society's role in China's public diplomacy is still limited, and official messengers are never fully trusted, even less so when they come from an authoritarian leadership. The Chinese population's views are seldom heard, because the government limits political freedom and civil liberties. The Chinese government increasingly holds domestic polls to find out public opinion on sensitive policy issues, but the results are often not public. There are a few positive developments in this area: the growing freedom in academic debate, the lively blogosphere, and widely used cell phone communications offer glimpses of public opinion, but this information does not reach a wide international audience.

The lack of transparency in Chinese politics is also an obstacle for China's public diplomacy. An authoritarian regime that conceals unfavorable information from the public also hampers the growth of China's soft power. It undermines international impressions that China is moving toward becoming a more open society. It was one of the causes of the debacle of the SARS crisis in summer 2003, when China's desire to limit the damage by downplaying the situation backfired seriously. International and domestic indignation was enormous, and criticism

was severe, putting pressure on the Chinese leadership. But China learned quickly and when new SARS cases occurred in April 2004, China's leaders immediately disclosed them and took swift and effective action. Officials were likewise open with information during the 2007 product safety scandals.[50] But they were not as forthcoming in the corruption and school construction scandal that erupted after the May 2008 Sichuan earthquake. China's leaders may be aware that concealing information often makes things worse, but they are not yet able to leave the old "default mode" of secrecy behind them, especially when the Party's position is at stake.

Chinese officials regularly call for a strengthening of China's domestic and international communication capacity to "promote China's cultural soft power."[51] Officials announced in January 2009 that China will spend US$6.6 billion to extend its international media outreach.[52] But this media outreach will only be successful when its reporters and editors have the freedom to speak openly about China's problems as well as its strengths.[53]

Chinese leaders should also realize that simply providing more information won't improve their image in the Western world. They should link China's public diplomacy messages to policies and deeds, especially when it comes to issues such as human rights, Tibet, and Xinjiang. Beijing needs to realize how democratic values, human rights, rule of law, and civil liberties such as freedom of speech deeply permeate Western societies. Chinese officials will continue to have limited success in public diplomacy in the West if they do not address these issues at the political level.

Conclusions

China's leaders have long recognized that improving China's image is a prerequisite for its economic and political rise, and that China therefore needs public diplomacy. Beijing spends much money and energy on developing and conducting public diplomacy, and recent developments indicate that the Chinese learn quickly. China's strengths in this area lie partially in its sources of soft power and partially in the way public diplomacy is conducted. China's culture and economic dynamism are great sources of soft power and offer many possibilities for public diplomacy actions.

But other trends are gaining importance in Chinese public diplomacy. Civil society groups and individuals have become more involved

in public diplomacy activities. People-to-people diplomacy, international academic and business cooperation, and cultural events have a growing impact on China's standing in the world. For the Chinese diaspora, China's economic and political rise to power is a source of pride, and Chinese communities abroad increasingly organize or participate in events that promote China and Chinese culture. China's blogosphere also may become an important contributor, through youth culture spread through the Internet, if not now, then in the near future. The efforts of these groups are modest and not always approved by the government, even though they can bring more legitimacy to China's public diplomacy. International observers should not expect Chinese society to play a fundamentally bigger role in public diplomacy, as Chinese authorities are not showing any sign of loosening their grip on society.

China's government is well aware that it should match its words with deeds in order to give credibility to the image that the country wants to project. China's public diplomacy actions, therefore are increasingly based on, or linked to, new policies or concrete measures to improve a situation. Although these policies or measures do not always meet Western expectations, they are often significant steps in the Chinese context and signal at least a willingness to listen and to take foreign criticism seriously. In some cases, Beijing's actions flow directly from a need to produce effective public diplomacy. For example, Chinese officials moved to reform their product safety system in response to the worldwide export scandals. Failure to act would have done damage to China's exports, but also to its image as a responsible world power. The actions went way beyond the realm of political spin. In such cases, when they are forced to reconsider their policies, China's leaders learn and gradually adapt to concepts and values that were hitherto unfamiliar, and they may someday internalize them. In other cases, policy actions precede public diplomacy concerns. A policy is changed for domestic economic, political, or social reasons, and it is only afterward that someone realizes the new policy should be included in the country's public diplomacy strategy. In these cases, public diplomacy reflects a change in policies and may serve as an indicator of shifts in China's political thinking.[54] For example, Chinese officials took the initiative to choose the environment as one of the themes for the Beijing Olympics when it was bidding for the Games, long before the general global public became aware of their pollution problems.

China's public diplomacy also encounters a number of difficulties. First, Beijing has to deal with rising expectations. A decade ago, China

could often get away with showing goodwill and taking half-hearted measures. Today, foreign publics expect more of China and want to see it take concrete steps toward democratization and international standards. Second, a rising China will not be able to avoid the suspicion, fear, and envy of global publics that comes with the status of superpower. China's authoritarian regime presents other difficulties for public diplomacy. Lack of government transparency makes it difficult to deal adequately with international suspicion about Chinese policies and weakens public diplomacy messages. Furthermore, it hampers China's emerging civil society from further participating in public diplomacy, and it limits Chinese citizens in freely speaking out on international issues.

China has considerable sources of soft power. Its culture, economic development, and, to a certain extent, its foreign policy are attractive to many countries and offer enormous possibilities for public diplomacy. In the area of foreign policy, China's leaders are increasingly willing to use their friendly relations with repressive regimes to help the international community push these regimes to end their crimes against their populations. But this will not be enough to compensate for the lack of Chinese progress on their own human rights. The international community (especially in the West) will not embrace China as a peaceful, harmonious, and responsible world power as long as journalists and political dissidents are arrested, lawyers and activists are prosecuted when fighting for civil rights, and prisoners are tortured in Chinese jails.

Notes

This chapter is an abridged and updated version of Ingrid d'Hooghe, "Into High Gear: China's Public Diplomacy," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 3, no. 1 (2008): 37–61. Published by Koninklijke Brill NV/Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

1. Analysis of China's public diplomacy is hampered by the lack of transparency in Chinese policymaking. There are few official documents on China's public diplomacy policy available to the public. This means that the observations made in this chapter are primarily deduced from public diplomacy actions and remarks by China's leaders.
2. See, for example, the polls of the *Pew Global Attitudes Project,* The Pew Research Center, *Financial Times/Harris Monthly Polls*, and *Transatlantic Trends*, German Marshall Fund. For Europe see Ingrid d'Hooghe, "The limits of China's soft power in Europe: Beijing's public diplomacy puzzle," *Clingendael Diplomacy Paper* 25 (2010).
3. Paul Sharp, "Revolutionary States, Outlaw Regimes and the Techniques of Public Diplomacy," in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations,* ed. Jan Melissen (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 106.

4. Jan Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," in Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy*, 5.
5. See, for example, Zhao Kejin, *Gongong waijiao de lilun yu shijian* (Public Diplomacy: Theory and Practice) (Shanghai: Cishu Chubanshi, 2007); Yiwei Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of China's Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2008): 257–273; Li Minjiang, "China Debates Soft Power," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2, no. 2 (2008): 287–308; and *Zhongguo ruanshili wang* (China's Soft Power Network), http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/166866/index.html
6. Interviews by the author with diplomats and academics, April 2009. See also, for example, Zhao Qizheng, "Better Public Diplomacy to Present a Truer Picture of China," *People's Daily*, online edition, March 30, 2007; or the last page of "CNN: What Is Wrong with You," *People's Daily*, online edition, April 3, 2008.
7. Interviews by the author with academics in Shanghai and Beijing in March 2007 and, for example, "Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing Gives Year-End Interview to People's Daily," December 20, 2005, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
8. Web site of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Close Friends Gather Together: The Foreign Ministry Holds the First 'Public Day' Activity in 2006," June 3, 2006; and "Gathering in 2007: Joining Hands with China's Diplomacy. Sidelights on the 2007 First Public Open Day of the Foreign Ministry," May 19, 2007.
9. Formerly called the Office of External Propaganda in English until Chinese authorities realized the bad connotation of the word "propaganda." The Chinese term for external publicity/propaganda, *duiwai xuanchuan*, remained the same.
10. For a detailed description of the monitoring of publicity by various ministries and offices, see David Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy," *The China Journal*, no. 57 (January 2007).
11. For examples, see Brady, "Guiding Hand."
12. This office is closely linked to the Central Publicity Department and the International Department of the Party. For more information on the Central Publicity Department, see Anne-Marie Brady, "Guiding Hand: The Role of the CCP Central Propaganda Department in the Current Era," in *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 3, no. 1 (2006): 58-77.
13. "Main Responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China," April 23, 2009. Web site Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC. www.fmprc.gov.cn
14. For a recent example see spokesman Ma Zhaoxu's remark on the ministry's "further efforts in public diplomacy this year." "China always welcomes foreign journalists: FM spokesman," *People's Daily Online*, January 21, 2010.
15. Author's conversations with Chinese diplomats stationed in various European countries.
16. For more on China's state actors in public diplomacy, see d'Hooghe, "Into High Gear," 42; Ingrid d'Hooghe, "The Rise of China's Public Diplomacy," *Clingendael Diplomacy Papers* 12 (July 2007); and Ingrid d'Hooghe, "Public Diplomacy in the People's Republic of China," in Melissen ed., *The New Public Diplomacy*: 88–105.
17. An epistemic community is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area. They can function as channels through which new ideas circulate from societies to governments as well as from countries to countries. See Peter Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46 (1992): 3, 27.
18. See, for example, "Diplomacy with Foreign Dignitaries: Personalities Build Up China's New Image," *People's Daily*, January 1, 2004.
19. The majority of China's NGOs are relatively autonomous in daily practice and can serve their own societal or commercial interests, but when it comes to the crunch they are dependent on approval—or neglect—by the authorities.

20. For example, Seungho Lee, "Environmental Movements and Social Organizations in Shanghai," *China Information* 21, no. 2 (2007): 269–297; Miriam Schröder, "Transnational NGO Cooperation for China's Climate Politics." (Paper presented at the 2007 Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change); and Quansheng Zhao, "Epistemic Community, Intellectuals, and Chinese Foreign Policy," *Policy and Society* 25, no. 1: 39–59
21. Zhao, "Epistemic Community, Intellectuals, and Chinese Foreign Policy."
22. See, for example, the election of the top 100 Chinese soft power enterprises, http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/166866/10307066.html
23. Web site Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission R.O.C. (Taiwan): http://www.ocac.gov.tw/index.asp
24. "Premier Wen Calls for Overseas Chinese to Promote China's Peaceful Reunification," *People's Daily*, May 21, 2005.
25. "Beijing Wooing Overseas Chinese away from Taiwan: Officials," *Taiwan Security News*, May 30, 2002.
26. For example, the China Synergy Program for Outstanding Youth, which gathers outstanding Chinese youth across the world to "learn about modern China and Chinese culture," http://www.chinasynergy.org
27. See http://www.globalvoicesonline.org, http://www.danwei.org, http://www.cmp.hku.hk, and http://www.chinadigitaltimes.net
28. "China has been using a new approach to public diplomacy to expand its influence and global appeal," *Peace Corps News*, online, August 8, 2007.
29. "Govt calls for building social stability, security," Xinhua, December 4, 2009. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005–12/04/content_3876620.htm
30. Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 2004), 11–14.
31. Economic strength can be a source of both hard and soft power. See, for example, Joseph S. Nye, "Think Again: Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, March 1, 2006.
32. See, for example, Part VII of Secretary Hu Jintao's report to the 17th Congress of the CCP, October 15, 2007, or the speeches presented at a special meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), held in summer 2007, on the topic of China's culture as a major resource for building China's soft power; for example "*Wu Jianmin: kaizhan wenhua waijiao de jidian sikao*" (Wu Jianmin: Some Thoughts on the Development of Cultural Diplomacy), speech by the President of China's Foreign Affairs University and former Ambassador to France, Wu Jianmin, July 24, 2007.
33. Web site of the Hanban (Chinese Language Council International), www.hanban.edu.cn
34. Clive Cookson, "China Leads World in Growth of Scientific Research," *Financial Times*, January 25, 2010.
35. A wealth of examples can be found in Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2007).
36. Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, May 2004): 3–4.
37. For example, Bates Gill and Yanzhong Huang, "Sources and Limits of China's Soft Power," *Survival*, 48, no. 2 (summer 2006): 17–36; and Drew Thompson, "China's Soft Power in Africa: From the 'Beijing Consensus' to Health Diplomacy," *China Brief* 5, no. 21 (October 13, 2005).
38. David H. Shinn, "The China Factor in African Ethics and Human Rights" (Paper presented at the *Oxford-Uehiro-Carnegie Council Conference*, December 2006).
39. See, for example, Jason Qian and Anne Wu, "China's Delicate Role on Darfur," *Boston Globe*, July 23, 2007.

40. See, for example, the polls of the *Pew Global Attitudes Project,* The Pew Research Center; *Financial Times/Harris Monthly Polls*, and *Transatlantic Trends*, German Marshall Fund. For Europe see d'Hooghe, "The Limits of China's Soft Power in Europe."
41. See, for example, the poll by *TNS Opinion* on "Perspectives on Trade and Poverty Reduction," December 2006; and Walden Bello, "China Provokes Debate in Africa," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, March 9, 2007.
42. "Global Public Opinion in the Bush Years (2001–2008)," December 18, 2008; "Global Economic Gloom, China and India Notable Exceptions," June 12, 2008; "Global Unease with Major World Powers," June 27, 2007, *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, The Pew Research Center, www.pewresearch.org
43. Ibid.
44. See "World Publics think China will Catch Up with the US—and That's Okay," at http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/may07/CCGA+_RiseChina_article.pdf
45. The report can be found at http://www.gmi-mr.com/gmipoll/release.php?p=20060522 and http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/bbcworld/worldstories/pressreleases/2006/05_may/emerging_giants.shtml
46. Stephanie McCrummen, "Struggling Chadians Dream of A Better Life—in China," *Washington Post*, October 6, 2007; and Ariana Eunjung Cha, "Chasing the Chinese Dream: A Growing Number of the World's Emigrants are Heading East, rather than West, in Search of Safety, Tolerance or Opportunity," *Washington Post*, October 22, 2007.
47. "Africans Keen to Grasp 'China Opportunities'," *People's Daily Online*, November 2, 2006.
48. "Foreigners Fond of Chinese 'Green Card'," *People's Daily Online*, August 20, 2007.
49. See, for example, Jennifer Brea, "Beijing Police Round Up and Beat African Expats," *Guardian*, September 26, 2007; and McCrummen, "Struggling Chadians."
50. See d'Hooghe, "Into High Gear," 53–54.
51. See, for example, "Li Changchun: Nuli goujian xiandai chuanbo, tigao guonei guowai chuanbo nengli" [Li Changchun: Work hard to build a modern communication system and raise our domestic and international communication capacity), December 20, 2008. Web site China.com, accessed February 2, 2009.
52. Vivian Wu and Adam Chen, "Beijing in 45b Yuan Global Media Drive," *South China Morning Post*, January 13, 2009.
53. See also d'Hooghe, "The Limits of China's Soft Power in Europe," 30–31.
54. For a discussion along these lines, see Wang Hongying, "National Image Building and Chinese Foreign Policy," *China: An International Journal* 1, no. 1 (March 2003): 67; and William A. Callahan, "Tianxia, Empire and the World: Soft Power and China's Foreign Policy Discourse in the 21st Century," *BICC Working Paper Series* 1(May 2007), University of Manchester.

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CHAPTER THREE

China's Image Projection and Its Impact

HONGYING WANG

"Soft power" is a relatively new concept in Chinese discourse. Drawn largely from the works of Joseph Nye,[1] it has quickly caught on among China's policy circles.[2] As the editor of the current volume points out in the introduction, "perhaps nowhere else has the idea of 'soft power' been as widely discussed, embraced and appropriated as in China." The Chinese may find "soft power" naturally appealing because it is compatible with Chinese traditions going back to Sun Zi and Mencius, which emphasize the psychological and moral elements of power. The Chinese Communist Party has paid particular attention to these elements of its influence at home and abroad. Indeed, from "people's diplomacy (*minjian waijiao*)" during the Mao Zedong era to President Hu Jintao's call for "inspirational power (*ganzhaoli*)" of today, China's foreign policy has always had a strong public diplomacy component. That policy has included projecting favorable images of China to the world.

In this chapter, I examine China's image projection abroad over the last several decades. What images has the Chinese government tried to project, including China's roles in the world and its visions of world order? What are some new trends in China's projection of its international images? Have China's efforts succeeded? In the following pages, I attempt to provide some preliminary answers to these questions.

China's Projected Images

In this section, I explore the images of China projected by the Chinese government from the communist regime's early years to the present by

examining several platforms of communications—The *Peking Review*, the Government Work Reports, and Chinese leaders' major foreign policy statements.

The Chinese government launched the *Peking Review* (later renamed *Beijing Review*) on March 5, 1958. It was the first and, for many years, the main weekly newsmagazine directed at foreign readers. Its purpose is for "foreigners to know about China's policies and study China's political situation and development trends."[3] For more than four decades, it was published in English, French, Japanese, German, and Spanish. More recently, the magazine has changed format. It is now published in print only in English and online in Chinese, English, French, German, and Japanese.[4] Between 1958 and 2006, more than 2,000 issues of *Peking Review* were published. I randomly selected one issue from each year for analysis. Because my focus is on China's image abroad in the context of public diplomacy, I coded only articles that have at least one paragraph regarding China's foreign relations.

Government Work Reports are delivered regularly to China's legislative body, the National People's Congress (NPC), by the premier. These reports, delivered at each meeting of each NPC, are widely publicized inside and outside China by the government. They, are directed at both the domestic and the international audience. Between 1954 and 2008, there were eleven NPCs. I analyzed the foreign policy content of the Government Work Report at the first meeting of each congress.

These two series of documents are not the only platforms used by the Chinese government to build China's images abroad. I have chosen to study them because they often set the tone for other public diplomacy venues (e.g., other publications, Radio Beijing, and cultural exhibitions abroad), and they are the most consistently used platforms over the last few decades (in contrast to TV and the Internet, which are relatively new venues). I first analyze both sets of documents to delineate China's portrayal of its roles in the world.[5] Then I analyze the Government Work Reports and important speeches by Chinese leaders that show how the regime envisions the world order.

China's Roles in the World

How has China's portrayal of its roles in the world changed over the years? To explore this question, I conducted a quantitative content analysis of the *Peking Review* and the Government Work Reports.[6] Figures 3.1 and 3.2 summarize the results. As these graphs show, the *Peking Review* and the Government Work Reports have presented

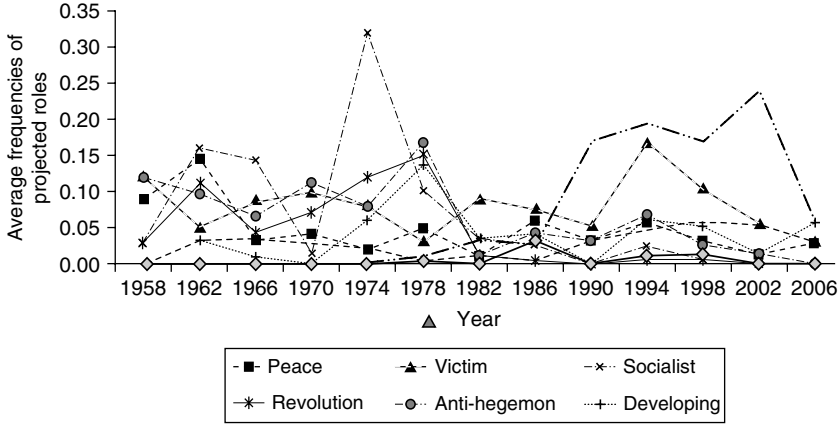


Figure 3.1 National Roles Projected in *The Peking Review*, 1954–2006.

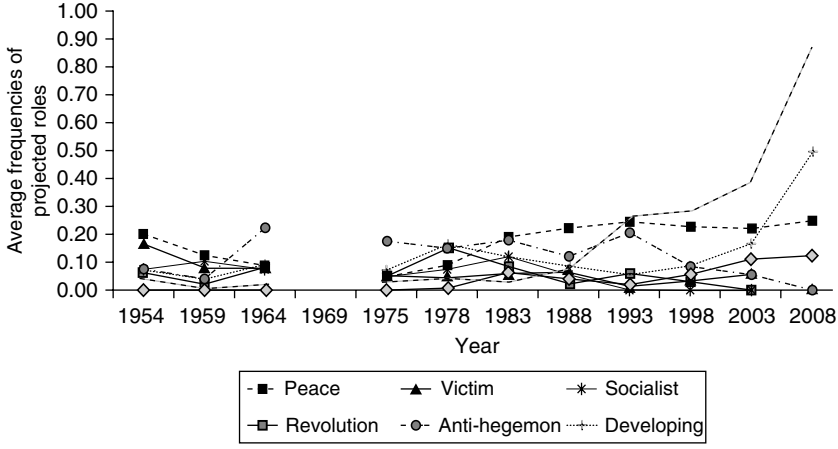


Figure 3.2 National Roles Projected in Government Work Reports, 1954–2008.

similar roles of China in the world during the past five to six decades. One can see both continuities and changes over the years. On the one hand, the government has consistently—though with different levels of vigor—presented China as a peace-loving nation. a victim of foreign aggression, an opponent of hegemony, and a developing country. On the other hand, while the government portrayed China as a socialist country and a revolutionary supporter during the Maoist period, it

has shifted in recent decades to project China's role as an international cooperator and a major power.

Chinese Visions of World Order

In building their international image abroad, countries not only project their roles in the world, but also proclaim their visions of world order. The latter tells the world what values and principles they stand for. During the 1950s, the Chinese government saw the world as divided between the socialist and the capitalist camps. Following Marxist and Leninist theories equating capitalism with imperialism and war, the Chinese government championed world peace through the triumph of socialism over capitalism. It advocated the socialist cause led by the Soviet Union. It also actively opposed colonialism and other forms of Western influence—including military alliances—in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. At a more pragmatic level, the Chinese government laid out the five principles for relations among countries with different political systems: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual nonaggression; noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. Overall, the Chinese government campaigned for a peaceful world in which the socialist camp would grow stronger at the expense of the capitalist camp, nations under foreign influence and control would gain independence and sovereignty, and countries would recognize and tolerate each other.[7]

From the 1960s to the late 1970s, Mao's "three worlds" theory guided China's world view. Mao defined the First World as the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union; the Second World as the other developed countries and socialist regimes in Europe; and developing countries as the Third World. But the Chinese government's international visions were somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, China continued to champion world peace, advocating comprehensive nuclear test bans and the destruction of all nuclear weapons. On the other hand, its support for liberating the Third World from old and new forms of colonialism gained greater militancy. Portraying "American imperialism" and "Soviet revisionism" as the biggest obstacles for world peace and national liberation, the Chinese government called for a "united front" against both superpowers through revolution. The assumption was that a world war was inevitable unless it was preempted by a world revolution, which would forever eradicate imperialism and war.[8] Meanwhile, China, having long been excluded from most international organizations, viewed

the existing international system as unfair and illegitimate. The Maoist regime explicitly advocated an alternative international order, including a "revolutionary" rival to the United Nations.[9]

With the onset of economic reforms in the late 1970s, the Chinese government dramatically altered its world view. Instead of rejecting the existing international system, China came to view it as a structure that offered opportunities worth pursuing. In the 1980s, China abandoned its revolutionary rhetoric and increasingly spoke about the virtue of a peaceful international environment. Since then, China's foreign policy discourse has focused on peace and development, continuing to oppose arms races and military alliances. China has also continued to favor greater equality among nations, national independence, a new international economic order, and the nonaligned movement. With regard to international institutions, the Chinese government explicitly expressed support for the United Nations and its principles and activities. More broadly, it advertised China's compliance with widely recognized international norms.[10] As Samuel Kim puts it, China abandoned its radical system-transforming approach to adopt a system-reforming and then a system-maintaining approach.[11]

In the last decade, China's foreign policy has developed a new dimension. While continuing to claim that China does not seek to overturn the current international system, the Chinese government has become more vocal in criticizing certain aspects of it, including the dominance of power politics, growing disparity between the North and the South, intolerance of different value systems, a tendency to use force to solve international conflicts, and neglect of the environment. As a self-appointed "internal critic" of such an order, China has suggested various reforms and an alternative vision of the world order it calls a "harmonious world."

The phrase "harmonious world" first officially appeared in a joint declaration issued by China and Russia in October 2004.[12] In April 2005 Chinese President Hu Jintao again mentioned this concept at the Asia Africa Conference in Jakarta. But the most important landmark was Hu's speech at the United Nations' sixtieth anniversary celebration in September 2005, entitled "Strive to Establish a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity." This concept was later reiterated and elaborated in a Chinese government white paper on China's Passage of Peaceful Development, issued in December 2005; in Hu's speech at Yale University in April 2006; and at an important foreign policy working conference of the Chinese Communist Party central committee in August 2006.

The first principle of a "harmonious world" is democratization of international relations. One of China's major criticisms of the existing state of global governance is its "undemocratic" nature. Democracy means different things to different people. The Chinese understanding of "democracy" in the context of international relations seems to refer to equitable participation of countries (represented by their governments) in international affairs and broad consultation with different countries when dealing with common international problems. The second principle of a "harmonious world" is justice and common prosperity. Chinese leaders point out that the growing economic inequality between the rich and the poor countries is not only unjust, but it also undermines peace and stability. They call for the industrialized nations to take more responsibility through opening their markets to developing countries, transferring technology, providing aid, and forgiving debt. They also ask the developing countries to engage in South–South cooperation and to realize their full development potential.

The third principle of a "harmonious world" is diversity and tolerance. China, along with many other non-Western countries, has often found itself under attack from advocates of Western economic models (e.g., the so-called Washington consensus) and political systems (e.g. American-style democracy). The Chinese government has gone out of its way to emphasize that the countries in the world have different histories, cultures, and economic situations and that none should impose their own values and models on other countries. The fourth principle of a "harmonious world" is the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. Though the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence have been a fixture of Chinese foreign policy discourse, officials and scholars have also adopted a series of new phrases, including "a new security concept," "common security," "collective security," and "confidence building" to describe China's new approach to international security.

To summarize, China's projected images have evolved over time, both in the government's depiction of China's roles in international affairs and its visions of a desirable international order (see table 3.1). The current images stress China as a peace-loving nation, a victim, an opponent of big power hegemony, a developing country, an international cooperator, and a major power. The Chinese government calls for reforms of the existing international order to achieve greater interstate democracy, common economic prosperity, cultural and ideological diversity, and the peaceful resolution of international conflicts.

Table 3.1 Evolution of China's Projected Image.

Time Period	*Major National Roles*	*Central Elements of World Order*
1950s	Peace-loving nation, victim, antihegemonic force, socialist country	World peace, triumph of socialism, national independence
1960s–1970s	Supporter of revolution, socialist country, victim, antihegemonic force	National liberation, world revolution
1980s–1990s	Peace-loving nation, cooperator, antihegemonic force	New International Economic Order, international norms
2000s	Peace-loving nation, cooperator, major power	Peace, diversity, development, and international democracy

New Trends in Image Projection

Although the Chinese government has always been aware of the importance of China's international images, it has become even more attentive to projecting favorable images in recent years. This is not hard to understand. The Tian'anmen Incident of 1989, which was reported live by the international media, showed the world how the Chinese government violently cracked down on students and other citizens demanding greater political freedom. The image of "the butchers of Beijing" fundamentally damaged the neutral-to-favorable view of China held by the world.[13] Since then, the international community, especially Western countries, has adopted a largely negative meta-framework through which they perceive and interpret Chinese policies and behavior. This has caused Chinese policymakers many diplomatic problems around the world. The Chinese government has been eager to get beyond that image, because it undermines China's integration into the global economy and hinders China's ambition to become a respected world power.

Domestic political considerations have also contributed to the rising importance of good images abroad. As many have observed, the ruling Community Party's legitimacy has faced challenges in recent years from rising economic inequality, social problems, and lack of political freedom. The Chinese government has sought to sustain its legitimacy by keeping the economy growing, by appealing to its historical role in liberating the nation from foreign imperialism, and by highlighting China's rising international status.[14] The government craves foreign (especially Western) praise, as it provides respectability and boosts the

legitimacy of the government among the Chinese public.[15] Another domestic consideration has to do with the rising importance of public opinion in the foreign policy realm. In contrast to the Maoist era, and to a lesser extent the Deng Xiaoping era, when the top leadership kept foreign policymaking as its prerogative, the military, industries, local governments, intellectuals, and general public have all sought to inject their interests and beliefs into the country's foreign policy.[16] Chinese policymakers cannot take public support of their foreign policy choices for granted. Favorable international attitudes toward China stemming from positive images of China can help reduce domestic opposition.

Two new trends are worth noting. First, as part of its effort to tell its stories to the world, the Chinese government has stepped up its public relations abroad. One can see this trend in China's public diplomacy in the United States. For decades, the Taiwan lobby was among the most powerful in Washington, DC, but the People's Republic of China had no equivalent lobbying group. In the last few years, the Chinese government has hired some of the most powerful American law firms and public relations firms to communicate with Americans.[17] According to a study by the Center for Public Integrity, the Chinese and the Hong Kong governments and government-controlled companies spent $19 million lobbying various branches of the U.S. government from 1997 to 2005.[18] Meanwhile, the Chinese Embassy in Washington D.C., has established a new working group that focuses on befriending influential members of the U.S. Congress. The goal is to improve China's ability to persuade the United States on issues of importance to China.[19] Beyond lobbying, the Chinese government has also expanded cultural and educational activities in the United States, including a cultural tour in 2000 and a China art festival in 2005. Elsewhere in the world, it launched a Chinese Culture Year in France in 2003, sponsored a major month-long Chinese cultural event in Germany in 2006, and initiated a China Year in Russia in 2007.

Second, China has become more attentive to mass media in projecting its images. Chinese policymakers and analysts are keenly aware that they face a very challenging international media environment. They point out that the global media system is marked by extreme inequality. News agencies in the developed countries—such as the Associated Press, Reuters, and Agence France-Presse—control much of the news reporting in the world. The United States is especially dominant in all forms of the media, including printed news, TV programs, Internet content, and so on. In contrast, China's media power is miniscule. The Xinhua News Agency produces about two million words of reporting

each day, which is overshadowed by Associated Press's seventeen million words of reporting. China has only a few newspapers and magazines distributed abroad, whereas there are more than four hundred American newspapers and magazines overseas. China Central TV has only two channels with global reach, compared to U.S. satellite TV programs, which account for more than fifty percent of all the satellite TV programs around the world.[20] Many in China complain about the discursive hegemony of the West, which leaves countries like China no voice. They argue China has no chance to express and explain itself and has consequently become a victim of Western demonization.[21]

Chinese scholars and policy analysts note that China must actively contribute to the establishment of a new international information and communication order, following the principle of "many voices, one world," first formulated in UNESCO's 1980 MacBride Report. But they have no illusions that China will be able to establish such a new order in the foreseeable future. They argue that China must improve its own media power and strategies to face the challenges of the international media environment. They note that China's old-fashioned propaganda methods are ineffective, and need to give way to more lively, culturally sensitive, and subtle public relations. A former head of the Xinhua News Agency criticizes Chinese foreign communication for its propagandist tune and advertising flavor, which typically meets with audience resistance.[22] Some argue the Chinese government should be more transparent and open to media scrutiny to reduce foreign hostility and suspicion of China, which would in turn make it easier for the Chinese government to deliver its messages.[23] Some suggest that China's media industry needs to become more innovative and competitive on the world stage. To facilitate that, the government should separate state ownership of the media from its daily operations, giving media organizations greater freedom and enabling them to form large conglomerates.[24] Many commentators propose better integration and coordination among different media organizations and media formats to project China's images abroad. In this context, some call for the development of nongovernment channels. They urge China to learn from the successful experience of Al Jazeera in Qatar and Phoenix TV in Hong Kong.[25] Others suggest that China enhance its cooperation with major international media companies, using their influence in the world to spread China's messages around. For instance, China could use the strong desire of these companies to enter the Chinese market as leverage to entice them to help China's media expansion overseas.[26] Chinese policy analysts are highly sensitive to the new importance of

the Internet in today's media environment. Some urge China to mobilize Chinese Internet users, both at home and overseas, to launch a "people's war" of public diplomacy.[27]

Many of these proposals have found their way into the Chinese government's policies and practices. China's handling of media coverage during the 2008 Beijing Olympics epitomizes its new national image projecting strategies. Long before the actual event, China began to frame the Beijing Olympics in such terms as "green Olympics" and "humane Olympics," which were designed to resonate with the prevailing international norms and values. When Western media reported critically on China's human rights and Tibet policies prior to the Olympics, the Chinese government took an unusually benign stand, as Chinese Internet users both in China and overseas took it upon themselves to fight against such criticisms. When the international media focused on Beijing during the Olympics, China put on an expensive and dazzling show of its ancient civilization and contemporary success. Fully consistent with China's desired images, the theme of a "harmonious society" and a "harmonious world" dominated the extravagant opening ceremony. The relatively liberal approach to foreign media organizations before and during the Olympics brought about the most favorable reporting about Chinese society in decades. Millions of smiling and helpful volunteers everywhere in Beijing went a long way toward literally changing the face of China as seen in Western media. Both Chinese and foreign observers noted that the Beijing Olympics marked a major victory for the Chinese government. The Olympics cast a favorable image of China and projected Chinese visions of world order.

Effectiveness of China's Image Projecting

How effective has the Chinese government been in projecting its chosen images? One way to address this question is to compare China's projected images with the targeted, international audience's perceptions of China. In this section, I take an initial step by comparing China's projected images with the American perceptions of China over the last few decades.[28]

To assess American perceptions of China, I rely on data from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.[29] From the Center's online data bank, I found 570 survey questions about China from 1954 to 2008. My original intention was to track American views of China

from the answers to those survey questions. But I discovered it was difficult to aggregate the data embodied in the answers, because the pollsters framed their China-related questions differently from year to year. Instead, I analyzed these survey questions themselves, treating their explicit or implicit assertions about China as indicative of the American opinion leaders' perceptions of China.[30] I believe comparing China's projected images and American opinion leaders' perceptions is a legitimate measure of the effectiveness of Chinese efforts at image projection. Because the American public in general is not all that interested in foreign affairs. As a result, it is quite susceptible to public opinion leaders' influence,[31] with the result that how the general public in the United States perceives China is largely shaped by how its opinion leaders view China. Second, U.S. opinion leaders are a main target of China's image projection efforts. China's energetic efforts to lobby various branches of the U.S. government and industries in recent years make this clear.

My analysis shows that American perception of China corresponds with some of the images projected by the Chinese government, but contradicts others. For instance, American opinion leaders generally agree with China's projected images of itself as a socialist country (figure 3.3). Likewise, they perceive China as a developing country and a major power, corresponding with China's projected images. On the other hand, China portrays itself as a peace-loving nation, but American opinion leaders think exactly the opposite (figure 3.4). Similarly, they do not see China as a force for international cooperation or a victim of foreign aggression. Meanwhile, Americans have given little thought to whether China is an autonomous actor, an antihegemonic force, or a supporter of revolution.[32]

What explains these patterns? Why are American perceptions of China sometimes similar to, but often at odds with, China's projected images? Part of the answer lies in the type of images involved. Some images are about more or less objective attributes and thus leave little room for interpretation. China as a developing country and a major power both fall into this category. China's relatively underdeveloped economy and low living standard are rather straightforward indicators of its developing-country status. Its size, population, permanent membership on the U.N. Security Council, and nuclear arsenal are all clear signs of its major power status. In such cases, it is not hard for American perceptions and China's projected images to converge. Other images require subjective judgments and are thus more controversial. China as an antihegemonic force, a peace-loving nation, a victim of foreign

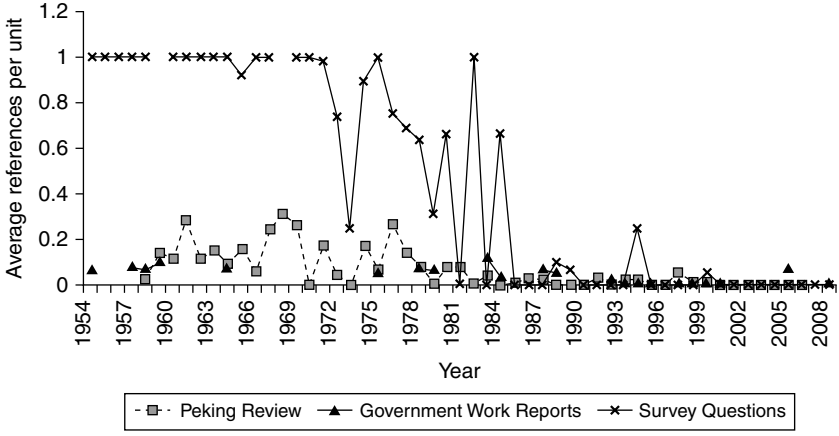


Figure 3.3 China as a Socialist Country.

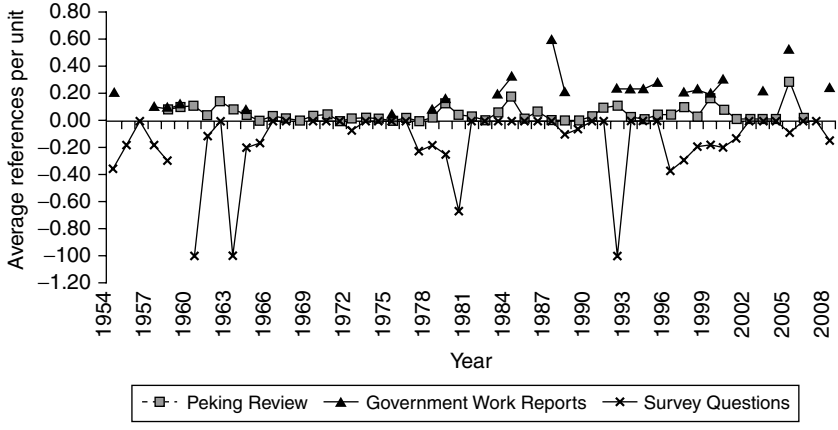


Figure 3.4 China as a Peace-loving Country.

aggression, an international cooperator, a bastion of revolution, and an autonomous actor belong to this more subjective category.

What, then, explains when and why American perceptions converge with or diverge from China's projected images on the more subjective issues? One factor may be found in the relationship between the projected images and Chinese behaviors. It is easy to imagine that American perceptions will converge with the images if those images are substantiated with Chinese behaviors. But they will diverge if there

is a large gap between words and deeds. For instance, it is hard for Americans to buy into China's self-portrayal as a peace-loving nation when it uses or threatens force against its neighbors. American perception of China as a warlike country intensified during the early 1960s after the Sino-Indian War, in the late 1970s and early 1980s around the time of the Sino-Vietnamese War, and in the early to mid-1990s when China dramatically increased its military budget, purchased fighters from the former Soviet Union, allegedly negotiated to buy an aircraft carrier from Ukraine, and launched missiles over the Taiwan Strait. However, even when China's behaviors are consistent with its projected images, American perception may still differ greatly from the images. For example, by most standards, it is clear that the Chinese government has become much more cooperative with the international community in the last twenty years or so. Ironically, the American perception of China has moved the other way. From the early 1990s to the early 2000s, in particular, American opinion leaders saw China in a very negative light on this issue.

To explain this phenomenon, it is helpful to turn to psychological theories of perception (and misperception). Psychologists have long noticed that people do not treat all incoming information equally. They are much more ready to accept information consistent with their existing perceptions than information that contradicts those perceptions. In fact, they may even interpret information contradicting familiar patterns as consistent with those patterns.[33] Similarly, in policy making, "decision-makers tend to fit incoming information into their existing theories and images."[34] Extending this perspective to intergroup perceptions, social psychologists find that people tend to use character-based attributions to explain an out-group's undesirable behaviors and use situational attributions to explain its desirable behaviors.[35] In international relations, this means that if a rival country acts cooperatively, it is seen as forced to do so by situation; if the rival country acts aggressively, its action is seen as dispositional.[36] Combining these insights, one could draw the following inferences: (a) it is highly likely that people will accept a negative image of a rival country if it is consistent with their existing images of that country; (b) it is somewhat likely that people will accept the negative image, even if it challenges existing images of that country; (c) it is somewhat likely that people will accept a positive image if it is consistent with existing images of that country; (d) it is unlikely that people will accept a positive image if it contradicts existing images of that country (table 3.2).

Table 3.2 The Psychology of Image Reception

	Negative images	*Positive images*
Stereotype-confirming	Highly likely to be accepted	Somewhat likely to be accepted
Stereotype-challenging	Somewhat likely to be accepted	Unlikely to be accepted

These inferences about perception between rivals shed light on the convergence and divergence of American perception of China and China's self-portrayal. We begin with the case of convergence. China's image as a socialist country corresponds with existing American perception since the founding of the People's Republic. Furthermore, in the ideological context of the United States, this is a negative image. Not surprisingly, Americans easily accept this projected image.

The image of China as an antihegemonic force is a mixed case. The antihegemonic image is not particularly consistent with the traditional American view of the Middle Kingdom. On that ground, it is not surprising that American perceptions of China have diverged from the projected image. On the other hand, the United States regards an antihegemonic force as unfriendly, because America considers itself as the leader of the world. Thus, the American public does not always reject this projected image of China.

Next, we turn to the cases of divergence. The description of China as a peace-loving nation is a positive one that every country in the world seeks for itself. But it contradicts the American stereotype of communist countries, including China. Thus, the American public has not accepted this image. Americans also have rejected China's self-depiction as a victim, an international cooperator, and, to a lesser extent, as an autonomous actor.

The American public has neither accepted nor rejected the image of China as a supporter of revolution, but simply ignored it. The revolutionary rhetoric and ideal are so alien to American foreign policy culture that it has failed to engage the American public altogether.

What conclusions can be drawn regarding the effectiveness of image projection? First, it is worth remembering the variation among projected national roles along the objective/subjective spectrum. Generally speaking, national roles toward the objective end are relatively clear-cut, leaving little room for manipulation. On the other hand, national roles toward the subjective end are more subject to cultivation. Second, in projecting national roles, it is important to substantiate words with deeds. The role that a country conceives and projects for itself is more likely (though not necessarily) to be accepted by others if it is backed

up by action. Third, it is important to recognize that image projection takes place in a historical context. It is extremely difficult to build a new positive role against preexisting negative perceptions. Finally, projection of images abroad needs to take foreign cultures into account. If a government uses concepts or language alien to a targeted audience—as the Chinese government has done frequently—it is not likely to be able to project its desired images effectively overseas.

To summarize, the Chinese government has always used image projection to augment its foreign policies. In recent years international and domestic developments have compelled the Chinese government to enhance its efforts, strengthening public diplomacy and making better use of the media. However, the effectiveness of China's strategy remains highly uncertain.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have examined the international images the Chinese government has tried to project about China since the early years of the People's Republic, along with some new trends of image projection that are emerging, and China's effectiveness in persuading the audience with these image-projecting efforts. In the conclusion, I shall make two general observations based on the findings from the Chinese case, one regarding the historical specificity of international images; the other about the utility of the projected images.

First, the Chinese case shows a country's desired international images are very much contingent on historical context, which includes domestic situations and international environment. During the first decades of the People's Republic—from the 1950s to the early 1970s—the determining factors were China's relative poverty and isolation from the rest of the world. In such a context, it was natural for China to adopt an attitude of revolutionary defiance toward the centers of power. This was reflected in its quest for a new world order and its self-portrayal as a supporter of revolution, a developing nation, and a socialist country. Beginning in the late 1970s, the new Chinese leadership was faced with an exhausted and increasingly dissatisfied population. It decided to make economic development and improvement of living standards its top policy priority. The Chinese government adopted a pragmatic foreign policy, recognizing its need for foreign capital, new markets, and technology for this undertaking. In its foreign policy discourse, it emphasized China as a cooperator in world

affairs, downplaying China's previous role as a socialist revolutionary power. More recently, the Chinese government has come to articulate a vision of "harmonious society" and "harmonious world," having achieved unprecedented—though unequally shared—national wealth. It is designed both to address domestic grievances over the growing disparities between the rich and the poor and to ease international anxieties over China's rise.

Second, the Chinese case shows that effective image building is not easy. Scholars of public diplomacy tend to stress the importance of their subject. They believe image building is a strategic foreign policy instrument. This study shows the difficulty of effective image projection, especially in circumstances in which the targeted audience already views the image-projecting country poorly and which is characterized by profound cultural differences between the two sides. My analysis of Chinese international image projection indicates it has by and large failed to persuade American elites on important issues. Despite increased Chinese efforts in recent years, there is little evidence that American elites have come to accept China's self-portrayal. Recently, Western governments have sometimes adopted China's self-depiction as a "responsible great power." For instance, the U.S. government has called on China to be a "responsible stake-holder" in the international system.[37] But this is hardly a sign the United States has accepted China's projected image. Instead, it is a common Western strategy to entice or shame the Chinese government into adopting policies they find acceptable, for example, with regard to human rights, arms sales, and exchange rate policies.

However, image projection is not only intended to persuade the foreign audience. It has an important function in the domestic context as well. China's pursuit of a favorable international image was always an integral part of the communist regime's strategy to solidify its domestic legitimacy from the early days of the People's Republic to the present. Jian Chen's study of Chinese foreign policy during the cold war shows that Mao Zedong and his comrades hoped to win the "hearts and minds" around the world, because they "understood that only when China's superior moral position in the world had been recognized by other peoples would the consolidation of his continuous revolution's momentum at home be assured."[38] Similarly, Peter Gries's study of Chinese nationalism argues that the Chinese government goes out of its way to gain "face" in its foreign relations in large part to bolster its legitimacy at home. He uses the term the "Kissinger Complex" to describe China's strong craving for American (and other international)

praise.[39] Although the Chinese government may not have persuaded Western powers to accept it as a "responsible great power," the fact that Western governments pay lip service to this term from time to time is nonetheless an indicator of China's new international status. The Chinese government can and does share this sort of foreign rhetoric with the domestic public to show the Chinese people that the international community holds the country in high regard. China's international prestige in turn boosts the government's domestic legitimacy and helps to marshal support for its domestic as well as foreign policy. Indeed, it is possible that the main effect of image projection abroad is to be found in the domestic context. The domestic impact of this dimension of public diplomacy is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it promises to be fertile ground for further studies.

Notes

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4. Skeptics may question how widely read the *Peking Review* is. My focus here is on the images the Chinese government has tried to project. Therefore, it is not my concern whether or how many foreigners actually read the *Peking Review.*
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6. I used different coding units for the *Peking Review* and for the Government Work Reports—paragraphs for the former and sentences for the latter. Before the formal coding, my research assistant and I did a preliminary test. For the nine image variables, we achieved a high intercoder agreement, with an average coefficient of agreement of 0.96. Details of methodology and coding scheme are available from the author.
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12. The basic ideas contained in the concept—mutual respect, common development, confidence building, and cultural tolerance—were already present in Secretary General Jiang Zemin's speech to the 16th Party Congress in 2002.
13. Since the 1980s, Gallup has asked respondents to say how they feel about China. In March 1989, 72 percent had a "very favorable" or "mostly favorable" impression of China. A *Los Angeles Times* poll taken in mid-June, shortly after the Tian'anmen incident, asked the same question. It found that favorable impressions of China plummeted to just 16 percent. By August 1989, another Gallup survey revealed that favorable responses had bounced back some, but to less than half of the pre-Tian'anmen level (31 percent),http://www.americans-world.org/digest/regional_issues/china/china1.cfm (accessed September 2010).
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24. Yuan Han and Lei Wang, "Quanqiuhua Shidai de Xinwen Chuanbo yu Guojia Xingxiang Xuanchuan Zhanlue," *Xinan Minzu Daxue Xuebao*, vol. 26, no. 3(2005): 269–272.
25. Xiaozhong Huang, "Zhongguo 'Waixuan' Huhuan Kaifang Fei Guanfang Chuanbo Ziyuan," *Xinan Minzu Daxue Xuebao*, no. 8 (2006): 176–179.
26. Yurong Wu, "Chuanmei Quanqiuhua Shidai de Zhongguo Guoji Xingxiang Zhanlue," *Zhongguo Dangzheng Ganbu Luntan*, no. 6 (2002): 41–43; Ming Fang and Yueliang Cai, "Zhengfu Guoji Gongguan: Guojia Xingxiang Suzao de Xin Shiye," *Dongnan Chuanbo,* no. 1 (2007): 32–33.
27. Hongwei Ma and Chen Min, "Wangshang Suzao Zhongguo Guoji Xingxiang," *Zhongguo Guoqing Guoli*, no. 1 (2001): 6.
28. A limitation of this step is that the United States has not always been the main target of China's public diplomacy. Before the Sino-American Rapprochement in the early 1970s, the Chinese government was more concerned about China's image in other parts of the world, such as the socialist countries, the developing countries and—to a lesser extent—Western Europe. This is related to China's identity. Social actors (including states) are more concerned with their image among members of their community. See Jon Elster, *The Cement of Society: A Study of Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and John B. Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame, and Reintegration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).) However, even before the rapprochement, the Chinese government was interested in influencing the "American people." Since then, the United States has increasingly become the most important intended audience of China's public relations.
29. The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research is in Storrs, Connecticut. It was founded just after World War II. It maintains a database of public opinion surveys conducted by academics, media organizations, and commercial pollsters dating back to 1935.
30. For example, I coded the following question as perceiving China as socialist, militant (opposite to peace-loving), and a major power: "Red China has exploded another atomic bomb. Do you think we should try to negotiate an atomic test-ban treaty with them?" I coded the following question as perceiving China as militant (opposite to peace-loving), obstructive (opposite to cooperative), and socialist: "Do you agree that the United States should come to the defense of Japan with military force if it is attacked by Soviet Russia or Communist China?"
31. Gabriel A Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1960) and James N. Rosenau, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1961) pioneered the study of American public opinion on foreign policy. They characterized the American public as basically disengaged from foreign policy issues. More recently, various survey data seem to confirm this perspective. For instance, the quadrennial Chicago Council on Foreign Relations poll repeatedly finds that only one-third of the American public are very interested in foreign policy stories. See John E. Reilly, *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1991* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1991) and *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1995* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1995).
32. Data and graphs on all the findings are available from the author if readers are interested.
33. Jerome Bruner and Leo Postman, "On the Perceptions of Incongruity: A Paradigm," in *Perception and Personality,* ed. Jerome Bruner and David Ketch (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1950).
34. Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," *World Politics XX*, no. 3 (1968): 455.
35. Jay Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia: Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements* (New York: Praeger, 1976); Thomas Pettigrew, "The Ultimate Attribution Error: Extending Allport's Cognitive Analysis of Prejudice," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 5, no. 4 (1979): 461–476.

36. Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).
37. This phrase was first put forward in 2005 by then-Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick in a speech at the National Committee of U.S.-China Relations.
38. Jian Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 15.
39. Peter Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

CHAPTER FOUR

China's International Broadcasting: A Case Study of CCTV International

Xiaoling Zhang

China has drastically increased investment in its international media with the goals of airing its views, enhancing the country's global influence, and showcasing its rise as a great power in a nonthreatening and nonconfrontational manner. As noted in previous chapters, media organizations such as China Central Television (CCTV), Xinhua News Agency, and *People's Daily* have all received substantial financial support from the government in recent years for their ambitious global expansion. This chapter focuses on China's efforts in international broadcasting.

This chapter highlights the development and evolution of CCTV's international channels—especially its English channel, CCTV International (also known as CCTV-9 in China, and renamed CCTV News on April 26, 2010)—and discusses its ethos and how it projects China's cultural and political appeal.[1] It attempts to address a larger question—whether China's state-centric, one-actor model in the example of its international broadcasting is an answer to public diplomacy challenges facing the country, and to what extent such efforts help to advance China's soft power. My observations are based on interviews at various times between the summer of 2007 and the spring of 2009 with Chinese media scholars, journalists, and other professionals working for CCTV International, as well as with guest speakers on "Dialogue," one of its most acclaimed programs.[2] I also examined its programming by way of recording and print sources on the channel, including its

own Web site. The two small-scale surveys of students in the United Kingdom on their awareness of CCTV International offer some indication of the impact it may have in the global information flow. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the state-centric public diplomacy model for the projection of soft power.

The Development of CCTV's Overseas Channels

From the start, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders were highly sensitive and attentive to the role of overseas broadcasting as a form of "foreign propaganda." Their efforts to reach the international audience via broadcasting go back to the early 1940s. On December 3, 1941, it set up China Radio International (CRI)[3] in a cave in Yan'an, aimed at "promoting understanding and friendship between the people of China and people throughout the world."[4] On September 11, 1947, the CCP reached the outside world in an English-language broadcast for the first time. Today, CRI broadcasts 1,100 hours of programs daily in 38 foreign languages, in addition to Mandarin and four other Chinese dialects.

China's first TV station, Beijing TV Station (CCTV's predecessor), was set up in 1958. Shortly after the Great Leap Forward, the CCP Central Committee's Ministry of Propaganda held the first "National TV Foreign Propaganda Conference" in 1963. Only eight TV stations that had survived those tumultuous years attended.[5] Not surprisingly, "foreign propaganda" activities for TV stations in those days simply meant exchanging news documentaries with TV stations in other communist countries, due to technological constraints and ideological orientation.[6]

With economic reforms and new openness to the world since the late 1970s, China is increasingly keen to have its voice heard on the world stage. This became particularly important after the Tian'anmen incident in 1989, when China encountered international criticism (especially among the Western countries) for its lack of human rights. Television had already played an instrumental role in constructing the political and cultural discourse that created and reproduced national identity, loyalty, and pride in Chinese society. Now the Chinese government adopted it again as a vehicle to reconstruct China's image by broadcasting its voice to the world. Not yet able to use satellite channels to reach out directly to foreign publics, China's strategy was to publicize itself through other countries' broadcasting networks. It began developing partnerships with overseas Chinese and foreign TV

Table 4.1 CCTV's Worldwide Bureaus

	Region	*City*	*# of reporters*
Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	8
	Macau	Macau	2
	Taiwan	Taipei	1
Asia	Thailand	Bangkok	2
	Japan	Tokyo	2
	India	New Deli	2
Europe	Belgium (EU)	Brussels	2
	Germany	Berlin	2
	France	Paris	3
	Europe Headquarters	London	12
Eurasia	Russia	Moscow	2
Australia	Australia	Sydney	1
America	United States (UN)	New York	2
	Canada	Toronto	2
	America Headquarters	Washington, D.C.	12
Africa	Egypt	Cairo	3
	South Africa	Johannesburg	1
Latin America	Brazil	Rio de Janeiro	2

Note: Compiled by the author from information on http://cctvenchiridion.cctv.com/01/index.shtml, accessed on December 20, 2009

stations, and set up joint operations abroad so that overseas broadcasting networks could carry Chinese programs.[7] In addition, CCTV actively sought to supply programs to overseas TV stations when they ran special feature programs on China. It provided transnational media groups with programs or related materials about Chinese economy and society when they came to China to make programs.[8]

The early 1990s marked a new phase in China's efforts to reach out to foreign publics with the launch of satellite TV channels for international broadcasting. In 1991, CCTV set up its "Overseas Broadcasting Center." On October 1, 1992, CCTV-4, China's first international channel in Mandarin, began its broadcasting service for overseas Chinese, especially those in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau.[9] In 2000, CCTV expanded further and launched the 24-hour satellite English Channel. The E&F Channel (Spanish and French) followed in 2004, and started to run separately in 2008, followed by CCTV-Arabic and CCTV-Russian in 2009. There are plans to launch a Portuguese channel in 2010, thus ensuring multilanguage coverage through China's satellite TV channels. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the entire CCTV strategic spread in different regions of the world.

With China's growing confidence, the target audiences also changed from the peripheral to the mainstream. Because overseas Chinese are minorities in Western societies, CCTV authorities believed that the focus for "foreign propaganda" should shift to the mainstream society in the United States, Europe, and neighboring countries. Therefore, they chose to use English and other foreign languages in their expansion of soft power and propaganda efforts.[10]

Programming

CCTV International's origin can be traced to English educational programs such as "Follow Me" in the early 1980s. But English TV services did not really come into existence until English news was broadcast at the end of 1986.[11] Together with an interview program called "Focus" and more entertaining programs such as "Cultural Lounge" and "Hello Beijing," they gradually formed a network of English TV programs at CCTV. This network was later converted into CCTV-4, which became an English satellite channel serving Chinese citizens living overseas, ethnic Chinese in other countries, and foreign viewers who were interested in China.[12] In 2000, the 24-hour English Channel CCTV-9 was launched, and CCTV-4 became a Mandarin language channel maintaining its global coverage by targeting overseas Chinese.

Since its inception, CCTV International has been one of China's important platforms to "improve the international opinion environment."[13] It has played a major role in defining, shaping, and projecting China's image and in promoting China's viewpoint concerning a variety of global issues. Over the years, it has revamped itself a few times in hopes of becoming more competitive globally, winning over viewers in the highly saturated international media marketplace.[14] For example, CCTV International, took on a whole new look in 2003, with dramatic changes in its programming. It even started to employ foreign news anchors, a practice unprecedented in recent Chinese media history. Since then, CCTV has hired more international on-air personalities. Presently, more than ten international employees are working for the channel as newscasters and television hosts to "greatly enhance both the professionalism and credibility of CCTV International as an international news provider."[15] It also changed the "News Hour" name to "CCTV International" to assert its brand and increase its international competitiveness. The network changed its tagline from "CCTV International, Your Window on China" to "CCTV International, Your

window on China and the World" in 2004, to better reflect its refined mission of acting as "a window on China for the world" and "bringing to the world the Chinese and Asian perspective on Chinese, regional and international affairs."[16] On April 26, 2010, CCTV International changed its name to CCTV News, and the schedule was changed accordingly. Noteably, the program "CCTV News" was changed back to "News Hour", and the tagline to "CCTV News, Your Link to Asia."

CCTV International's programming consists of news, feature programs, and a language program. An examination of the news programs (e.g., News Hour, News Update, Asia Today, Biz Asia, Biz Talk, New Money, Culture Express, Dialogue, Sports Scene, World Insight, and China 24) shows that the channel not only provides extensive coverage on China, Asia, and other developing nations, but also aims to present its own version of issues and events happening in these countries, thereby providing a Chinese perspective as an alternative to the dominant Western voice in the global arena. Heping Jiang, then chief of CCTV International, spoke at the 2005 Asian Media Summit about its program "Asia Today," a daily 30-minute newscast devoted exclusively to news from Asia. "We believe that none of our worldwide competitors has such a timely and comprehensive program offering [on Asia]," Jiang touted. "World Insight," for example, aims to "provide a Chinese perspective on major global events and Chinese foreign affairs," and "World Wide Watch" offers "daily round-up of world news with a Chinese perspective."[17] In addition, the channel has increased coverage on other global affairs. It is also clear that the news reports on China are not limited to politics, but also highlight China's achievements, especially in cultural and economic developments. This is not surprising. Economic success has given China the confidence to assert itself as a global player. It is also the country's economic development that projects an image of prosperity and societal accomplishment.

Although CCTV Internationall aims to be a 24-hour news channel,[18] the feature programming—consisting of a dozen or so shows, including "Story Board," "Journeys in Times," "Learning Chinese," "Cross Over," "Rediscovering China," "Centre Stage," "Nature and Science" and "Travelogue"—not only takes up a significant number of the programs, but its coverage is largely on China itself. CCTV International's promotion of Chinese culture is of course part of an attempt to display China as an emerging power in a peaceful manner. The channel manages to tap into multiple cultural and ethnically symbolic resources—both traditional and contemporary—and it becomes a showcase for the

Chinese landscape, local customs, historical legacy, and cultural artifacts. For example, the regular magazine program "Around China" in the archived programs introduces peoples, cultures, and economic development of various regions—including ethnic minority groups—while offering viewers glimpses of the beautiful scenery and rich cultural heritage in China. Officials and professionals alike clearly see these shows as important vehicles for boosting China's international image and for reinforcing the country's concept of peaceful development and advocacy of a harmonious world.

The analysis of the CCTV International's programs reveals that the network actively defends China when the country is criticized in the international media on sensitive issues.[19] It also pays much attention to China's environmental protection, political and social stability, national cohesion (especially on the issue of Taiwan and Tibet), anticorruption, human rights, and the reduction of poverty. Although it from time to time challenges Western perspectives on events and issues, it by and large reflects the Chinese government's issue agenda, and rarely discusses contentious topics.[20] Not surprisingly, the notions of "peaceful development," "mutual benefits of China's rise" (to global power), and "harmonious society" are priorities on the overseas publicity agenda.

Distribution and Viewership

CCTV International aims to target a global English-speaking audience, including foreign expatriates working in China.[21] The Chinese government has helped the channel move from mere geographic coverage to gaining access to foreign media markets. The government opened up some southern Chinese TV markets to foreign media in exchange for cable access in the United States for CCTV International. For instance, according to a BBC report,[22] News Corp agreed that its U.S. network, Fox, would carry the English-language channel of Chinese state broadcaster CCTV-9. On October 22, 2001, CCTV and AOL Time Warner (AOL) signed an agreement giving AOL Time Warner access to cable distribution in Southern China, and requesting that AOL-TW put CCTV's English-language channel on the cable network in New York, Los Angeles, and Houston.[23] A 2003 deal with Viacom-owned MTV "assisted in promoting CCTV programs in the United States" by enabling CCTV-9 to broadcast to "30 top-class hotels in 10 major cities in the United States, including Washington D.C., New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Atlanta."[24] Thanks

to these efforts, CCTV International claimed to cover 98 percent of the world within a few years after its launch, with 45 million subscribers outside China.[25]

CCTV has not conducted any systematic overseas audience research so far,[26] but a three-year Internet survey showed that 39 percent of the viewers were non-Chinese outside China, 3 percent were non-Chinese in China, and 58 percent were Chinese, with the majority (43 percent) of them from within China.[27] The study's authors argued that CCTV's beginnings as English learning programs and English news broadcast on its Chinese-language channel, not initially run 24 hours a day, are responsible for the fact that most viewers were Chinese.

Although the study gave some indication of CCTV International's viewership, many questions remained unanswered. For instance, it was not determined in which foreign markets CCTV performed well. The author conducted two informal surveys with first-year students pursuing their Chinese Studies degree (106 respondents in the 2007–2008 survey and 126 in 2008–2009) at the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom. These two groups were selected for several reasons. Previous research efforts at eliciting responses from randomly selected groups on campus and from local communities showed that very few had ever heard of CCTV International. The present groups were therefore selected based on the assumption that, as students of Chinese Studies, they were more likely to have viewed Chinese satellite channels. Also, these groups were composed of students coming from over ten countries/regions, despite a majority of them being British. It was therefore an attempt to elicit responses beyond Britain, albeit on a very limited scale. Finally, most students at this university were from middle- and upper-middle-class social backgrounds and their families were more likely to have Sky satellite dishes, necessary for receiving satellite channels. The questionnaire also included a question exploring whether the respondents knew anyone else who viewed Chinese satellite channels.[28]

The surveys were deliberately timed before and after the summer Olympic Games in China, on the assumption that the Olympics would attract more overseas viewers to CCTV International. However, the results seem to suggest that CCTV International had a low penetration rate among these students. Although all households with Sky satellite dishes are able to receive CCTV International, few had in fact turned to the channel for news and entertainment, and the frequency of usage was extremely low. The interviews showed that viewers mostly switched to CCTV International to learn Mandarin or to watch programs about

Chinese history and culture rather than for news. Despite the limited scope of the studies, the survey responses and the ensuing interviews illustrated CCTV International's scant presence and influence among this subset of the British population, probably indicative of the larger pattern in the United Kingdom as well. This finding is consistent with anecdotes and other observations.

Challenges in Reaching Foreign Publics

Though some U.S. political leaders lament over "the institutional ineffectiveness, lack of strategic direction, and insufficient resources" of today's American public diplomacy,[29] China has aggressively expanded its public diplomatic activities to improve its attractiveness and enhance its global influence. The latest to join the existing overseas broadcasting channels is the Xinhua News Agency, which launched an English-language television news program in July 2009. The nature of Chinese overseas broadcasting has served to centralize and manage Xinhua's activities in conformity with government policies.

The advantages are obvious: the Chinese government can centrally coordinate Chinese TV stations at all levels—by command or coercion—to work together and expand public diplomacy activities abroad. CCTV has always been at the center of shaping the domestic political environment and is also taking up the leading role for "foreign propaganda." Meanwhile, TV stations at all other levels supply CCTV with programs.[30] The State Administration for Radio, Film and Television sponsors an annual national conference on "TV Foreign Propaganda Coordination." Local TV stations regard it as a political task to supply programs and as a political achievement if their programs are chosen to be aired on CCTV.

However, soft power should not be confused with resources. The rise of **s**oft power is not only about the power of transmission, but also about the information transmitted and effective communication with the audience. China and its overseas broadcasters face challenges that come from within China as well as the forces of the international media market. Indeed, in this era of satellite TV channels and Web sites, the explosion of information that is demand-driven rather than supply-driven has posed many challenges to China's state media. China has to compete in a very crowded global media sphere with well-established transnational media organizations, such as BBC and CNN, and newly emerging ones, such as Al Jazeera and France 24.

Credibility and Timeliness

Attraction depends on credibility, a quality that a state-orchestrated image-construction campaign would typically lack. Governments today are suffering to some extent from a credibility problem in communicating with foreign audiences.[31] So this is not just a China problem. Many countries' most effective public diplomacy activities are often independent of their governments. Many commercial media companies and other actors such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have succeeded, because they are considered good forces, unencumbered by the trappings of sovereignty and untainted by real politics.[32] But China does not have such comparable institutions, and there are some indications that its leaders are aware of such a deficiency. For instance, the Office of the Chinese Language Council International claims that it is "a non-governmental and non-profit organization affiliated (with) the Ministry of Education of China."[33] But it simultaneously claims that it "is composed of members from 12 state ministries and commissions." These claims are contradictory, but what is revealing is that the Chinese government is starting to realize the importance of nongovernmental actors to achieve its goals. However, the state owns all Chinese TV stations, due to their politically sensitive nature. The State Council recently announced the creation of entertainment, news, and culture companies with less government backing and the opening of state-owned groups to outside financing.[34] But the state and the Communist Party will likely continue to exert control over news programming.

The roles and missions of CCTV International are obvious: they are to tell China's story to foreign audiences. By its very nature, it is neither a platform for criticisms nor a channel whereby "balanced" views can be presented. In other words, CCTV International is not playing the role of a "neutral" observer. Almost all of the survey respondents in my studies said they would turn to independent media to verify a news story's credibility, rather than rely on the government; only one answered that he would compare with the Chinese source.

The nature and process of the Chinese media also seems to go against the demands of contemporary global communication, which requires timeliness and real-time reporting. Although news coverage of the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008 was timelier, the news gathering and reporting process is often cumbersome. For critical stories, the Information Office of the State Council first drafts the press reportage and then seeks approval from higher authorities before it can disseminate the news to the public and outside world.[35] The scant coverage

of the Tibetan riots in March 2008, and then the turmoil over the Olympic torch relay outside China, caused much dissatisfaction and criticism both domestically and abroad. The strict control over news coverage and the more relaxed management of entertainment programming are the reasons for more feature programs than news programs on CCTV Internatinoal, as one CCTV journalist pointed out in an interview. Although both Chinese media scholars and practitioners know that "news reporting rather than the communication of culture plays the leading role on the world arena,"[36] it is difficult for the Chinese media to win over foreign audiences in a timely fashion under such restrictive conditions, especially on issues the government perceives as sensitive.

Party Logic vs. Market Logic

Another challenge comes from the contradictions of the state-centric model and China's growing media market. CCTV International must follow China's political imperatives, but it also needs to live with the market forces the state has unleashed. China's reach for the international audience is primarily a government undertaking, driven by the party-state's political imperatives rather than for the benefit of the media industry economically. Based on my interviews with CCTV International managers, the channel was set up to influence foreign public opinion and was intended to be a non-profit making operation. Whereas Chinese TV channels generate hefty advertising revenues by offering popular programs such as TV dramas to the domestic audience, CCTV International needs to be more selective in its programs to construct the proper party-state image. For instance, CCTV International cannot show foreign films, though it sees them as a viable way to increase its viewership and to attract advertisers.[37] But, unlike other TV channels in China, CCTV International is not aimed at commercial profit, so staff has little financial incentive to improve programming.

Despite the lack of political status and government support, provincial stations are keen to expand outside China for revenue growth. However, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) issued a stipulation in 2004 that mandates government approval and management of any radio and TV stations' international expansion, including renting and buying new channels or establishing new stations.[38] This regulation effectively prevents any TV or radio stations from expanding outside China on its own.

As China began to allow the market to regulate certain aspects of the media, many channels became largely self-financed and, hence, driven by profit-seeking. Advertising is the main revenue source for the Chinese media, accounting for almost 90 percent of total income in 2004, compared to only 10.7 percent from government subsidies.[39] Concerns about ratings, circulation, and market shares are driving the Chinese media to provide more sensational programs to maximize economic returns.[40] The Chinese government therefore has to deal with a media industry that has its own market logic to follow—local stations lack commercial incentives to invest resources in producing programs for CCTV for overseas publicity.[41]

Policies for CCTV's general Web site also reflect this growing trend toward commercialism. One observer pointed out that CCTV's English Web site looked similar to those of a Western media Web site, but the Chinese version was extremely "visually crowded": loaded with information that ranged from top political leaders' activities to advertisements for insomnia remedies, beauty contests, and get-rich-quick schemes. Obviously, the Chinese version is directed at domestic viewers to generate advertising revenue.

Professionalism vs. Party-Line

Interesting situations often arise when the media industry's views conflict with the government's positions. Another effect of media commercialization and China's reforms is the increasing professionalism among journalists. A new crop of young professionals, a majority of whome have received Western training, now populate CCTV, especially CCTV International. My interviews with the staff there showed that they tend to adhere to journalistic professionalism and question government interference. The remarks of a journalist summarized the way many of them felt about working for CCTV: "It is difficult and different (from the West) to work for CCTV, as it is under strict censorship, and we all know about it." Another journalist expressed his doubt as to whether restrictions on media reportage will relax during and after the Olympics, because it is "the golden opportunity for the party to project (favorable) images to the world, and I don't see any change to happen this year." One journalist also pointed out that the media industry would have difficulty undergoing fundamental changes without political reform.

An analysis of the program "Dialogue," a daily 30-minute interview program on current affairs, over a 2-month period in late 2007

and early 2008, showed that the two hosts tend to push the boundaries by asking guest speakers tough questions on sometimes sensitive topics. For instance, China's concern with its international image was reflected in the frequency of the topic being discussed: three times within one and a half months (on December 24, 2007, January 1, and January 31, 2008). The Western-trained host, Yang Rui, challenged the program guests a few times on what constitutes a nation's image on the December 24, 2007, program. My interviews with program guests revealed that they were encouraged to become more confrontational during the program. What is interesting is that some guests chose not to address certain questions directly if they considered them too "ideological." The guests' behavior during such programs deserves another study, but it is apparent that the hosts tried to adhere to professional standards and to increase viewership by pushing the limits, though not deviating too far from the party's principles. It is never possible to predict the consequences of such discrepancies between the journalists' way of thinking and their daily observance of government regulations. However, there are obviously discordant notes within the state-centric model that are not always in harmony with the government's aims. As John Jirik aptly pointed out, the Party line is "best understood as the constant psychological pressure on journalists not to make certain kinds of mistake, rather than a brief to act as a Party mouthpiece."[42]

Conclusion

China's state-centered model has enabled it to expand its soft power resources rapidly. Within just a few years, CCTV International has claimed its stake in the global media landscape, and continues to grow. However, its small audience in the United Kingdom, for instance, suggests that it will be difficult for China to win the hearts and minds of foreign viewers unless it deals effectively with issues of credibility and government control. Though state-led public diplomacy is by no means unimportant to soft power promotion, China's international broadcasters will have little influence in the global information flow due to problems and challenges in both content production and distribution. All this is determined by the nature of the Chinese media, such as CCTV remaining under tight Party supervision. What China needs is to develop a more independent

overseas broadcasting sector whose programs reflect the interests and habits of international viewers. A Beijing businessman's 2009 purchase of a British TV station has caused some sensation within the Chinese media about its great potential to promote Chinese soft power.[43] It is far too early to predict its influence, but it does give some indication that China is beginning to better understand the importance of working with private enterprises to get its messages across to foreign publics.

Notes

1. As this study was mostly conducted before the name change, we still use "CCTV International" throughout the chapter.
2. I am grateful to those who agreed to my request for interviews, including three leading media academics in Beijing and two in Shanghai, two managerial members of staff and two reporters, one presenter for CCTV International, one reporter for CCTV based in CCTV's European Headquarters in the UK, and two guest speakers on the program "Dialogue." As was agreed, the interviewees remain anonymous in this chapter.
3. CRI has changed its name a few times since its establishment. When it was established it was called *Xinhua News China Radio* (XNCR). In April 1950 when XNCR moved to Beijing, the capital of new China, it was renamed *Radio Peking*, which changed into Radio Beijing in 1983. In 1993, in order to avoid confusion with the local *Beijing People's Broadcast Station*, *Radio Beijing* changed its name to *China Radio International*. For more history on CRI see its Web site at http://english.cri.cn/about_us/first.htm
4. See the Web site of CRI at http://english.cri.cn/about_us/what-we-do.htm
5. Zhenzhi Guo, *The History of Chinese and Foreign Broadcasting and Television* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2005), 243.
6. Xiaosong Tang, "The Development of China's Public Diplomacy and System Building," *Contemporary International Relation* 2 (2006): 42–46.
7. "CCTV's 'Going Out to the Sea with the Help of Others' Boats' Is Constructive to Going out" at the Web site of the SARFT, at http://www.chinasarft.gov.cn/articles/2007/12/11/20071212151101490771.html
8. Ibid.
9. See http://tv.cctv.com/cctv4/index.shtml, accessed on February 10, 2010.
10. Zeng Jianhui, *Melting the Ice, Building a Bridge and Breaking through* (Beijing: Wuzhou Publishing House, 2006), 130.
11. Ke Guo, Wei Wang, and Cuiling Sang, "Globalizing the Local: How China's English TV Media Influence the World?" *Media Research*, 4 (2004), at http://rirt.cuc.edu.cn/html/meijieyanjiu/2007/0612/262.html, accessed on January 7, 2009.
12. Ibid.
13. Zhang Lin, "On the Strategies of News Report on CCTV International Channels," *Modern Communication* 124, no. 5 (2003): 31–34.
14. Heping Jiang, "Window on China and the World CCTV–9," in *Promoting Peace and Prosperity in a Globalised World, Asia Media Summit*, ed. Sucharita S. Eashwar (Publication with UNESCO collaboration/sponsorship: 2005), 173, at http://download.aibd.org.my/books/AMS_05_Promoting_Peace_and_Prosperity.pdf
15. Ibid., 174.
16. Ibid., 173.

17. See "World Wide Watch" at <http://www.cctv.com/program/worldwidewatch/01/01/index.shtml>, accessed December 20, 2009. This program has stopped since April 2010.
18. See Jiang, "Window on China and the World CCTV–9," 173.
19. For example, the special series on "Made in China" in September 2007, which included such episodes as "More Attention on Toy Safety," "Haier Hammers out High Quality."
20. For further discussions see John Jirik, "China's New Media and the Case of CCTV-9," in *International News in the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Chris Paterson and Annabelle Sreberny (Hants, UK: University of Luton Press, 2004), 127–141.
21. From the author's interview with one of the assistant chiefs of CCTV International in 2008.
22. "Murdoch wins China cable TV deal", BBC News, December 20, 2001 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/1721160.stm, accessed on March 21, 2010.
23. John Jirik, "The AOL Time Warner CCTV (China) television exchange: Guanxi in globalization theory," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Marriott Hotel, San Diego, CA, May 27, 2003 *Online* 2010, at http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p111969_index.html
24. See *"CCTV English Channel Landing in United States,"* at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200305/01/eng20030501_116101.shtml, accessed on February 10, 2010.
25. See "About CCTV International," at http://english.cctv.com/english/about/index.shtml, accessed on February 10, 2010.
26. Confirmed by a managerial member of staff at *CCTV International*.
27. Guo, Wang, and Sang, "Globalizing the Local," at http://rirt.cuc.edu.cn/html/meijieyanjiu/2007/0612/262.html, accessed on January 7, 2009.
28. Following the completion of an initial questionnaire that identifies who has used CCTV International, the frequency of their usage, purpose, and their views on the channel, semi-structured interviews were conducted with those who reported to have viewed CCTV International. The purpose of the interviews includes further exploration of the interviewees' perception of the credibility of the channel, the reasons they watch the channel, and what they normally watch on the channel.
29. Guo, Wang, and Sang, "Globalizing the Local," 5.
30. For details see "National TV Foreign Propaganda Co–operation Conference 2005 in Fuzhou, Fujian," at <http://www.cctv.com/tvguide/special/wyh/20050907/100973.shtml>, accessed June 17, 2008.
31. See Lord, *Losing Hearts and Minds?* 111.
32. Brian Hocking "Rethinking the "New" Public Diplomacy," in *The New Public Diplomacy*, ed. Jan Melissen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 39.
33. See http://english.hanban.edu.cn/gywm.php, accessed February 28, 2009.
34. "China Yearns to Form Its Own Media Empires," *New York Times*, October 4 2009, at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/05/business/global/05yuan.html, accessed on March 18, 2010.
35. Zeng, *Melting the Ice, Building a Bridge and Breaking through*, 27.
36. See Li and Zhou, *Soft Power and Global Communication,* 34.
37. From the author's interview with the assistant controller of CCTV International.
38. "Notice on Further Strengthening the Radio, Film and Television 'Going–out Project' Management," at <http://www.chinasarft.gov.cn/articles/2004/10/26/20070919141825580844.html>, accessed March 13, 2008.
39. Zhengrong Hu, "Chinese Media: Transition and Issues," keynote speech at the *China Media Festival* in SOAS, University of London, June 18, 2008.
40. For instance, the first three months of 2008 witnessed three broadcasting stations at the provincial level being severely criticized by the SARFT for putting on pornographic programs.

See 'Publicity,' at http://www.chinasarft.gov.cn/catalogs/gldt/20070903170530620224.html, accessed June 30, 2008.

41. See "National TV Foreign Propaganda Co–operation Conference 2006 in Yunnan," at http://www.cctv.com/tvguide/special/wyh/20060713/103251.shtml, accessed at January 15, 2008.
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CHAPTER FIVE

The Evolving Chinese Government Spokesperson System

Ni Chen

In today's information environment, public communication has proven to be the coin of the realm. This is particularly true when government's image and credibility—consequently legitimacy—are challenged at home and abroad. The Chinese government, gravely concerned about its international image and domestic credibility, has emphasized the use of government communications to connect with its domestic and international stakeholders. This, in part, correlates with Beijing's recent emphasis on the importance of public diplomacy. To combat "the China threat," the leadership under Hu Jintao began to incorporate soft power into diplomatic strategies to reshape foreign public opinions about China and rebuild the country's international image.

In the midst of this reorientation, the Chinese government spokesperson system stands out as a strategically driven effort of government communication. What generated the evolution of such a system? How does this system function in helping the government to reach and address the foreign media? How do the spokespersons get selected, appointed, and trained to face foreign reporters? What, if any, insight can one derive from this look into China's deliberate efforts to promote its public diplomacy worldwide? This chapter attempts to address these largely understudied issues.

The System

Though it has drastically transformed its economic and social systems, China has pursued political reforms quite slowly. Nonetheless, China has made concerted efforts to change the external perception of its political system and policies, thereby reshaping its international image. One related endeavor has been to bring about reforms in China's media system. The media landscape has been transformed relatively quickly, for it no longer serves solely as the "propaganda mouthpiece" of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or the government. To enhance readership or viewer ratings and to maximize advertising income, many state-owned media organizations have changed their content and increased their publications and programming. A few have become "media conglomerates," even expanding into other types of businesses.[1] Journalists have adjusted their roles, with an increased awareness of professionalism and, gradually, a sense of social responsibility. Acknowledging the media's dynamic changes, the Chinese government made communications a priority and moved to adopt the spokesperson system, a common practice among many other nations for government communications in domestic and international affairs.

The rapid growth of communication technology has also served to convince the Chinese leaders of the importance of speaking to the public quickly and directly. The new generation of government officials has realized that traditional propaganda has become obsolete. Many officials now believe that transparency in communication and release of information can help gain public credibility, and thus, political legitimacy. They have recognized the need for a regular communication channel between the government and the public to facilitate an efficient flow of information and to take into account the public's right to know.[2] For example, Zhao Qizheng, (the former director of the State Council Information Office (SCIO), who had also led the development effort in Shanghai's Pudong in the 1990s before becoming the chief of central government communication), pointed out that "a functioning information-releasing system can serve as an effective communication channel, helping to increase the transparency of public administrative/government policies; thus, it plays an important role in enhancing the social stability and furthering economic development."[3]

The Chinese government's spokesperson system came into being in this modern political and media context. The State Council Information Office (SCIO) became the architect and pioneer of the spokesperson system in China when it was put into place in January 1991 to help the government create a desirable image by "explaining China to the

world."[4] It was a timely and, in effect, much-needed move, as China was undergoing an image and credibility crisis worldwide as a result of the 1989 Tian'anmen incident.

SCIO is an administrative office of ministry level under the State Council, China's chief administrative body. According to its Web site, the agency's designated jurisdiction and responsibilities include

1. providing domestic and foreign media with timely and accurate information on China's economic and social development and on major emergency events;
2. compiling and publishing government white papers to present China's policies and positions on major issues to the international community in a comprehensive, systematic, and authentic manner;
3. making interview arrangements for foreign journalists and boosting exchanges and cooperation with press offices of foreign governments and foreign media;
4. sponsoring books/movies/videos and cultural activities to introduce China and the Chinese culture to the world; and
5. pushing forward the sound development of the Internet, and strengthening international exchanges and cooperation in the IT field.[5]

SCIO's principal charge is to speak to domestic and foreign media, especially during crises. To fulfill such a task, its top priority has been releasing information and answering questions at regular and special news conferences. The practice of designating a spokesperson at these news conferences has slowly but surely become an integral part of a central government communication system.[6]

This practice of designating a government spokesperson was occasionally adopted in the earlier years of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Republic of China (PRC),[7] but its regular use is relatively new for the PRC government. It has undergone three phases in its recent development before becoming an institutionalized government function.

Phase I—The Initial Stage (1982–2003)

The PRC historically rejected the spokesperson practice for its external communication as a Western concept. When the country opened up to the world in the late 1970s, however, the reform-minded

leadership under Deng Xiaoping began to view releasing information through news conferences as a special venue for external communication. In February 1982, the CCP Central Committee's Secretariat and the Central Commission for External Propaganda jointly issued an instruction "On the Establishment of Press Spokesperson System and the Improvement of Work on Foreign Journalists." It was the first official Chinese endorsement of the spokesperson model, and it explicitly stated that the practice was intended to reshape international news reporting on China.[8]

The practice was first featured in a "debut" news conference hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on March 26, 1982, in response to a public speech made by then-Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev three days earlier, proposing to reduce Sino-Soviet tensions. Qian Qichen, the head of the MFA's News Division and later the Foreign Affairs minister, acted as the foreign ministry's spokesperson at this rather brief conference. He read a three-sentence announcement to a group of domestic and foreign reporters but took no questions. It was immediately picked up by international news, and Qian's action, however limited, set the spokesperson practice in motion.[9]

On March 1, 1983, News Division Chief Qi Huaiyan announced at a news conference that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) would henceforth release government-related information to domestic and foreign media at regularly held news conferences. He was the first to serve as MFA's official spokesman. With the CCP Propaganda Department's approval, the China Journalists Association (CJA) held an April 23 news conference introducing the first-ever spokespersons for several central government agencies, including the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council.[10] To standardize the practice, the Central Commission for External Propaganda issued "Interim Regulations for the Work of News Spokespersons" in November, which again defined the spokespersons' role as "shaping" foreign reporting on China so as to enhance international understanding and support of the country.[11]

At this initial stage, however, government news conferences still largely followed external propaganda's traditional pattern. The conferences focused almost exclusively on Chinese foreign policies. The spokespersons simply read from scripts, taking no questions from reporters. Although they were regularly scheduled and conducted, the news conferences were limited in both quantity and quality. By and large, the spokespersons looked stiff, spoke exceedingly slowly, and resisted any questions or quests for clarification. "No comment" or

"no further information" became their patterned response to foreign reporters. They were branded government "mouthpieces."[12]

The Office of CCP Central Committee Publicity formally changed its name to the Information Office of the State Council in 1991, shifting the supervision of information release through news conferences from the Party to the government.[13] It was not until 1997 when, driven by China's rapid economic development and events such as China's petition to join the World Trade Organization, Beijing's bid to host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, and the Qiandao Lake Incident in 1994 (when thirty-two Taiwanese tourists drowned and the government failed to release information on the incident in a timely fashion)[14] that SCIO started holding news conferences more frequently in response to the emerging need for timely information. The challenges that the Chinese government faced and the difficulties it encountered suggested that government spokespersons had to confront not only foreign reporters, but also public opinion at home.

With political reforms in slow motion, the quality of information released by the Chinese government remained poor, and the spokespersons' effectiveness was low through the end of the 1990s. The spokespersons suffered from limited credibility due to news conferences being held irregularly, often lagging far behind a big newsworthy event, and spokespersons mainly reading out news releases and entertaining few if any questions. Only a small number of carefully screened foreign reporters were invited ; and the conferences seldom were broadcast or televised live. The information flow was one-way and top-down in direction. Foreign reporters continued to view spokespersons largely as another form of government propaganda.[15] The practice of spokespersons did not gain much traction until 2003, when the devastating SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) epidemic hit China.

Phase II—the Growth Stage (2003–2007)

The spring 2003 SARS outbreak was a turning point. During the crisis, the lack of official information fueled rumors and panic.[16] Without reliable information channels, the public simply got more scared. This, in turn, threatened social stability and hurt the government's image and reputation. The Chinese government suddenly found it essential to provide timely information with openness, speed, ease of availability, and credibility in a crisis situation. The incident and the lessons learned from it led to the realization that achieving a prosperous economy was not sufficient for development, and constructing a more open and

transparent government, one that dealt effectively with communication issues, was equally important.

Worried about the government's international image and domestic credibility, the leadership under President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao decided to make a drastic change on releasing information. SCIO was designated as the central voice to speak to the public on the crisis from April 20 onward.[17] The agency took the lead to launch a series of reforms in the government's spokesperson practice.

First, with the central government's authorization, SCIO took over the SARS–related communication to help better manage the crisis. It incorporated the release of information by other government agencies (the Ministry of Health and Beijing Municipality) into its own, turning its news conferences into the most authoritative venue for information release.

Second, with the pressing crisis, SCIO naturally increased the quantity of news conferences. It held 41 news conferences in 2003, compared to only 9 in 2002. That number jumped to 160 in 2004, transforming news conferences into more or less routine events.

Third, SCIO began to adopt standardized rules for news conferences that were common in international practice. For example, it reduced the time allotted to the "opening statement" from fifty minutes to only five and expanded question-and-answer sessions to accommodate the media's special needs for information. In addition, more overseas and foreign journalists were invited to news conferences.[18]

Fourth, new media were employed to allow more access to government information and greater interaction with government spokespersons. News conferences were made available to the public in real time, with scripts and videos posted in their entirety on appropriate Web sites.

Fifth, senior government officials and experts were invited regularly to participate in SCIO's news conferences, either as guest speakers or communication advisors. This not only improved the accuracy of information released, but also encouraged other government agencies to hold their own news conferences and appoint their own spokespersons.

The SARS experience helped the Chinese communication officials realize that designating spokespersons and improving the quality and quantity of news conferences put the government and public more at ease. They were further convinced that designating spokespersons was an important part of the necessary interaction between the government and the public. With this practice, the media and the public had far greater access to authoritative and comprehensive information. Indeed,

Shanghai's municipal government decided to designate its own spokesperson on June 3, 2003, becoming the first Chinese local government body to do so.

The lessons learned from the SARS crisis also spurred further reforms on releasing government information. Premier Wen emphasized the need to "enhance government transparency and credibility" during his "Government Work Report" at the Third Session of the Tenth National People's Congress in August 2004. This paralleled President Hu Jintao's theme that the Chinese government must be "people-oriented" to transform the country into a harmonious society. The CCP Central Committee passed a resolution to enhance government accountability the following month, calling for more attention to such important social issues as "active promotion" of reporters' "watch-dog" roles and "further improvement of (the) news release system."[19]

With these mandates from the central leadership, the Chinese practice of releasing information through news conferences and spokespersons began to grow quickly by the end of 2005. According to then-SCIO director Cai Wu, the spokesperson system was in place in all seventy central government ministries. In addition, twenty provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities had established their own spokesperson systems, and twenty-three others had plans to do so.[20]

Government news conferences became a regular undertaking at both the central and provincial levels. In 2005, government information offices including SCIO and ministries of central and provincial governments held 1,088 conferences (as compared to 900 in 2004).[21] More and more government officials as well as specialists participated at these conferences as guest speakers. Some even agreed to entertain a few questions. Little by little, government information provided through news conferences and spokespersons gained more credibility in the eyes of both foreign reporters and the Chinese public.

Government agencies also used different channels to help release information in a more timely fashion. In addition to news conferences, SCIO employed a 24-hour telephone inquiry hotline and the Internet. Special efforts were made to help foreign media access needed information, including providing English versions of news releases and Chinese-English translators.

Quantity certainly does not necessarily warrant quality. It seems that Beijing's communication officials understood that perfectly well. As Cai indicated in his February 2006 progress report, SCIO played a proactive role in upgrading the skills of government spokespersons at all levels. In 2005, SCIO prioritized providing training workshops

for current and future spokespersons to improve their communication skills. Forty such training sessions were conducted, with an estimated 3,000 people participating. As a result, spokespersons looked more confident and experienced in releasing information and handling questions and, more importantly, began to construct amicable, professional relationships with reporters, both foreign and domestic.[22]

It is important to note that the fast growth of China's government spokesperson system also spurred further administrative reforms. In January 2007, the State Council passed China's first nationwide "Open Government Information Regulations," which were put into effect at the beginning of 2008. Although aiming to "regulate" information release, the law was framed around the concept of "openness" and transparency, hence further legitimizing the spokesperson system.[23]

Phase III—Mature Stage (since 2008)

Two events in 2008 put China in the spotlight and on everyone's "radar screen" worldwide: the mega earthquake in Sichuan Province and the Summer Olympics in Beijing. In the former, the Chinese government successfully turned the crisis into an opportunity. With the Olympics, it seized the moment to demonstrate the country's strength to the world. The government spokesperson system played a vital role in both instances.

Chinese officials reacted to the Sichuan earthquake crisis quickly as top leaders understood that the government's legitimacy "required them to take quick action in releasing information,"[24] especially at a time when the government's poor handling of the 2003 SARS crisis was still fresh in people's memories. A few hours after the earthquake struck, SCIO became the lead agency in crisis communication on behalf of the rescue and relief effort. During the crisis, SCIO held live news conferences frequently, providing timely information.[25] Each conference lasted roughly an hour and a half, divided almost equally between official statements and reporter questions. These conferences focused on releasing the most updated official information on critical issues such as the death toll, the numbers of wounded and missing, the numbers already rescued and removed to safety, and rescue operations. Information released at the early stages concentrated on the nature of the disaster, the extent of damages, the options available to deal with the crisis, and actual government actions. Through daily updates, briefings, and news conferences, SCIO projected an image of the Chinese government as being open and transparent.

These efforts seemed to have paid off, because they left reporters with the impression that the government was more open to releasing information to domestic and foreign audiences than in 2003. All of this gave the government some much-needed credibility, especially important at a time when officials faced severe international criticism for their tough response to riots and protests in Tibet and Xinjiang. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang, for example, linked China's earthquake response to its human rights record by pointing out that government communication proved that "the Chinese government has carried out a 'people-centered' relief effort."[26]

Chinese government spokespersons seemed better prepared when Beijing was bidding for and showcasing the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, as once again, challenges and opportunities coexisted. Although the Olympics is an international sporting event, foreign critics used it to pressure Beijing concerning its policies toward Tibet and the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region. But the games would also offer China a rare chance to promote its cultural heritage and economic achievements.

SCIO sought help from international expertise. SCIO worked closely with Hill & Knowlton, a global public relations firm, during the bidding process. Following the firm's advice, SCIO attempted to change global public opinion toward China by separating human rights concerns from the bid. Its strategy was to position the bid and the Olympics as a means of further "engaging" China in the international community and "pushing" the country for more changes toward a "peaceful rise." Four fundamental messages were extensively communicated through SCIO and other government agencies' news conferences: (1) China did indeed have the communications technology and infrastructure needed to host the Olympics; (2) China had made great environmental strides, rivaling those of the West; (3) the Olympics were intended to bring the fraternity of sports to the world, including China; and (4) hosting the Olympics would inevitably improve China's human rights outlook.[27]

Another unprecedented action to require government spokespersons to address the concerns raised by foreign reporters before the Games. Beginning in October 2005, almost three years before the Olympics, the Beijing Olympic Games Organizing Committee started holding weekly news conferences. The committee also decided to hold special news conferences whenever reporters voiced concerns over game-related issues, including security measures, ticketing, environmental protection, transportation, or construction. Spokespersons received sustained training on handling questions from reporters, and after three media centers were opened on July 8, 2008, the organizing committee

followed the "international practice" by having a spokesperson meet the media daily at each center.[28]

On August 1, one week before the Games opened, President Hu Jintao met with reporters representing 25 foreign media organizations at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. After giving a short speech, Hu responded directly to reporters' questions. He even appeared frank on some critical questions. In responding to a question by an Al Jazeera reporter on whether the Games would cause more concerns over "the China threat," Hu said China meant to show the world its "peace loving" image and determination through the Olympics. He also claimed that his leadership would push for "more comprehensive reforms including political reforms" after the Games to "expand socialist democracy."[29]

The success in handling communications during the Sichuan earthquake and the Beijing Olympics seems to have convinced Chinese leaders that information release in a "timely, accurate, open and transparent" fashion through the spokesperson system could potentially help the government make the best use of China's "cultural soft power." Since 2008, the Chinese government has strengthened the spokesperson system, and spokespersons have received further professional training.

In another significant development, CCP departments and agencies are in the process of formally adopting the spokesperson practice. At the year's last press conference on December 29, 2009, SCIO Director Wang Chen announced that one of the agency's top priorities in 2010 was to help party departments and committees at both central and local levels designate spokespersons. This was in response to a call by the fifteenth Central Committee's Fourth Plenary Session for the establishment of party committees' spokespersons. Once in operation, the system would enhance transparency over Party affairs. The experience gained by some central party departments—including the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and municipal party committees such as in Nanjing, Shenzhen, Changsha—suggested that they would achieve positive outcomes by employing spokespersons.[30]

It will be interesting to see how the party organizations will adopt the spokesperson practice. The party has thus far relied on its traditional propaganda in mobilizing popular support for its rule in China, and has rigidly institutionalized the propaganda system from the central level down to the county and township. Party hardliners have headed the propaganda operations, exercising broad control over print media,

film, television, and the Internet. With the propaganda (or publicity) departments supervising the party's spokesperson system, it remains a grave challenge to transform propaganda into the "timely, accurate, open and transparent" release of information.

The Spokespersons

The effectiveness of any communications efforts depends largely on the spokespersons. Therefore, the Chinese government hopes to put a human face on its spokesperson system. Certain issues deserve special attention, including who gets selected, what training they receive, and how much autonomy they have. These undoubtedly correlate to the effectiveness of their performance in promoting the Chinese government's image and credibility at home and abroad.

Selection Criteria

In the West, spokespersons' qualifications often entail being articulate, fast on their feet, and thoroughly knowledgeable about the issues they address.[31] These qualifications are closely linked with the requirement of source credibility, associated with the three factors of expertise, sincerity, and charisma.[32] These and other requirements of spokespersons apply not only to private companies but also to public sectors in a democratic setting. For China, the selection criteria include at least the following.

First, it is commonly held that spokespersons should be comfortable with and experienced in dealing with foreign correspondents. Ever since China's reform efforts in the late 1970s, more and more foreign media organizations have dispatched correspondents to set up offices in China. The government has increasingly loosened the restrictions on where they could travel, what organizations they could contact, and who they could interview. Nevertheless, former MFA spokesperson Wu Jianmin pointed out in April 2005 that "the Chinese government officials including communications officials stumbled when dealing with journalists and particularly unprepared to face foreign reporters." As a result, they "lacked skills and experiences" in addressing issues raised by foreign journalists.[33] Thus, a government official's comfort with and ability to deal with foreign journalists stands out as a top requirement for government spokespersons. This applies especially to MFA and SCIO spokespersons. More and more government

institutions are following their example; and their spokespersons have usually been selected from those working in the foreign affairs division, perceived as being more "comfortable" in coping with foreign media.

Second, personal charisma seems to have been consistently emphasized in the selection of Chinese government spokespersons. Chinese officials often appeared rigid, not only lacking enthusiasm when making public speeches, but reluctant to engage the audience. The image of Chinese spokesmen as "robots" hurt the credibility of government-supplied information. The MFA took the lead in reshaping that image by appointing women to the jobs. Since early in the 1990s, the number of spokeswomen has increased, including Li Jingua, former ambassador to New Zealand; Fan Huijuan, former ambassador to Ireland; and Zhang Qiyue, a senior member of the PRC's Permanent Mission to the United Nations. With long working experience in the West, they impressed even the most critical foreign reporters with their personal charisma: they were firm, but open, direct, confident, warm, and engaging. Their "Western-style" presentation, fluent English, and confident smiles increased their credibility.[34]

Third, the government has taken expertise and knowledge seriously in selecting its spokespersons. Whether the audience perceived the spokesperson as an expert on the subject matter is an important determinant of credibility. No spokesperson can be an expert on every issue that concerns the public, but he or she should be willing to work with experts. For instance, the preparation for each MFA news conference consistently stressed the need to gain expertise and knowledge about the issues to be addressed.[35] These processes usually entail research carried out by an in-house group as well as consultation with experts within or outside the government specializing in the issue area. Whenever needed, specialists would be brought directly to the news conferences, either briefing the audience or addressing questions. In the latter, government spokesperson would act largely as facilitators of the gathering, with the invited experts doing the talking. This practice is aimed at reinforcing the impression of expertise and knowledge, and thus credibility.[36]

Fourth, the stature of and roles within the government also seem to have been factors in selecting government spokespersons. To this date, policy making within the Chinese government is not transparent, and this is particularly true in the area of foreign policy. Whether a policy declaration will attract any attention of foreign reporters

depends in part on which spokesperson announces it. A person with a high stature within the government or known to be within the decision-making circle would entail a lot more credibility.[37] SCIO is noted for its sensitivity on this issue. When he was appointed to head SCIO in April 1998, Zhao Qizheng brought a great deal of political prestige. Prior to this post, he was the CCP Central Committee's deputy chief of external communication, and was known as a close associate with then-Party Secretary Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rong Ji. During his seven-year tenure, Zhao not only appeared at SCIO's news conferences but also spoke as an invited guest at prominent international forums in various countries. He was even called Beijing's "White House spokesperson."[38] Zhao's successor, Cai Wu, carried the same political stature. Cai had worked as a senior leader of the Chinese Youth League's Central Committee and as the deputy minister for the Party Central Committee's International Liaison Department. In both positions, he had long been associated with Hu Jintao, who became CCP's secretary-general in 2002. As a perceived insider of the top leadership circle, Cai added a great deal of "authority" to SCIO's news conferences. For more than three years, his appearances at SCIO news conferences attracted the largest audiences. When he left the post in 2008, he openly advocated granting more "autonomy" to government spokespersons in releasing information.[39]

Overview of Spokespersons

A look at the recently released lists of all government spokespersons offers some insights into how they were selected. As an act of transparency, the Chinese government published three lists of government spokespersons (161 in total) on December 29, 2009. The first consists of CCP Central Committee departments (five departments with six spokespersons), the second includes ministries and administrations within the State Council (76 agencies with 101 spokespersons), and the third contains all 31 provincial and autonomous regional governments (with 54 spokespersons).[40]

The number of spokespersons is not evenly distributed across the Chinese bureaucracy. Some central government agencies have appointed more spokespersons than others, and it is the same at the provincial level. Of the CCP Central Committee's five departments listed, the Central Taiwan Work Office (CTWO) appointed two, but the others have only one each. It should be noted that no spokesperson is listed

with the two key departments of propaganda and organization. The State Council has several agencies that have multiple spokespersons.

- The Ministry of Civil Affairs has four spokespersons.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and the General Administration of Press and Publication each has three spokespersons.
- The Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Ministry of Health, the National Population and Family Planning Commission, National Bureau of Statistics, National Tourism Administration, China Banking Regulatory Commission, and Civil Aviation Administration each has two.

For the thirty-one provincial and autonomous regional governments, more than half (sixteen) have appointed multiple spokespersons. Among them, Xinjiang Autonomous Region and Heilongjiang Province have the most, with each having four appointed spokespersons. The provinces of Guangxi, Guangdong and Shandong each have three spokespersons. Xizang (Tibet), Gansu, Yunnan, Chongqing, Hainan, Hunan, Hubei, Fujian, Anhui, Liaoning, and Shanxi list two each. Interestingly, the economically dynamic areas (such as Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Beijing, and Tianjin) each have only one.

These differences seem to suggest different concerns and emphases. For the Central Committee, Taiwan remains a high-profile issue, whereas corruption, ideology control, and officials' appointment are still downplayed. The central executive body (SC) appears to expect public attention to focus on its policies on social welfare, ethnic affairs, public health, economic development, cultural affairs, banking regulations, and foreign affairs. It is likely that, in the eyes of government leaders, these topics have generated more positive outcomes for the government than others such as education, work safety, and public security. At the provincial level, Xinjiang continues to attract foreign reporters' attention as ethnic conflicts are fast growing region-wide, and the less developed regions seem more anxious to create an image of "openness" than the developed ones.

Government spokespersons are selected from different divisions and units, but predominantly from secretariat and administrative offices. The background of the six spokespersons of the Central Committee's departments is evenly divided among executive offices, policy analysis,

and information and communication. Here is a breakdown of where the 101 SC spokespersons come from:

- 35 (34.5%) from the secretariat;
- 22 (21.8%) from the administrative division,
- 13 (12.9%) from the policy analysis division;
- 9 (8.9%) from the information office;
- 8 (7.9%) from the propaganda office,
- 3 (2.9%) from the foreign affairs division;
- the remaining 11 (10.9%) from other offices.

The provincial spokespersons (54 in total) consist of 30 (55.6%) from secretariat and administrative offices, 18 (33.3%) from the information office, and 6 (11.1%) from the propaganda division.

Although the party is somewhat balanced, the SC agencies and local governments tend to lean toward their staff officials. Within the Chinese administrative system, people working in secretariat and administrative offices are among the closest to top decision makers. They usually act as speech writers, policy analysts, policy advisors, and liaisons with top leaders. They are presumably among the most knowledgeable about policies and policy issues. As many as 70 of the SC spokespersons (69.3%) and 30 (55.6%) of the provincial ones can be characterized as having such policy expertise, reflecting its importance in the appointment practices. It is noteworthy that people with communication experiences—but who are not close to top leaders or the decision-making circle—do not compose the majority: they make up only two from the party's information offices, 17 (including from propaganda offices, 16.9%) of the State Council, and 18 from local governments.

Government spokespersons also tend to hold senior positions. With the departments of the CCP Central Committee, four of the total six were appointed as division heads, and the other two are deputy division heads. The spokespersons of the SC agencies consist of 8 (7.9%) vice ministers, 64 (63.4%) division heads, and 29 (29.7%) deputy division heads. The provincial and autonomous regional governments follow a similar pattern: 29 (53.7%) of their spokespersons are division chiefs and 18 (33.3%) are deputy chiefs. All these positions are characterized as "high ranking."

In China's bureaucratic system, official ranks matter greatly. The Chinese government certainly wants its "voice" to the public to be viewed as authoritative. When the eight spokespersons with vice

minister appointments speak at any news conferences, for example, their words naturally carry much weight. Those with division head appointments also convey the impression that they speak with insider knowledge, though to a lesser degree. It is, however, interesting to note that no spokesperson at the provincial level carries a governor or vice governor title, although many of the governors and vice governors were invited to speak at SCIO news conferences during the 2008 Sichuan earthquake crisis.[41]

Training and Development

Regardless of their background or official ranks, government spokespersons are to communicate publicly and directly. Their communication skills and experience tend to make a difference, particularly when news conferences become a routine arrangement, broadcast live on television and online, and often simultaneously translated from Chinese into English. Thus, professional training has increasingly become an integral part of the government's spokesperson system. In an interview with *Beijing Review* in August 2006, then-SCIO director Cai Wu stressed the need to offer spokespersons at all levels regular training.[42]

Indeed, China has made sustained efforts in the training of government spokespersons. So far, four different venues have been employed. First, SCIO sponsors national government spokesperson seminars. Launched in September 2003, these two- to three-day seminars have been offered almost annually for spokespersons from ministries, administrations, and commissions under the State Council. Second, SCIO and local agencies co-sponsor training courses, which often aim to help select spokespersons for the agencies. These are usually in the form of a two-day workshop, held locally and with SCIO communication officials as trainers. Third, SC's agencies and provincial and municipal governments organize their own training courses. This has recently become a principal training platform. In 2009, for example, eleven provinces and five municipalities held training seminars.[43] Fourth, national key universities offer certificate programs for government spokespersons. The programs at Tsinghua University and the Chinese University of Communication are among the most recognized.[44]

Government spokesperson training stresses practical and experiential learning, which is reflected in three aspects. First, most of the

lecturers are seasoned communication practitioners, including government spokespersons (e.g., Zhao Qizheng, Cai Wu, Wu Jianmin), and prominent TV talk-show hosts and commentators (e.g., Cao Jingxing of Phoenix TV in Hong Kong). Also, international communication and public relations specialists are brought in as trainers. Second, the approach of simulation and interactive learning is frequently employed at the training seminars. A Beijing spokeswoman, Deng Xiaohong, recalled that she had learned the most at a training seminar featuring World Health Organization (WHO) communication specialists. At the seminar, she was assigned to host a mock televised news conference with WHO trainers playing the role of foreign reporters.[45] Third, as part of the training, spokespersons are dispatched abroad to observe how their foreign counterparts perform. For example, a Chinese delegation—consisting of twenty-one spokespersons from eight central government agencies and three provincial agencies—visited the United States in 2009. Its field trip to the United Nations included attending a news conference hosted by U.N. secretary-general's spokesperson Michele Montas and an in-depth exchange with Montas after the conference.[46]

Conclusions

This is a preliminary and descriptive study of the Chinese government spokesperson system. It is also an attempt to look at how government communications play out in Beijing's exercise of public diplomacy. One can derive several implications from this study.

First, China's use of spokespersons to communicate with the outside world was driven largely by concerns over its international image. The goal was to reshape international media's portrayals of the Chinese government, which in the eyes of Chinese leadership have played a significant role in fostering the "China threat" sentiment around the world. The Chinese leadership found taking defensive actions and negative attitudes toward foreign news reporting ineffective and often counterproductive, particularly during crises and over politically sensitive policies. Therefore, it has slowly realized that the government should communicate with the foreign media proactively. It was not until the 2003 SARS crisis, the earthquake disaster, and the 2008 Olympics that enough lessons were learned to make the spokesperson system a routine function across government agencies and at all levels.

Second, the Chinese political and media contexts have shaped the evolution of government spokesperson systems. At first, political and professional factors hindered the spokesperson system's development. For example, government spokespersons had their hands tied, because they were only considered as mouthpieces, thereby exerting tight control over information and the press. In light of the ever-changing media landscape, especially with the rise of digital media, and China's gradual political reform, concepts of information freedom, political transparency, and government accountability have increasingly appeared in public discourse, and more importantly the government has moved to adapt and adopt some of these principles.[47] It is within this context that the Chinese government has institutionalized the practice of spokesperson as an instrument of external communication and a form of public diplomacy.

Third, the government spokesperson practice indicates some encouraging trends. For the Chinese government, there certainly is a growing recognition and pressure to share information with the public more quickly and truthfully. The spokesperson practice rests on the "two-way asymmetrical model" in communicating with the media and employs communication strategies accordingly.[48] Moreover, the spokespersons appear conscientious in setting the agenda and framing the issues that would help reshape the government's image and reputation. They have made deliberate efforts toward building and cultivating relationships with the media, particularly foreign correspondents.

Fourth, the government seems to have paid attention to credibility in selecting, appointing, and training the spokespersons. Though it has stressed personal charisma in selection policies, expertise in government policymaking seems to stand out as the most commonly sought qualification. It is interesting to note that the government has also made ranks and concurrent appointments an important criterion, reflecting the influence of China's bureaucratic culture. Although government agencies are increasingly integrating public relations into their operations, they have not yet fully professionalized the spokesperson practice. To rectify such a shortcoming, the government has vigorously incorporated professional training into the spokesperson system to develop expertise and cultivate talent.

The government spokesperson practice also faces new challenges. The most outstanding one is how to balance addressing foreign media

and communicating with domestic audiences. Partly intrigued by the foreign-oriented government communications, domestic publics have been increasingly calling on the government to release information promptly and to communicate with them in an open, honest, and direct fashion. The Chinese government has responded to such domestic pressure by, for example, extending the practice of government spokespersons into the party sector and the local levels. After all, improving communicating with its domestic public will help the government foster a more positive image abroad.

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CHAPTER SIX

Chinese Corporate Diplomacy: Huawei's CSR Discourse in Africa

Lu Tang and Hongmei Li

Africa is now dubbed as "China's new frontier."[1] In 2007, China's investment in Africa reached US$1.57 billion, a whopping 202 percent increase from 2006, and an estimated 900 Chinese companies were operating in 49 African countries.[2] In the same year, the trade between China and Africa reached $73 billion.[3] The presence of China and Chinese companies in Africa has been the target of intense international curiosity and scrutiny. Although enthusiasts marvel at Chinese companies' success in Africa, more critics have emerged. Human rights groups and activists condemn China for providing arms to the Sudanese government in exchange for access to Sudan's oil and criticize Chinese companies for their continuing operation there despite the dismal human rights condition in the country. They also accuse Chinese companies of dangling on the skirts of unpopular dictators in Africa such as Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe. Environmentalists criticize Chinese construction companies for starting large-scale infrastructure projects in Africa, such as building dams and railways, without thoroughly evaluating the environmental and ecological impacts of these projects. African consumers and local business owners accuse Chinese companies of flooding the African market with low-quality, cheap Chinese imports.[4]

Chinese companies' image is also China's image. How Chinese companies are perceived greatly influences how China is perceived abroad. As Christa Freeland, the U.S. managing editor of the *Financial*

Times, pointed out, "[a] country's businessmen are its best ambassadors abroad."[5] In Africa, the Chinese government's public diplomacy efforts and Chinese companies' practices are intricately related. On the one hand, the success of the Chinese government's diplomacy in the last few decades laid the foundation for Chinese companies to enter the African market successfully. On the other hand, actions of Chinese companies affect China's image as a nation and the effectiveness of China's public diplomacy efforts in Africa as well as the rest of the world. How Chinese companies deal with and talk about corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an important factor that impacts their corporate images and China's national image in Africa.

This chapter presents a case study of the African CSR discourse of Huawei Technologies, a leading Chinese telecommunication company, within the broader context of China's public diplomacy in Africa. Our analysis of Huawei's Web site, CSR reports, annual reports, employee newspapers and blogs, and news reports shows that Huawei promotes a development model of CSR, which is consistent with China's model of development. Huawei's business model in Africa, however, can potentially backfire on China's public diplomacy efforts on the African continent.

China's Soft Power in Africa and Corporate Diplomacy

The last three decades have witnessed a steady rise of China's soft power in the developing world.[6] China has been promoting its soft power among developing countries through cash grants, aid projects, low-interest loans, economic collaboration agreements, direct investments, and cultural exchange. Such efforts appear to have been successful. Public opinion polls conducted by both the BBC World Service and Pew Research Center demonstrated that countries with a positive attitude toward China are primarily developing nations.[7]

At the center of China's soft power is the rising popularity of its distinctive development model, often referred to as the "Chinese Model of Development" among Third World countries, and "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" within China. It is also known as the "Beijing Consensus" in the West. The Beijing Consensus represents a top-down approach to economic development: market economy fueled by "a commitment to innovation and constant experimentation," regulated by the state and guaranteed by political and societal stability based on political self-determination.[8] It is considered an alternative to the

Washington Consensus promoted by the United States, which emphasizes economic development based on the free market and political democracy.

China has been especially successful in cultivating soft power in developing countries that the West has failed to penetrate, such as Iran, Zimbabwe, and Venezuela.[9] Guided by its "non-interference in domestic affairs" principle, China takes a constructive engagement approach in dealing with these countries, insisting on letting other countries make decisions on their internal affairs.[10] This noninterference principle stands in sharp contrast to the practices of Western countries, which often bundle economic aid with political demands, and makes China very popular among many developing countries.[11]

China's soft power in Africa has been on the rise in the past half a century. China's close relationship with Africa dates back to the 1955 Bandung Conference, during which newly independent Asian and African countries committed to developing Asia-Africa cooperation without political alignment.[12] In the 1960s and 1970s, China developed many international aid programs to build factories, railways, stadiums, and dams in Africa, despite China's own poverty. Zhou Enlai, China's premier at the time, characterized such aid as "the poor help the poor."[13] In the late 1970s, China started to focus on its own economic development and its aid to Africa, though still continuing, received much less attention.[14] Entering the new millennium, China further developed its ties with African countries by championing the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000. The forum is characterized by "pragmatic cooperation" and "equality and mutual benefit."[15] China has successfully utilized the forum to create close cooperation with African countries. Today, FOCAC has been expanded to include forty-nine African countries.

A strategic shift has occurred in China's engagement in Africa. China's African diplomacy in the 1960s and 1970s was characterized as "economy for diplomacy," i.e., providing foreign aid for political/ideological influence. Since the 1990s, China's strategy in Africa can be characterized as "diplomacy for economy," with economic cooperation and cultural exchange as the new foci.[16] Today, China has established twenty-one Confucius Institutes in thirteen African countries.[17] Over 18,000 African students have studied in China with scholarships from the Chinese government.[18] Such cultural exchanges are established to promote African students' familiarity with China and Chinese culture. In addition, the new Sino-African relationship has focused on economic cooperation and trade. China replaced the traditional, unilateral

aid approach with a "co-development" approach, taking advantage of mutual needs, that is, China's need for Africa's natural resources and market and Africa's need for China's capital and technologies, for a win-win outcome. As Western companies packed up and left Africa in the 1990s, believing it was a failed continent, Chinese companies moved in and Sino-African trade increased by sevenfold between 2000 and 2007.[19]

Scholars have pointed out that business corporations are important players in public diplomacy.[20] Jeffrey E. Garten, the former Undersecretary for International Trade in the U.S. Department of Commerce and dean of the Yale School of Management, argued that corporate interests and American foreign policy have been closely related throughout U.S. history. He has therefore called on the administration and business leaders to work together strategically.[21] Corporations could play an important role in public diplomacy by promoting a global worldview and sharing management practices.[22]

Indeed, the Chinese government's diplomacy and Chinese corporations' expansion in Africa have gone hand-in-hand. China's diplomatic efforts in Africa paved the way for Chinese corporations' successful entry into the continent. The Chinese government introduces Chinese companies into Africa by helping them establish contacts with local business and political leaders and by commissioning them to work on large-scale aid projects in Africa. Chinese governmental agencies also give African countries concessional loans with the condition that Chinese companies enjoy priority in bidding for projects funded by these loans.[23] Furthermore, the Chinese government encourages its companies to expand into Africa by giving them low-interest loans, grants, and technical assistance.[24] China's economic diplomacy in Africa has succeeded and reinforced China's role as a leader in the South-South dialogue.[25]

The successes and failures of Chinese companies affect China's national image and the effectiveness of China's public diplomacy efforts in Africa. Chinese companies' success elevates China's image in Africa. African stakeholders have praised Chinese companies for their productivity and work ethic on numerous occasions. However, Chinese corporations' controversial practices threaten the benign image China is trying to project in Africa. The global civil society has expressed concerns over how Chinese companies have negatively affected human rights, environmental conservation, governance, labor conditions, and economic sustainability in Africa.[26] In her recent book *China's African Challenges*, Sarah Raine identified seven major charges against Chinese

companies in Africa: a preference to import workers and materials rather than utilizing local resources, low wages paid to local workers, lack of business transparency, low product quality and safety, disregard for the environmen, enjoying an unfair advantage from excessive governmental subsidy, and narrow and imbalanced bilateral trade.[27]

Such charges threaten China's co-development goal and the sustainability of its soft power in Africa. In recent years, increasing numbers of people in African countries have started to express their dissatisfaction with Chinese companies' practices, and sometimes, even an anti-China sentiment against all Chinese people in Africa. For instance, the Senegal Trade Association (UNACOIS) delivered an ultimatum to the Senegalian president in 2004, demanding that he "drive all the Chinese from Senegal" in a month, as the accumulated resentment toward cheap Chinese products that flooded the country's market reached a fever pitch.[28] Similarly, anti-China sentiment is rising in Zambia, a country that has maintained a cordial relationship with China since its independence from the British rule in 1964. In 2005, an explosion killed fifty-two workers at an explosives plant in Zambia's Copperbelt region. The accident was attributed to the plant's Chinese managers' failure to implement safety measures. The families and friends of those who died took to the street to protest against the Chinese company. The Zambian police cracked down on the protestors, leading to further aggravated tension between local Zambians and Chinese.[29] The anti-China sentiment flared so high in Zambia that the pro-Taiwan opposition presidential candidate Michael Sata, who ultimately lost the race in 2008, vowed to expel all Chinese if elected.[30]

The Chinese government initially took a defensive stance against Western and African countries' criticisms of Chinese companies, dismissing such allegations as hypocritical and intended at preventing China's rise in Africa. Recently, the Chinese government has gradually come to recognize the links among Chinese companies' practices in Africa, China's national image, the Sino-African relationship, and China's relationship with the West at large. The Chinese government began to encourage Chinese companies to conduct business in Africa in a socially responsible manner. For example, China's Ministry of Commerce started to work with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2005 to establish CSR guidelines for Chinese companies in Africa. The State Council issued "Nine Principles on Encouraging and Standardizing Foreign Investment" in 2007, requiring Chinese companies to observe local laws, protect the environment, and provide training and safety drills

to local workers. When Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Namibia in February 2007, he held a special meeting with Chinese companies there and told them to invest in local communities, improve product quality, be socially responsible, and create a positive image of China.[31] It is, therefore, important to study how Chinese companies handle their social roles and conduct business in Africa, and how their actions affect the symbiotic relationship between the images of Chinese companies and China in African countries.

CSR with Chinese Characteristics

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)—or similar terms such as social responsibility, corporate social responsiveness, corporate citizenship, and sustainable development—refers to business corporations' obligations to society beyond business interests and minimal legal requirements.[32] Only recently have Chinese companies started to talk about CSR at home and abroad. Recent surveys of Chinese companies' corporate communication and public relations executives showed that although most consider CSR important, the primary reasons for their CSR engagement were to elevate companies' image and build corporate culture. Most companies proclaim that protecting the environment, energy conservation, employee's health and safety, and product quality are the most important dimensions of their CSR engagement, but they also admit that their current CSR activities are mainly focused on public philanthropy such as disaster relief, education, and support for the youth and the elderly. Issues such as advancing civil rights and improving international relations are considered least important.[33]

CSR in the West is based on three ideas: human rights, citizenship, and liberalism. First of all, CSR is built on the idea that companies need to respect the rights of their different stakeholders. For instance, Stohl, Stohl, and Townsley found that corporate codes of ethics in the West have evolved through three stages: ethics as maximizing profits (emphasizing the rights of shareholders), ethics as ethical treatment of employees (emphasizing the rights of employees), and ethics as respecting the collective rights of human beings to a safe environment and a sustainable future (emphasizing the rights of general public).[34] Another philosophical root of today's prevailing definition of CSR is the notion of citizenship, specifically corporate citizenship, an idea that started in the 1980s and 1990s.[35] Being good corporate citizens means helping to deal with social problems that governments cannot solve and

participating in decision making as members of the civil society.[36] It entails a shift in corporations' relationship with society from a passive response to social pressure to a proactive engagement with social issues. Finally, CSR is based on the assumption that corporations operate in a society based on the logic of competitive market only and are free from governmental interventions. Though governments can sometimes influence the operation of business corporations, today's multinational corporations (MNCs) have the power and resources to resist government's pressure and operate on their own terms. Many have chosen to do so.[37] Any other parties with an interest in corporations or their CSR policies are stakeholders. Corporations make their own decisions on how to practice CSR, while considering the needs and requirements of different stakeholders.

CSR with Chinese characteristics is based on China's different conceptualizations of the three philosophical roots discussed above. First, the rights to survival and development are considered the most essential human rights in China.[38] In the Western context, human rights typically include individuals' rights to freedom, safety, and equality. These values are considered universally true and are believed to transcend cultural and national boundaries.[39] China rejects the universalism in Western ideas of human rights and insists that individual countries have the right to define human rights on their own terms. At the center of the debate between the universalist and relativist approaches to human rights is the relationship between two types of rights: civil/political rights and social/economic rights.[40] Proponents of universal human rights believe that these two sets of rights should go hand-in-hand, whereas relativists argue that whether these two sets of rights should or can coexist is culturally specific. In China, the dominant discourse about human rights is that the rights to economic development and to live free from poverty are paramount in developing countries such as China, whereas political reform might lead to social instability, which in turn, can potentially hinder economic development.

Another philosophical foundation of Western CSR is the notion of citizenship, which states that corporations are citizens of society and are thus entitled to participate in deliberation and decision making to improve society. The concept of citizenship was introduced to China in the early nineteenth century and is still relatively foreign to the Chinese society, which has traditionally emphasized obedience and duty.[41] Today, Chinese companies typically frame their relationship with the state in terms of their compliance to governmental policies

and regulations.[42] As a result, Chinese companies are less likely to take a proactive approach to social problems, and compared to their Western counterparts, Chinese companies' CSR agendas are more likely to be framed by the government.

The free market, the third foundation of the notion of CSR in the West, does not exist in its original sense in China. Despite China's economic privatization, the Chinese government still wields enormous power over how corporations conduct their business and how they practice CSR. The Chinese government initially rejected the Western notion of CSR promoted by nongovernmental organizations and some Chinese intellectuals. Chinese officials maintained that China needs to define CSR on its own terms.[43] However, the Chinese government expected China's MNCs to present themselves as up to Western standard in terms of their CSR performance to the world. After several leading Chinese MNCs received poor ratings for their CSR practices by *Fortune* magazine in 2007, the Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council issued a document in January 2008, requiring companies owned by the central government to be exemplary in fulfilling their CSR. Subsequently, most of the Fortune 50 Chinese companies issued their CSR reports following the guideline of the *United Nations Global Compact* within weeks. Clearly, in China, CSR is not the sole business of corporations, but part of the larger picture the Chinese government wants to paint. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the Chinese government's determination in defining CSR on its own terms and its desire to appear up-to-par in global society may cause inconsistency between Chinese companies' CSR communication and their actual CSR practices. It is in this context that we are going to analyze Huawei's presence and its CSR discourse in Africa.

Huawei's African CSR discourse: A Case Study

Huawei Technologies was founded in 1988 in Shenzhen by Ren Zhengfei, a former People's Liberation Army officer. It was a small private company with an asset of a mere 21,000 Yuan (around $3,000). But Huawei has since rapidly grown into one of China's leading telecommunications companies and the fifth-largest competitor in the global market. The company reached global contract sales of $16 billion in 2007, which was a 45 percent increase from 2006. About 72 percent of the increase in 2007 came from international markets. Today, the

company employs a workforce of more than 80,000 on all continents, more than half of whom work in research and development. Huawei started its operations in Africa in 1997 in Kenya and is now the largest Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) product provider in the region. Its sales in Africa topped $2 billion by 2006. At present, the company employs around 30,000 people in 40 African countries.[44]

Huawei's African CSR Discourse

Organizational discourse is the "structured collections of texts embodied in the practices of talking and writing that bring organizationally related objects into being as these texts are produced, disseminated and consumed."[45] Organizational discourses influence organizational members' attitudes and behaviors by shaping their priorities and preferences. As a result, though it is important to study what organizations do, it is sometimes even more important to examine what organizations say. Understanding Huawei's discourse about its CSR activities in Africa will shed light on how the company and its employees define the company's relationship with African society. Furthermore, examining Huawei's African CSR discourse in the context of China's rising soft power in Africa will provide insight into business corporations' role in public diplomacy. It is clear that both Huawei's overall CSR discourse and its African CSR discourse have become more sophisticated over time.

Huawei paid special attention to telling the world that it is conducting business in a socially responsible manner in Africa. Besides its annual CSR report, Huawei published a separate CSR report focusing solely on its operation in Africa in 2008, titled "Enriching life through communication: A local player in Africa committed to social responsibility."[46] This is Huawei's first CSR report focused on a particular region. To understand Huawei's African CSR discourse, we rely mainly on the following texts: CSR sections in Huawei Annual Reports (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008), Huawei CSR Report (2008), and Huawei African CSR Report (2008). Other texts, including company documents and employee newspapers, are also used in interpreting Huawei's CSR discourse. Table 6.1 provides a summary of the themes in Huawei's CSR discourse during this period.[47] It is clear that both Huawei's overall CSR discourse and its African CSR discourse have become more sophisticated over time. While there was virtually no

Table 6.1 CSR in Huawei's Annual Reports, 2005–2008

Year	*Overall CSR themes*	*CSR Themes in Africa*	*Major texts*
2005	• Disaster relief • Donation (money, telecom equipment) • Donation to education • Employee volunteers		Annual Report 2005
2006	• Bridging the digital divide • Environment • Giving back to local communities • Localization • Disaster relief	• Contribution to the development of local telecom industry • Local training centers • Local employees	Annual Report 2006
2007	• Bridging the digital divide • Environmental protection • Social contributions • Socially responsible supply chain • Employee growth and security	• Charitable donations • Donation of telecom equipment • Local training centers	Annual Report 2007
2008	• Bridging the digital divide • Environmental protection • Contributions to local community • Supply chain • Employees	• Bridging the digital divide – Extending Telecommunications services to remote areas – Elevating local telecommunications expertise • Environmental protection, energy savings and emission reduction (e.g., reusable energy) • Social contributions – Battling against natural disasters – Medical and health donations – Educational donations • A local player	Annual Report 2008 CSR Report 2008 African CSR Report 2008

mention of African CSR in 2005, Africa occupied a central position in Huawei's CSR discourse by 2008.

The Discourse of Development

Huawei's African CSR discourse centers on the theme of development. The company defines its CSR vision in Africa as "growing with Africa." This vision clearly indicates that the development of the company and the development of local communities in Africa are two most essential components of the company's CSR achievements on the African continent.

Development of the company: Though the development of the company itself is not typically considered part of its social responsibility, it is quite common for Chinese companies to present their own growth—revenues and profits generated, and taxes paid—as their most important contribution to society. This is the case with Huawei's CSR discourse. According to Archie Carroll's influential model of CSR, the profitability of a business is the economic dimension of its CSR.[48] Milton Friedman took a similar view, saying, "The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits . . . to make the most money as possible while conforming to the basic rules of the society, both those embodied in law and those embodied in ethical culture."[49]

Huawei acknowledges that its employees in Africa are working long hours under extremely harsh conditions. However, the company does not frame such a condition as a problem of labor conditions. Instead, Huawei celebrates it as a manifestation of its employees' spirit of "determined struggle despite of extreme hardship" (*jianku fendou*) for the company's development. For instance, Huawei's senior management published an important and very often quoted article titled "Heaven rewards the diligent" (*tiandao chouqing*) in the company's employee newspaper in 2006. The article centers on the importance of "*jianku fendou*" as vital to Huawei's survival and growth, saying,

> *Jianku fendou* is the soul and theme of Huawei's culture. We should under no circumstance lose our culture of *fendou* (struggle) because of outside misunderstanding and doubt. We should under no circumstance depart from our root—*Jianku fendou*—despite Huawei's development.[50]

The article goes on to give examples of employees' selfless contributions to the company's global expansion.

> When we moved out of China to expand our global operation, we found that all the good markets had already been snatched up by Western companies. We had a glimpse of hope only in those remote, politically unstable regions with disagreeable natural environments, where Western companies had not bothered to occupy. To seize this last opportunity, countless brilliant sons and daughters of Huawei left their motherland and families behind to work overseas. In disease-ridden Africa, in Iraq where the air still smells of gunpowder, in Tsunami-devastated Indonesia, and in Algeria right after major earthquakes, you can always see Huawei people's determined struggle. Some of our employees climbed snow-capped mountains, braved jungles, and walked for eight days on foot to provide customer services to our new market. [. . .] Some employees got injured in terrorist attacks or contracted malaria, but went back to their job posts immediately after their recovery.

Development of local communities: Though Huawei emphasizes its own development as one of its primary CSR achievements, the company puts more emphasis on its contributions to the development of local communities in the following areas: building telecommunication infrastructure, training local employees, contributing to education and environmental conservation.

As a telecommunications company, Huawei's business is to build wireless communication infrastructure (e.g., transmission towers), sell devices (e.g., cell phones), and provide supporting services at a more affordable price than its Western competitors. Huawei emphasizes "bridging the digital divide" as its most important contribution to Africa. The company discusses how it developed low-cost wireless communication infrastructure to provide telephone, fax, and Internet services to remote rural areas of Côte d'Ivoire (formerly known as Ivory Coast), where it was too costly to build traditional landlines. The idea of providing a little child living in a remote African village access to the wonderful outside world through the Internet is a powerful image that can capture many people's imagination. For instance, Huawei's 2008 CSR report told the story of Lillian, a ten-year-old girl in Cameroon, who surfed on the Internet for the first time and was able to see pictures of the Disneyland, thanks to

the telecommunication network Huawei built and the computers it donated to her school.

To Huawei, the economic development of local communities goes beyond the building of physical infrastructure to include local human resource development. Huawei has established training centers in six African countires: Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, Tunisia, Angola, and South Africa, where more than 12,000 people from different African countries have received technical training. Training local employees can not only produce much needed local talent, but also contribute to local communities' sustainable development.

Huawei also emphasizes its contribution to the development of education in African countries by donating computers to schools, providing funding, and establishing scholarships to motivate outstanding engineering students to pursue college education. Many discussions of such contributions were included in Huawei's CSR reports. However, the company did not provide any specific numbers on the scale of its financial contribution of education in Africa.

A final dimension of Huawei's responsibilities to the local community is reflected in its expressed commitment to the environment. Huawei frames its business—developing telecommunications networks and providing wireless communication services—as its primary contribution to the environment. When people have access to telephones, they are going to travel less and consume less energy; when the Internet becomes widely available, more trees are going to be saved as people rely less on printed media. Furthermore, Huawei also emphasizes its use of alternative energy, such as solar and wind power, to power its wireless towers in Africa.

Underlying all of Huawei's engagements in the local community is the idea that they will allow sustainable and long-term economic development in African countries. Huawei proudly claims, "We are not just giving people fish. We teach them how to fish themselves." The sustainable development of Africa, furthermore, is in perfect harmony with the company's growth on the continent. In other words, Huawei's CSR philosophy in Africa coincides with China's vision of co-development that underpins the Sino-African relationship.

What's Missing from Huawei's CSR Discourse?

Several important dimensions of CSR are missing from Huawei's African CSR discourse—working conditions, localization, and business

transparency. Huawei does not include its employees' working conditions as part of its African CSR discourse. Huawei employees have worked and lived in harsh conditions. Many of them are located in some of the most underdeveloped countries in the world or even conflict zones. In some African countries, 70 percent of Huawei's Chinese employees contracted malaria at some point. Some of its Chinese employees working in Africa have criticized the company for failing to provide acceptable working conditions or to ensure their safety.[51] And though Huawei's employee newspapers at least mentioned efforts at improving the living and working standards of its Chinese employees in Africa—such as bringing good chefs from China and organizing cultural events for employees—there is no mention in either its Chinese or English-language publications of the working conditions of its African employees.

Such disregard of employee conditions does not surprise those familiar with Huawei's business model in China. Huawei's highly competitive organizational culture, called "mattress culture,"[52] is well known. Different stakeholders at home have harshly criticized Huawei for forcing its employees to work long hours under immense pressure. The most recent major scandal about Huawei's employee treatment occurred at the end of 2007. At that time, China passed its first Labor Contract Law, dictating that workers who have been employed for at least ten years at the same company are entitled to lifetime employment with their employer and receiving benefits accordingly. Right before the new law took effect on January 1, 2008, Huawei required almost 10,000 of its Chinese employees with more than eight years' tenure at the company to resign and get rehired based on one- to three-year contracts to avoid signing permanent work contracts with them and providing the associated benefits.[53] This move caused nationwide media coverage and extensive criticism.

Another aspect of CSR typically found in MNCs' CSR discourse in developing countries is localization. Huawei's African CSR discourse is ambiguous about localization. Even though half of Huawei's employees in Africa are allegedly local employees, there is no available data on their roles or responsibilities. There is evidence, however, that Chinese employees still fill most of the managerial and R&D positions in the company.[54] According to some Huawei employees, the company pays less than the prevailing salaries in local labor market to keep operating costs low. As a result, the company is unable to attract highly trained or talented local workers.[55] This has been a challenge faced by many Chinese companies doing business in Africa. As its local branches in

Africa are all managed by Chinese expatriates, it is even harder for the company to attract local talent and for local employees to really identify with the company.

Furthermore, Huawei is yet to actively adapt to local societies and cultures in Africa. Even though the company has started to provide French language training to its employees in French-speaking African countries, there is no evidence that Huawei is encouraging its employees to interact with local people. Similar to many other Chinese companies, Huawei's Chinese employees live in company compounds isolated from the local community. In fact, in the company's employee newspaper, Huawei prides itself in providing employees with comfortable housing, high quality Chinese food made by Chinese chefs, and helping employees remain in touch with families in China. Such amenities hardly encourage its Chinese companies to interact more with the local society. Sarah Raine pointed out that Chinese corporations' lack of contacts with local communities often leads to suspicion and hostility from local stakeholders.[56]

Finally, there is no mention of business transparency in Huawei's African CSR discourse. Such themes are also absent in Huawei's overall CSR discourse. Chinese companies have often been criticized for lack of business transparency in their operations both at home and abroad. Transparency International, a global civil society organization against corruption, publishes an annual Bribe Payers Index, which ranked Chinese companies twenty-first in 2008, for their likelihood to bribe overseas.[57] This makes it even more important for Huawei to emphasize business transparency in their CSR discourse in Africa, as African governments have been notorious for bribery and embezzlement.

Huawei's CSR and China's Public Diplomacy in Africa

As discussed earlier, CSR with Chinese characteristics is based on three aspects: how human rights are defined, the role of corporations in society, and corporations' relationships to the state. In analyzing Huawei's CSR discourse, one can see that human rights are defined as the rights to development, including the rights to a life free from poverty and isolation, the rights to economic development, and the rights to a sustainable environment. As a result, Huawei's African CSR model is a model centered on economic development fueled by technical innovation and guaranteed by environmental sustainability. Other dimensions of CSR typically found in the CSR discourse of Western MNCs, such as labors'

rights, product quality, business transparency, and cultural localization, are of secondary importance to Huawei.

In terms of corporations' role in society, Huawei frames its relationship with local society as a pioneer of technological advancement and economic growth and an outside philanthropic benefactor. The company does not designate itself as a corporate citizen of African society and does not engage in social issues and problems other than poverty reduction and economic development. Huawei does not discuss its positions and achievements on the following issues: the development of standard business operations amid rampant corruption in Africa; the improvement of human rights in the context of war, conflicts, and political dictatorship; and the improvement of low pay and harsh working conditions. Again, such an approach is consistent with China' diplomacy in Africa: noninterference and leaving Africans to deal with their own governance problems.

Although most of the major Chinese companies operating in Africa are state owned, Huawei is a private company. However, the state does play a significant role in the company's success in Africa. The Chinese government continues to offer Huawei and ZTE, another leading telecommunications company and Huawei's major competitor, tax benefits to encourage them to invest in Africa. These tax incentives allow Huawei to adopt a low-price strategy in Africa while making good profits. Huawei also received a $10 billion loan from China Development Bank, a policy bank owned by the central government, to support its global expansion.[58] The Chinese government also supports Huawei's expansion by providing loans to African governments on the condition that they purchase Huawei's products. These governmental policies helped Huawei enter the African telecommunications market that Western MNCs previously dominated.

Huawei's developmental model of CSR in Africa is consistent with China's growth model at home and is encouraged and promoted by the Chinese government. Huawei's success is celebrated as China's achievement in Africa and an example of the success of China's development model. During the 2006 FOCAC meeting in Beijing, the Chinese government organized African dignitaries on tours to visit Huawei's headquarters in Shenzhen and its research institute in Beijing. During his recent trip to the fourth FOCAC ministerial meeting in Egypt, Chinese Premier Wen Jianbao visited Huawei's training center in Cairo and talked with trainees by video system. He praised Huawei for providing the latest technology to Africa and stated, "[The Huawei Center] reflects an important shift for China-Africa cooperation that we

are giving priority to personnel training . . . I believe [the African people] can master the modern technologies and push forward the development of Africa." He further required Huawei management to look at training from the broader perspective of China-Africa cooperation, rather than the mere development of their enterprise, and thereby promote friendship between the Chinese and Africans.[59]

Huawei's success and its contribution to technological development in Africa help to promote China's soft power there. Political and business leaders in Africa have praised the company on many occasions. For example, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, president of the Dangote Group, the largest industrial conglomerate in Western Africa, said Dangote's cooperation with Huawei will "bridge a lot of capacity needs, improve Nigeria telecommunication environment, guarantee cost reduction of end-users, and enrich the lives of Nigerians."[60] Uganda President Yoweri Museveni praised Huawei for making communication cheaper and more efficient through its broadband and undersea cable, which significantly reduce the cost of transmission of information and data, help promote efficiency in government departments, and improve television picture quality.[61] Huawei's case is also discussed in almost all recent books on China and Africa.

In short, though Huawei has made remarkable achievements in Africa, it still faces many challenges when expanding its business in Africa. Its close ties with the Chinese government can facilitate its development in Africa, but its controversial business practices can damage China's reputation in Africa. Furthermore, China's lack of concern over human rights issues in Africa can cast shadows on Huawei's global image.

Conclusion

At this moment, most Africans seem to hold a positive view toward globalization and MNCs operating in Africa. For instance, Gallup International's "Voice of the People 2006" poll shows that seven out of ten Africans view globalization positively.[62] GlobalScan's 2004 poll of eight countries in Africa indicates that 78 percent are positive about globalization.[63] The majority of them also favor foreign companies operating in Africa. In this context, Chinese companies' developmental model of CSR may strike a chord with African stakeholders. So does China's developmental approach in its diplomacy efforts in Africa. However, African stakeholders are also sensitive toward foreign

companies' practices. Many believe that rich countries benefit more from such a trend and that they are not playing fair.[64] Although Chinese companies can potentially play a major role in China's diplomacy in Africa, if they fail to address issues such as working conditions, localization, and business transparency, their practices might backfire and even dampen the Sino-African relationship that the Chinese government has worked so hard to build.

This study presents an early attempt to understand the relationship between Chinese companies' CSR engagement in Africa, China's public diplomacy, and China's soft power in Africa. It examines how Huawei, a leading Chinese telecommunications company, frames its CSR engagements and accomplishments in Africa in its company documents. The story told by Huawei might be different from the stories told by its employees, customers, suppliers, and the general public in Africa. It is essential to examine multiple discourses around Chinese companies' CSR efforts and how they relate to China's public diplomacy in Africa.

Public diplomacy literature generally recognizes the close linkage between a country's public diplomacy efforts and the practices of its business sector, but it is important to understand when the interests of the two entities overlap and when they diverge. There is certainly the risk of corporations hijacking a country's foreign policy and interests. In this regard, researchers should conduct cases studies and theorize how the Chinese government may leverage corporations for its public diplomacy efforts while at the same time maintaining its autonomy in carrying out its public diplomacy strategies in Africa.

A final note of caution is due here. Many studies of Africa, including this one, talk about Africa as if the continent is a monolithic entity. Such an assumption is problematic, as African countries are heterogeneous in terms of their political systems, levels of economic development, religions, and cultures. Future research needs to have a more nuanced understanding of Africa in understanding Chinese companies' CSR practices as part of China's public diplomacy there.

Notes

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3. "China in Africa: Implications for U.S. Policy" 2008 http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2008/EconomyTestimony080604a.pdf Deborah Brautigam pointed out in her 2009 book *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* that the figures on China's aid in Africa are often inflated or simply erroneous due to mistakes in translation, conversion of figures between different numeric systems and currencies, and repeated counting of deals negotiated over time. The figures are generally larger than what they really are.
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8. Beijing Consensus is a term proposed by Joshua Cooper Ramo, a former senior editor of *Time* magazine. Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004).
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11. Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 44–45.
12. Sithara Fernando, "Chronology of China-Africa relations," *China Report* 43, no.3 (2007): 363–373.
13. Philip Snow, *The Star Raft: China's Encounter with Africa* (New York: Weodemdeld and Nocolson, 1988).
14. Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift*.
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17. See http://www.chinaqw.com/hwjy/kzxy/200902/06/149570.shtml
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19. Li, "China's New Policy toward Africa," 31.
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29. Ibid.
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CHAPTER SEVEN

National Image Management Begins at Home: Imagining the New Olympic Citizen

Jeroen de Kloet, Gladys Pak Lei Chong, and Stefan Landsberger

The Chinese government seized on the 2008 Olympic Games as an opportunity to present a new and vibrant China to both its citizenry and the world. This chapter examines how China used the Games as a moment to stress the "civilizational" value of Chinese culture to its people and, in tandem, to promote what are deemed good civilized manners among its citizenry. It was part and parcel of the government's effort to showcase a better image of China. As Beijing Mayor Wang Qishan remarked, "We have to have a good Olympics, otherwise not only will our generation lose face, but also our ancestors."[1] In this chapter, we analyze the Chinese government's visual promotional materials (e.g., posters) and Olympic manuals for volunteers and taxi drivers to map out the different discourses on the civilized behavior expected of its people during the Games.

The symbolic work of the nation-state before and during the Olympics attests to the importance imagination plays for the everyday maintenance of China as a nation-state. This, in turn, points to the paramount significance of visual imageries that feed the imagination of the citizenry. The widespread and increasingly rapid circulation of images has given birth to new patterns of what to see, how to see, how to be seen, and where to be seen. The global movement toward the

visual and the development of a modern global language regarding the content and message contained within these visual images have become key research issues. These developments not only supplement but also reshape inherited notions of cultural and material history. Seen from this perspective, the visual stimuli reproduced in Chinese government posters have become an increasingly important, rich, and accepted venue of inquiry.[2]

Drawing on Foucault's work on governmentality (a concept that refers to how a citizenry is managed, regulated, and disciplined, not so much by force and law but rather by a complex set of regulatory tactics), we will show how China targeted the bodies and minds of its citizenry. We will also examine the contents of the disciplinary materials to illustrate how a new Olympic citizen is imagined. In the conclusion, we will reflect briefly on the limits of the disciplinary techniques employed by the nation-state and examine how successful the promotional techniques may have been.[3]

Imagination and Governmentality

Our analysis revolves around the notion of imagination. Following the work of Arjun Appadurai, we do not perceive imagination as mere fantasy, escape, or contemplation. Instead, it is "imagination, in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighborhood and nationhood [. . .] imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape."[4] In that sense, the imageries surrounding the Beijing Olympics are to be perceived as *real imaginations*—a phrase resonating with Manuel Castells' notion of "real virtuality."[5] In the process of constructing and displaying the nation as a unit—an "imagined community"—the role of the media is crucial.[6] As Benedict Anderson shows, the rise of the modern nation is linked to the convergence of capitalism and print technology, which "created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation."[7] The nation is imagined "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[8] This does not render the nation-state less real, as testified by the strong sentiments of patriotism that swept over mainland China during 2008.

Whereas Anderson theorizes on the origins of the modern nation-state, we take the Olympic Games primarily as an ongoing and indispensable

project of (symbolic) nation-state maintenance. The art of maintaining the nation-state involves a daily semiotic struggle. According to Billig, everyday life is saturated with a range of expressions of what he calls "banal nationalism." These are, to him, the "ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced." It is argued that these habits are not removed from everyday life, as some supporters have supposed. The nation is indicated, or "flagged," in the daily lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition."[9] Though Billig writes explicitly about "the West," we will show that his remarks apply equally to China.

In maintaining the imagined community called China, it is crucial to safeguard the support of its citizenry. The Olympics provided an ideal moment to involve the Chinese in the production of a "new" China. Hence, the massive campaign to recruit Olympic volunteers. The Manual for Beijing Olympic Volunteers (Volunteer Manual) explicitly stated that the volunteer program was one of the key promotional strategies put forward by the Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG), and it aimed to include all Beijing citizens: "*all the citizens of Beijing* to smile to express their compassions, to spread civilization, to build a society of harmony, and to promote the concepts of 'People's Olympics' and 'socialist harmonious society.' "[10] Official reports claimed that China had 1.7 million volunteers—the largest number of volunteers in Olympic history.[11]

The extraordinary length of the Torch Relay within China—a relay that passed approximately 114 cities all over the country—is yet another example of how the Olympics were used to imagine and perform the nation-state. The relay reached its symbolic climax when the torch arrived at the peak of Mount Everest. However, despite the gigantic symbolic attempts to involve the whole nation, the spectacle itself gravitated heavily toward Beijing, China's political and cultural center. This is the city where millions of volunteers supported the Games; where thousands of taxi drivers were trained to speak some English, to dress up for the Games, and to behave in a civilized manner; and where migrant workers were asked to leave the city so as not to distort the ideal image China wished to convey to the world. The Games can thus be read as a moment seized by the nation-state to discipline and govern its citizenry.

The Foucauldian notion of governmentality strikes us as particularly appropriate here. Rather than thinking of power in terms of a Machiavellian state that rules its people, it makes more sense to focus

on the intricate ways in which people are turned into citizens. As Foucault states, "we find at once a plurality of forms of government and their immanence to the state; the multiplicity and immanence of these activities distinguishes them radically from the transcendent singularity of Machiavelli's prince."[12] Instead of tracing one singular way through which the Chinese nation-state exerts its power over its citizenry, we need to look at the multiple ways in which people and things are arranged, marked, and disciplined—not by fixed laws but by what Foucault refers to as *tactics*. Consequently, "with government it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics—to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved."[13] Thus, Foucault asserts, "the state can only be understood in its survival and its limits on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality."[14] In our view, the Olympics provide a unique prism through which we can grasp how the Chinese nation-state employed the tactics of governmentality.

To summarize, following Anderson, we perceive the Olympics as an important moment of maintenance of the imagined community commonly referred to as the Chinese nation-state. This moment not only signals an attempt to present a new China to the world at large, it is simultaneously seized as an opportunity by the nation-state to govern its citizenry. The tactics of governmentality employed during the Olympics—tactics that are neither new nor unique but instead part and parcel of a wide array of tactics whose historical trajectories remain yet to be carefully researched—are plural, diverse, and differentiated, rather than univocal and singular.

Official Imaginations of the Olympic City and its Citizens

Walking in the city of Beijing in 2008, one would have no difficulty noticing the omnipresence of the Beijing Olympic Games–related posters, slogans, images, and the like. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has always regarded propaganda as an important communicative tool.[15] Post-reform changes and globalization-led media transformations may challenge the propaganda posters' appeal yet, as Landsberger writes, "the central party and state apparatus is still committed to the use of posters, and, as a result, posters remain omnipresent in Chinese

life."[16] During our research, we collected a wide range of propaganda posters found in city streets and subway stations in Beijing. As we will show, the discourses that emerged from the posters as well as the training manuals for volunteers and taxi drivers reveal something more complex than simply persuading the public to support the Games: they are embedded in wider discourses on citizenship and urban planning and, as such, are part of the tactics of governmentality. More specifically, these tactics were mobilized through three discourses: first, and most prominently, a civilized China; second, a safe China; and finally, a harmonious society. Here, we focus primarily on the first theme, with some discussion of the other two discourses.

A Civilized China

The discourse of a civilized China was arguably the most salient one. It summoned the citizens to behave well in public and to embrace the Beijing Olympics with complete devotion. The slogan "Welcoming the Olympics, Stressing civilization, Establishing a new trend," (*ying aoyun*, *jiang wenming*, *shu xinfeng*) frequently appeared on the promotional materials, reminding the public of their duties and obligations as Chinese citizens. This discourse resonates strongly with the notion of *suzhi*. *Suzhi* generally refers to a person's quality, and is often used together with "*renmin*" i.e., "*renmin suzhi*" (population's quality).[17] Despite its common usage in people's daily lives, the term "*suzhi"* by itself does not say much. As Kipnis writes, "the term 'quality' (*suzhi)* is vague enough to allow considerable divergence of interpretation."[18] Both Anagnost and Kipnis propose that the term should be understood as a discourse.[19] To Kipnis, *suzhi* discourse "refers to the myriad ways in which this notion of human quality is used in processes of governing contemporary China."[20] Anagnost traces the genealogical usage of the term.[21] She mentions that *suzhi* gained much discursive power after the economic reforms in the 1980s, but it was in the early 1990s that *suzhi* gained an ascending political discursive power. By then, according to Anagnost, "population quality had become a key term in the party-state's policy statements and directives to cadres, even as it began to circulate more broadly as a general explanation for everything that held the Chinese nation back from achieving its rightful place in the world."[22] The *suzhi* discourse, then, is not new, but it has gained much discursive power in the lead-up to the Games. Four aspects, or articulations, of the discourse on civilization and *suzhi* were most prominent: first, the campaigns that asked for support not only of the Games, but

of the nation as a whole; second, the importance of hygienic behavior; third, the stress on good manners; and fourth, the importance of speaking English.

First, Chinese citizens were not only expected to support the Games, but to support the host country itself. One banner we frequently encountered in Beijing said "Seize the opportunity of a century to realize the dream of the century!" (*yongyou bainian jiyu,shixian bainian mengxiang*), which refers to China's one-hundred-year-old dream of hosting the Olympic Games.[23] A "Go, China!" campaign was launched by the government to ask the citizens to support Chinese athletes in their attempts to win gold medals. The campaign demanded a wide range of citizens' participation using various multifaceted strategies. For example, one televised public service announcement educated the people how (civilized) applause would spur the athletes—both the Chinese and the others—to greater heights, while at the same time teaching elements of fair play and hospitality. Simultaneously, supporting Team China became a recurring trope in commercial advertising. China finished the Games with fifty-one gold medals, more than any other country, strengthening the nation's pride. But supporting the Chinese team was not sufficient; the Chinese people had to display civilized manners and truly embody the nation.

Second, good hygienic behavior was part of the governmentality tactics that aimed to produce a better citizen. Although very much geared to the Olympic event, the actual contents of these calls were not much different from the time-honored strategies that the Chinese government has used ever since 1949 to raise the level of popular hygiene. In one poster we collected, the ever-louder calls to restrict or prohibit smoking, for example, definitely benefited from the insertion of the image of the Bird's Nest Olympic stadium. Though the messages sounded familiar, the forms most certainly were modernized, another indication of how modern and attuned China has become to certain "Western" practices.

Third, "good manners" was one of the key terms in the discourse about the modern civilized citizen. Assuming the voice of the patriarchal head of the family, the promotional materials urged the citizens to behave themselves or the nation, the ultimate family, would lose face. To quote Landsberger, "The moral education of the people has been viewed historically as a function of good government in China."[24] The authorities wanted to show a population of well-disciplined citizens who internalized the rules of good manners and behaved well, especially during the Olympics. It seemed a widely held belief that

"winning manners" actually could help "win the Games," paraphrasing the title of a book that hit the bookshelves in the run-up to the Games.[25]

BOCOG's Volunteer Guide devoted a whole chapter, "Volunteering Skills," to social manners.[26] According to the chapter, "[m]anners are a reflection of a person's education and character, enhancing all human relationships" and "Olympic volunteers are ambassadors of the Games and will mirror and reflect China."[27] The volunteer thus carried the burden of representing the entire nation, and his/her good manners were expected.

The chapter went on to present a set of "rules" on basic social customs, postures, communication manners, and taboos. It began with some "basic" rules, giving priority to

1. maintaining a fine image (expressed through a fine appearance, gentle manners, polite language, and a dedicated work spirit);
2. adopting an appropriate attitude;
3. respecting others;
4. accepting others kindly;
5. respecting others' privacy;
6. being honest;
7. maintaining appropriate relationships;
8. treating ladies first.

Then, on the subject of proper posture, it discussed sitting, standing, and walking. Each was accompanied by a detailed description of "proper" postures and a list of behaviors to avoid. Descriptions were added to emphasize the level of disgrace, such as "low-class and boorish," "cocky and impolite," and "too easygoing." After a subsequent description on communication manners—such as shaking hands and how to conduct normal and telephone conversations—a final section was devoted to a substantial list of "taboos." It started with some general rules, followed by taboos regarding colors, numbers, foods and drinks, and gifts. This section gave special attention to different cultural and religious practices. It informed the readers that the world is bigger than the "West," and even the "West" is not homogenous, just as there are people with different religions.

Both media workers and the more representative volunteers, such as ceremony hostesses, were subjected to stringent training on "manners." Official trainers revealed the secret formula of "the best smile": it should expose between six and eight teeth, no more, no less. A female

trainee told reporters about the hardship they went through: "We have to wear high heels and stand with chopsticks in our mouths, books on our heads and paper between our knees. It is really tiring."[28]

A training manual for Olympic volunteers, "Cultural Differences and Impacts," found on the BOCOG Web site, reveals how organizers educated the volunteers to turn them into ideal-type citizens.[29] Proper manners were advocated, and Western standards served as the yardstick for such behavior. As the manual explained,

1) Speaking with Your Mouth Full

This is considered quite rude when at the dinner table. Western children are taught from a very early age never to do this.

2) Passing Gas/Belching/Burping

This is considered rude in any situation. If you do need to pass gas, excuse yourself and go to the bathroom. Of course, this is sometimes out of your control. If you accidentally pass gas loudly in front of others, you need to say, "excuse me," and quickly start talking about something to distract the people around you. DO NOT discuss any details about your gas, or any bodily function at the table!

Examples found in the training materials were usually presented with strong disciplining tones, using words such as "rude" and the capitalized "DO NOT." The imagined responses from the invisible yet omnipresent "Westerners" operated as disciplinary tools: they were "the civilized other," for whom the Chinese volunteer needed to behave in a civilized manner.

To further strengthen and historicize the importance of good manners, Confucius was constantly quoted. For example, we read in the volunteer guide the following well-known Confucian sayings: "One who has manners is one who respects others;" "How very glad we are to welcome friends from afar"; and "Ask about taboos when entering another territory; ask about customs when going to another country; ask about unmentionables when visiting a family."[30] To bring in such traditional Confucian sayings was to remind the readers of their long and rich history, thereby presenting the Games as the guardian of "a modern China, a product of 5,000 years of civilization and history."[31]

To emphasize the importance of good manners, promotional materials regularly assumed citizens' misbehavior in public, which therefore

required correction and civilization. Among numerous materials concerning public transport, one billboard poster in a subway station (photo 7.1) used a discipline-or-punish tone to urge passengers to line up properly. An officer in a well–tailored uniform was placed in the center, with two orderly queues at both sides. His authority was made explicit, first and foremost, by his centrality in this poster, by his uniform, and by his posture—left arm raised as if pointing to some mischievous kids. The passengers listened to him. But the strong sense of "discipline" and "order" depicted in the image was translated into a message of "safety" in the slogan, which said "Wait safely, queue up [lit: "Wait for the train safely, get on the train orderly" (*anquan houche, youxu chengzuo*).

Other similar posters urged citizens to step out of the bus properly (*shunxu xiache*), to pay when using public transport (*wenming shuaka*), or to keep an appropriate distance—that is, one meter—behind people withdrawing money from an automated teller machine (*yi mi de chaju*).



Photo 7.1 Queue up in Order.
Photo by Gladys Pak Lei Chong.

The promotional materials also offered more direct messages regarding the Games, encouraging citizens to actively support and endorse Beijing's effort to host the Olympics. To be an Olympic volunteer was the most explicit way of acknowledging one's civic duty and embracing this national undertaking passionately. In one poster, the message seems clear: to participate in the Olympic Games is to serve the country. In the image's background is a male figure wearing a white T-shirt with the Beijing Olympic Games emblem on it. At the picture's center, his hand is placed over his heart, forming a gesture of loyalty and dedication to his fatherland and the Games. The English text strengthened the message by claiming wide support for the Games: "As many as 70,000 volunteers would be needed for the Olympic Games and another 30,000 for the Paralympics."

Conflated with this call for civic duty and active participation was imagery of children, youth, and the nation's future. Many posters depicted children who were energetic and cheerful, innocent and bright. Such images were a visual suggestion that the younger generation had embraced the Games and that their commitment would translate into a promising future for China. As one slogan said, "Children bear our hopes for the future; the future of this Olympic city rests on their shoulders" (*haizi shi mingtian, shi xiwang, zhezuo aoyun zhi cheng de weilai zheng danzai tamen jian shang*). When posters specifically targeted China's youth, these youth were invariably asked to become volunteers. Slogans such as "Welcome the Olympics, Stressing civilization, Establishing a new trend" were followed by the line "I participate, I contribute, I am happy" (*wo canyu, wo fengxian, wo kuaile*) (see photo 7.2) and "I participate in the Olympics too" (*aoyun you wo yige*). But, as many posters stated, "to be a volunteer is to set an example for the public" (*aoyun xianfeng*).

Finally, organizers considered it crucial that the representatives of a new China—such as volunteers and taxi drivers—speak English to welcome foreigners. On Beijing television, a daily program titled "Olympic English" taught the audiences phrases that were considered crucial to welcome foreign guests, such as "I am a vegetarian." The state required all Beijing taxi drivers to learn English and take English examinations. This requirement caused quite a commotion in many taxi drivers' daily lives, according to our ethnographic research. To prepare for the English exams, some taxi drivers would listen to English-learning cassettes tapes or CDs when driving. This changed their radio-listening habits to a rather disciplined habit of "learning." To make sure that passengers felt welcome, a message saying "Welcome



Photo 7.2 Welcoming the Olympics.
Photo by Gladys Pak Lei Chong.

to Beijing…" in English was installed in the taxi meter. Whenever drivers started the meter, this sentence would play automatically.

Apart from learning English, courtesy speech was another essential element in the campaign. The *Olympic Beijing Taxi Palm Book* emphasized the importance of courteous words. For example, it urged drivers to remember the "Ten-character courteous phrases": Hello (*nihao*), Thank you (*xiexie*), Please (*qing*), Sorry (*duibuqi*), Good-bye (*zaijian*).[32] Drivers were also urged to do the following:

1. speak decently and politely (no swear words, not too loud);
2. talk clearly (no "er er hua") and sincerely;
3. avoid gossiping about other people, or complaining about seniors or spreading rumors;
4. not ask passengers for personal information;
5. not interrupt passengers' conversations;
6. not behave with an exaggerated sense of self–importance, boosting oneself and denigrating others; etc.[33]

A Safe China

One discourse that gained prominence over the course of 2008 was the discussion about safety. Safety became an important topic after the Tibet events and after fears grew over "terrorist attacks" from an alleged "separatist" Uyghur movement. Television news reports showed how the army prepared for potential attacks. As many Beijing residents explained to us, they were advised not to go on the streets during the Olympics, but instead watch the spectacle on television. The government also imposed visa restrictions to keep potential terrorists from entering the country. Most parts of the city were less crowded than normal. With no joyous crowds, some visitors may have found the city rather eerie during the Games. To enter the Olympic Green—the park surrounding the main venues such as the "Water Cube" aquatics center and the Bird's Nest—valid tickets were required. All subway stations were equipped with x-ray machines that remain in service today. Safety regulations to enter stadiums were elaborate, and it is important to note that such regulations were developed in close cooperation with the International Olympic Committee.

The discourse on safety trickled down to a much more mundane level, becoming part of everyday routines. A sign that said "Avoid Fire, Safe Olympics" (*quchu huohuan ping'an Aoyun*) could be found in almost every residential complex, usually next to the elevators or the building entrance. A banner in the Yonghegong subway station stated, "Everyone be vigilant of fire safety, we make a safe Olympics" (*renren guanzhu xiaofang, gongzhu ping'an Aoyun*). Yet another poster stated "Humanistic Olympics, Law and Order" (*renwen aoyun fazhi tongxing*).

As the Games approached, we witnessed a growing emphasis on citizens' participation in realizing a safe Olympics. We came across banners addressing citizens directly, such as "Your attention, my participation, Our safe Olympics" (*nide guanzhu, wode canyu women de ping'an aoyun*).

In some residential areas, posters gave citizens detailed instructions with as many as twenty guidelines, again with the emphasis on "your participation," saying "to realize a safe Olympics requires your participation" (*ping'an aoyun de shixian xuyao nide canyu*).

These guidelines included such things as property owners should have a valid permit to lease out their properties; hoteliers should follow all safety regulations and should keep closed-circuit television footage for a required period of time; hoteliers should inform the

police right away if they see suspicious behaviors or objects; foreigners or visitors to Beijing should register at local police stations within 24 hours after arrival in China. All these are apt examples of governmentality tactics in which the citizenry itself is held responsible for a safe environment. Its role as watchdog is illustrative for the widening circles of surveillance that characterize contemporary societies, including China.

A Harmonious Society

Chinese President Hu Jintao introduced the "harmonious society" concept in 2005. The concept of harmonious coexistence was, first and foremost, enshrined in the Beijing Olympic slogan, "One World, One Dream," promoting the very idea of harmonious coexistence despite differences. Many promotional materials supported this idea. One poster carried a very simple, but expressive image with five arms in five different colors, joining together to form a variation of the five Olympic rings. The colors of the five Olympic rings are supposed to represent the different continents. But no continent is assigned a specific color, supposedly to embody the Olympic ideal that universalism is beyond racial disparity or even inequality. The arms in the poster are not interlocked like the Olympic rings; rather, they all come together at one point, symbolizing the fact that all efforts are being put together for the same goal, that is, the Beijing Olympics.

The harmony Beijing Olympic organizers strove to propagate was both multiethnic and multicultural. At the same time, promotional materials often portrayed Chinese ethnic minorities celebrating and welcoming the Games, thus reiterating the dominant narrative that acknowledged the differences between minorities and, above all, their shared happiness under Beijing rule.

Turning outward, the harmonious coexistence message also connected "the East" with "the West," particularly through images of "cultural fusion." For instance, in one poster, a young Chinese boy playing with a soccer ball is juxtaposed with an elderly Chinese doing Tai Ji in a park. Such juxtaposition alludes visually to a fusion between West and East. It acknowledges cultural differences, while hinting at a promising future: the young boy will acquire his skills in a modern sport, and the senior citizen will remain the guardian of a traditional sport. By mobilizing Orientalistic stereotypes, the poster hence provides a reassuring encounter between the assumed old tradition of "the East" and the alleged new modernity of "the West."

Orchestration and Resistance

We have mapped the three most prominent discourses through which the Chinese state attempted to govern its citizens and to produce specific model citizens: first, the discourse of civilization with its articulations of nationalism, personal hygiene, good manners, and linguistic skills; second, the discourse of a safe China; and finally, the discourse of a harmonious society. These overlap profoundly and reinforce each other. For example, good manners are interpreted as a sign of support for the country, both of which help to produce a harmonious society. As we have seen, governmentality is not a carefully planned scheme; rather, it consists of an array of ad hoc arrangements and measures. The Sichuan earthquake, for example, had a significant impact on the promotional campaigns, just as the Tibetan events and the indignation surrounding the Torch Relay significantly affected the discussion about safety. And the safety discourse got another unexpected twist shortly after the end of the Olympics, when the melamine milk scandal broke out, prompting heated debates over food safety and the lack of governmental oversight. In turn, the government responded, "less than two weeks after the story first came to light, an initial wave of aggressive coverage gave way to comforting reports about forceful government intervention as well as articles that focused on the health benefits of milk."[34]

Thus, rather than a carefully schemed program, governmentality refers to the *continuous* attempts of the nation-state to govern its citizenry; this process is and can never be completed or finished. Instead, it involves an orchestration of discourse in which the nation-state, the local organizing committee, and the IOC tried to pull at the strings of all actors in the promotional theater.[35] Yet some actors may play out of tune, and it is not always that clear who acts as the conductor. The conductor's power is not unlimited given that other voices, actors, and even other conductors may enter the stage to claim leadership, thus disrupting the idealized imageries that produce a New China.

When we interviewed Gao Changli, the Beijing organizing committee's deputy director of the media operations department, he explained to us that promotional discourse was constantly monitored and adjusted when necessary. Even during the Games, his team would watch television to see if all banners were placed correctly, and intervened on site when necessary. The Games are often perceived as an extremely well-planned promotional campaign. That resonates with the image of China as a monolithic, authoritarian society with the Communist

Party as a Machiavellian prince in control. Our analysis shows this is not quite the case. Instead, the maintenance of the imagined community called China requires everyday attention. Hence, the nation-state needs to develop governmental tactics that penetrate deeply into the everyday lives of its citizenry.

The Olympics went smoothly, and the orchestration of discourse has seemingly worked well. The question about how many citizens deeply supported the Games remains to be answered. Given the applause the Olympic torch received on its route—as well as judging from our own observations in Beijing in 2008—it seems fair to claim that the Games met with widespread support. However, Olympic discourse can never be fully under control or completely unitary. It always contains possibilities for different interpretations and holds potential moments of heteroglossia.[36] The state-driven ideal of an imagined community entails in practice different, contested articulations of "China" and of "Chineseness"—in other words what China stands for and what it means to be Chinese.[37] As Chatterjee remarks aptly in his critique of Anderson, "Whose imagined community are we talking about, and should our imaginations remain forever colonized?"[38]

For example, just shortly after the Games, the New Labor Art Troupe in Beijing released their CD "Our World, Our Dream." The group consists partly of migrant workers, and was established in a cultural center for migrants in Beijing. The Bird's Nest was featured on the jacket of the CD, but in the context of this production, it is a facility that was built by thousands of migrant workers. The group's appropriation of the official Olympic slogan for the title of the CD reveals a desire to articulate its own voice and own dreams, claiming them to be different from the official ones. The censorship regulations prevented the CD's release before the Games, because it could conflict with the image China wished to construct. In the Bob Dylan-like songs on the CD, the migrant workers sing about their loneliness, the experience of migration, unsafe labor conditions, and the discrimination they face in Beijing. Their CD is just one of many examples that show how the nation-state's promotional discourse can be appropriated to articulate quite different meanings. In the words of Shue, "in any system of domination's own logic of legitimation we should be able to find encoded the basic grammar for protest, the 'raw material' that is available to be used most powerfully in opposition to that system."[39] That the state-driven, symbolic maintenance of a utopian China is ongoing and indispensable underlines that it is never complete or completely successful. As Foucault reminds us, "Where there is power, there is resistance,

and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power."[40]

Notes

Part of this chapter has appeared as: "The Beijing Olympics and the Art of Nation–State Maintenance," *China Aktuell—Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 2 (2008): 6–36. See www.CurrentChineseAffairs.org

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Chinese Diaspora, the Internet, and the Image of China: A Case Study of the Beijing Olympic Torch Relay

Hongmei Li

On April 9, 2008, along the Beijing Olympic torch relay route in San Francisco, tens of thousands of pro-China demonstrators were waving Chinese flags, singing the Chinese national anthem, and chanting slogans such as "Go Beijing, Go Olympics," "We Love China," "The Dalai Lama, Liar," and "Stop Media Distortions." While two aircraft pulled pro-China banners in the sky, a large number of Chinese supporters on the ground attempted to obstruct views of Tibetan flags and drown out voices of Tibetan supporters. Some Chinese were wearing "I Love China" T-shirts, red-heart facial stickers, and Chinese flags, and others were performing waist drum dance (*yaogu*) to create a festive atmosphere. If the torch relays in London and Paris represented a triumph of pro-Tibetan demonstrators, the relays in San Francisco and subsequent cities (e.g., Canberra, Nagano, and Seoul) witnessed an overwhelming number of pro-China supporters and a red sea of Chinese flags. Chinese diasporic communities seemed to make concerted efforts to rally around Beijing and assert their Chinese identity on a global scale.

Over Chinese-language Web sites, the torch relays were enthusiastically discussed and offline protest activities were organized. Nationalism—often understood as a collective identification with a nation-state and a sense of pride and attachment—among the Chinese

diaspora is not new, as demonstrated by their tremendous material and physical support for China during World War II.[1] The Internet's role in organizing nationalism is not new either, as displayed in cases such as the Chinese diaspora's global protests against murder and rape committed against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia in 1998.[2] What is new here is the performative aspect of nationalism centering on a global media event (i.e., the Beijing Olympics) that attracted national and international attention. The Internet not only reinforced online and offline activism but also modified nationalism across national borders.

This chapter looks at how Chinese diaspora communities use new media outlets to engage with what Anderson called an "imagined community" through an examination of how they responded to the overseas leg of the Beijing Olympic torch relay.[3] It analyzes how nationalism is increasingly performed and constructed around media events and how the Chinese diaspora participate in a kind of distributed nationalism. Most important, it discusses how the role of the Chinese diaspora intersects with China's international image. Materials for the study are drawn from various sources, including Internet bulletin boards, media coverage, interviews, and my ethnography of Chinese-language Web sites popular among the Chinese diaspora, including *mitbbs.com*, *backchina.com*, *wenxuecity.com*, *tianya.cn* and *QQ.com* before and during the torch relay from March 2008 to May 2008. I pay particular attention to *mitbbs.com,* the largest bulletin board system based in the United States for overseas Chinese students and recent immigrants, which claims to have hundreds of thousands of bilingual users, with 15 percent of its posts originating from China. All Web sites in this study are hosted in North America, except *tianya.cn*, one of the most influential Chinese Internet communities hosted in China, and *QQ.com*, one of the largest social-networking sites in China. Many of the overseas Chinese students actively participated in the discussions on *Tianya*'s Internet bulletin boards. The choice of the Web sites means my analysis cannot be generalized to Chinese Americans who generally do not read Chinese. Rather, the Web sites' target readership is first-generation Chinese immigrants or students, and most users are Chinese citizens.

Conceptualizing the Chinese Diaspora

The term "diaspora" was originally used to reference Jews who were dispersed around the world but still maintained a distinctive identity

and desire to return home.[4] Some scholars have attempted to list characteristics of diaspora, but others have criticized such an approach as essentializing the diaspora without paying attention to their changes.[5] The concept of "diaspora" has now been generalized beyond Jewish, Greek, and Armenian diasporic communities to embrace any dispersed people away from their place of origin.

The concept of "Chinese diaspora" refers to Chinese descendants residing outside mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, regardless of their citizenship. The Chinese diaspora are a complex group along the lines of generation, place of origin, length of stay outside China, and political and ideological stances. Their demographics have shifted dramatically from the pre-1950s sojourners, to the assimilated diaspora during the Cold War, to the current more diverse new migrants.[6] They consist of Chinese nationals working and residing overseas (*huaqiao*), ethnic Chinese with foreign citizenships (*huaren* or *huayi)* and Chinese students (*liuxuesheng*). I use "diaspora" in this study because the commonly employed concept "overseas Chinese and sojourners" (*huaren huaqiao*) is often considered Sino-centric and problematic when referring to Chinese with citizenships outside the three areas mentioned above.[7] The term "diaspora" also implies a real or imagined linkage among dispersed Chinese, as manifested in the somewhat distinctive culture of overseas communities and close connections between new migrants and China.[8] It is used interchangeably with the term "Chinese overseas," except for official translations of Chinese organizations, where "overseas Chinese" is used.

Media and Diasporic Nationalism

There are two contrasting ideas about the Chinese diaspora. One views them as cosmopolitan and transnational with fluid identities,[9] and the other sees them as nationalistic with loyalties to China or "Cultural China."[10] Some scholars have also conceptualized how the Chinese diaspora negotiate their identities simultaneously at transnational, national, and local levels.[11] This chapter focuses on the rise of nationalism, which is often viewed as an imaginary produced and sustained through oral communication, print media, and other communication technologies.[12] Modern communication technologies enable diasporic communities, what Appadurai calls "trans-nation,"[13] to maintain close connections with their country

of origin. Like nations, the diaspora are also viewed as "imagined communities."[14] In his ethnographic study in Los Angeles, Naficy, for example, analyzes how Iranian exiles used media to create an "exilic national imagery" and argues that being in exile can "lead to defensive hybrid strategies of disavowal, self-deception, fetishization of the homeland, nostalgic longing, and chauvinistic nationalism."[15] Similar to exiled Iranians, many Chinese overseas view China as the motherland, which often leads them to defend an idealized image of the country.

The formation of sizable immigrant communities, sustained by Chinese-language newspapers, TV programs, and the Internet, are some of the factors allowing for a recent rise of nationalism among the Chinese diaspora.[16] Sun argues that, from the very beginning, media of the Chinese diaspora bear "the birthmark of nationalism."[17] The Internet, in particular, is playing an increasing role among Chinese new immigrants in shaping their Chinese identity. For example, Tay and Hughes argue that the Internet was crucial in mobilizing global Chinese in their responses to atrocities targeting ethnic Chinese in Indonesia in 1998.[18] Not only did Internet users frame the assault on Chinese women as an assault on the global Chinese community, but they also initiated offline protests and exhibitions in Singapore, the Philippines, China, Thailand, the United States, and elsewhere, and urged Beijing to take a tough stance toward Indonesia.[19] Moreover, the mainland Chinese media heavily influence Chinese immigrant media. Nyiri argues that the "ideologemes" in China strongly influence the immigrant media's content, style, layouts, and attribution of news importance. New immigrant media often reprint stories from mainland Chinese media, and vice versa. For instance, newspapers in China often report on stories that celebrate the success of Chinese immigrants.[20]

James Clifford contends that diasporic awareness is constituted by "the experience of discrimination and exclusion" and by "a shared, ongoing history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, or resistance."[21] Nationalism among Chinese immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, was largely a result of immigrants' daily encounters with racism and their concern over China's backwardness and its future in the hands of foreign powers.[22] Racial prejudice against Chinese immigrants still exists. For instance, 52 percent of Chinese Americans surveyed in 2005 stated that they experienced racial discrimination or racial slurs.[23] Such discrimination

affects immigrants' sense of identity and produces a sense of common experience.[24]

Furthermore, the rising nationalism among the Chinese diaspora should be understood in the larger context of rising nationalism in China.[25] China's entering onto the global stage provides a relatively favorable environment for people to be organized.[26] Business activities in Chinese communities are connected with the mainstream society and global economy, in which China plays an increasingly important role.[27] Maintaining transnational ties with China thus offers "an alternative mode of incorporation into mainstream American society."[28] A survey reported that 70 percent of Chinese immigrants in the United States paid close or fairly close attention to news in mainland China; nearly a third of Chinese immigrants in Los Angeles contacted people in their homeland at least weekly.[29] Decades of patriotic education in China also provides an environment that supports Chinese nationalism.[30]

Given these facts, this chapter thus contributes to studies that stress diasporic nationalism and their use of the Internet. It also functions to critique literature that equates the diaspora solely with cosmopolitan experience.[31]

The Role of the Internet in Organizing the Chinese Diaspora

The International Context for the Beijing Olympic Torch Relay

On March 10, 2008, hundreds of Tibetans in Lhasa began protesting on the 49th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Beijing's rule. Demonstrators were arrested in the following days and violence escalated in the streets. Subsequently, Beijing expelled Western journalists in Tibet and closed the area to the outside world. Western media, politicians, human rights activists, exiled Tibetans, and Tibetan supporters immediately used the uprising to condemn Beijing, its abuse of human rights in general, and the suppression of Tibetans specifically. Western media generally portrayed the Chinese as aggressors and the Tibetans as peaceful demonstrators. Some also depicted Beijing as an illegitimate host for the Olympics and debated a possible boycott of the Beijing Olympics' opening ceremony.

The Chinese diaspora closely followed the events as they unfolded, and actively participated in debating the issues in the Internet space. For

example, immediately after the Tibetan demonstration turned violent, almost all top news on *mitbbs.com* was about Tibet. Tens of thousands of Chinese participated in online discussions. The majority of posts expressed outrage toward Western media coverage. In many Western cities, thousands of Chinese took to the streets to protest against the Western media, calling for a truthful portrayal of the events and showing their support for Beijing. Most of these demonstrations were organized voluntarily. On March 23, for example, a small group of Chinese students distributed pro-China posters at a rail station in Montreal. On March 29, an estimated five thousand protesters gathered for a Toronto rally, and another two thousand demonstrated in Calgary. The Toronto protesters produced a banner, and delivered to senators in the Canadian Parliament a public letter signed by thousands of Chinese urging that the media in the West also "listen to the voice of the Chinese and get to know a true Tibet."[32] There were smaller rallies in Vancouver, Munich, Auckland, Sydney, and Melbourne. All of these rallies centered on themes protesting against Tibetan separatism, violence in Tibet, and Western media biases.

The Western media, especially CNN, became the main target of Chinese activism. Anger against CNN flared up after Chinese Internet users found that a photo published by *CNN.com* had had cut out a group of Tibetan mobs from the original AFP/Getty photo. Even though CNN later used a new version that included the group of Tibetan rioters, the edited image could still be found through Google search.[33] Commenting on CNN's action, Roland Soong, a well-known blogger in Hong Kong, remarked, "This is a self-inflicted wound. If CNN believed that it was right in the first place, then it should have stuck to that position. Instead, it surrendered quietly. Not only did this not appease the Chinese netizens, it only made it worse."[34] A 24-year-old entrepreneur in Beijing founded a popular Web site *anti-cnn.com,* aiming to expose biases in Western media reports and spread "truthful" information about China. With its slogan "We just want the truth. CNN: The world's leader of liars," the Web site, maintained by volunteers, collected Western media reports considered biased, misleading, or manipulative. CNN was made into a symbol of shame over the Chinese Internet. Many Chinese netizens circulated a popular phrase on the Internet "don't be too CNN as a human being" (*zuoren bie tai* CNN), meaning don't be shameless in everyday conduct. After Jack Cafferty, a CNN commentator, remarked on the air on April 9 that the Chinese were "thugs and goons" (which CNN stated was

a reference to the government rather than the people), not only did the Chinese government repeatedly ask Cafferty to apologize,[35] but Chinese demonstrators increased their fire at CNN as well.

Human rights issues have long been a bone of contention between China and the West. Other nations, international groups, and individuals within and outside China sought to challenge China's position as the Olympic host country.[36] Thus, an Olympic torch relay that was billed as a "journey of harmony" across the world instead became a target for protestors. For instance, several demonstrators from Reporters Without Borders disrupted the torch lighting ceremony in Olympia, Greece, on March 24. When the flame arrived in London on April 6, it encountered angry protesters, mostly Tibetans in exile and Tibetan supporters. Some demonstrators threw themselves at the torch, and at least one attempted to grab it away, and another tried to put out the flame with a fire extinguisher. In Paris on April 7, demonstrators extinguished the flame several times, and a Tibetan protester attacked Jin Jing, a handicapped Chinese torch bearer, making the relay more a journey of embarrassment than celebration for China.

Many among the Chinese diaspora (especially first-generation immigrants from China and Chinese students) expressed quite different views from the Western media. They generally felt that it was inappropriate to link human rights issues with the Beijing Olympics, that the Tibetans were misrepresented as peaceful protesters, that Tibetan supporters were Western collaborators or pawns to contain China, and that the history between China and Tibet was misunderstood. Indeed, many demonstrators acknowledged that they did not support Beijing or the Olympics initially, but they valued China's image in the world. The image of China was thus treated as something separate from the government. On the other hand, perception of China is more often than not associated with perception of Chinese Americans in the United States. According to a 2007 survey by the Committee of 100, 66 percent of Americans stated that China's negative image hurt the perception of Chinese Americans.[37]

Chinese Activism in San Francisco

San Francisco, a port that attracted some of the earliest Chinese immigrants to America, was on the Beijing Olympic torch relay route. On April 9, 2008, more than 20,000 China supporters showed up for the relay to counter Tibetan activists, viewed by the former as damaging

China's international reputation. The majority of the demonstrators were new immigrants, and many were well-paid professionals and scientists in the Bay Area. Students and some older immigrants also participated in the rally. Others included members of *tongxianghui* (origin-based associations), Chinese students and scholars associations, various alumni associations, Chinese chambers of commerce, and professional associations. Regular contacts among these organizations enabled easy coordination for the rally.

At its peak prior to the rally, users on the San Francisco board of *mitbb.com* reached over 3,000. Many more participated in discussions of the coming demonstration. Discussion topics included transportation to and from the rally, posters, donations, T-shirts, protesting tactics, tips for dealing with media, slogans, songs, equipment, preferred clothing color (red was recommended), appropriate personal appearance and behavior, respectful treatment of Chinese flags, potential conflicts with Tibetan supporters, and analysis of their own advantages and disadvantages.

Participation in the rally effort—whether virtually or in the real world—helped nurture a sense of community. Many among the Chinese diaspora shared open letters, poems, essays, and jokes of their encounters with "prejudiced" and "hypocritical" Westerners. They described how they defended China before professors, classmates, and colleagues, and the lessons they learned from the experiences. Many donated money. More than $20,000 was raised through *mitbbs.com*, according to one organizer.[38] One user posted a message on the San Francisco board on April 3, asking for monetary donations to make T-shirts and posters. Within two hours, other users had pledged about $1,500. Donors also promised to partially reimburse air tickets, gas mileage, and transportation for students from out of town. An April 7 message was posted to collect information about those willing to provide free housing. Many people immediately responded, demonstrating a strong sense of trust among the community.

Participating organizations provided transportation and free T-shirts. Many volunteered to make flags, posters, and other gadgets. Loudspeakers and materials used to make Chinese flags—such as red cloth and small poles—were said to be sold out in all Radio Shack and Home Depot stores in the South Bay Area by April 8, one day before the San Franscisco rally.[39] Some volunteered to recruit rally participants in Chinese supermarkets in the area. Many who could not participate in the rally delivered their symbolic support. For example, a woman stated on *mitbbs.com*, "I am pregnant and cannot attend the rally, but

when demonstrators pass by my company, I will run downstairs and give you big applause." Another person composed and posted on *mitbbs.com* a Chinese poet for "all brave fighters."

To many among the Chinese diaspora, China was viewed as a victim in this particular case, reflecting the enduring narrative of China's humiliations during the past century at the hands of other countries.[40] Protecting the torch was also widely perceived as an honor. One Internet post stated, "Any embarrassment to the torch similar to that in Britain and France will be a shame to all Chinese in the Bay Area." Chinese Web sites enthusiastically praised torch carrier Jin Jing, who was attacked by a pro-Tibetan activist in Paris, but protected the flame with her body, despite being a disabled athlete. The images of the attack were endlessly circulated. The attack was perceived as an attack on China and all Chinese, and Jin Jing was hailed as a Chinese heroine.

In the eyes of Chinese supporters, pro-Tibetan activists were collaborating with Western governments to embarrass China. This motivated them to act in unity. As one netizen remarked on *mitbbs.com* on April 7, two days before the San Franscisco rally, "When Tibetan supporters and others make troubles, we are more united. Once united, what else can we fear? China is no longer the old China that was once bullied by various colonial powers . . . China indeed has many problems . . . [but] I have been branded from head to feet as a Chinese. Today when others wantonly insult and demonize China, we should stand up, get united and fight back." Such views are common among first-generation immigrants, Chinese nationals, or students. Ethnic Chinese born in the West might have totally different views, which this study does not analyze. Many Taiwanese immigrants do not really identify themselves with mainland China, especially if they support Taiwanese independence.

After the rally, participants posted their personal experiences, videos, pictures, and suggestions on the Internet. They shared the lessons they learned, and celebrated Chinese solidarity. Some even attempted to shame those who failed to participate in the national project. Two contrasting narratives were circulated simultaneously online: a sea of red flags as triumph of the Chinese and China, and the torch being attacked as a shame. Westerners were described as being ignorant of China and the Tibetan history, and thus in need of education on these matters. Tibetans were described as violent, aggressive, rude, less educated, or being hired to protest. A widely circulated video showed that Tibetan supporters did not even know where Tibet was. The Dalai

Lama was described as a pawn of the West, and Tibetans and their supporters were thus "othered."[41]

The successful rally in San Francisco seemed to have inspired similar events in other places across Europe, North American, and Australia.[42] Three goals dominated these rallies: support for Beijing, condemnation of Tibetan violence, and condemnation of the Western media. After April 19, some rallies specifically targeted CNN. Stories of overwhelming support and camaraderie were circulated over the Internet. Internet users applauded stories posted about Chinese minorities (e.g., Miao), Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and even Tibetan support for China. These stories seem to legitimize the rallies and protests as pan-Chinese rather than Han chauvinism.

The Delivery of Chinese Flags to Chinese "Netizens" Overseas

One lesson San Francisco rally organizers learned was that it was important to wave large Chinese flags to obstruct views of anti-China flags or banners and to show their powerful support for China. This lesson was passed on to others, and Internet users within and outside China coordinated a two-week-long online movement to deliver flags to foreign locations. On April 10, a Chinese Internet user in Australia posted a message on *Tianya*, entitled "Urgent, Urgent, Urgent!!! Australian Netizen Friends (*wang you*) Need Chinese Flag Urgently." More than 80 responses were posted within two hours. Most follow-up posts supported and pushed the message to become top news on the homepage. Subsequently, Chinese Internet users in South Korea, Japan, the United States, and other places posted their requests for flags. Netizens also established a flag donation discussion group on *QQ.com*. Searching on May 3, 2008, for "*juanzeng guoqi*"(flag donation) in Chinese resulted in 31,000 hits on *Google.com*, and 46,000 hits on *Baidu*, China's largest search engine.

On April 11, *Tianya* issued a special call for flag donations entitled "Urgent delivery! Urgent Delivery! Let Our National Flag Fly High." The call stated, "When the Olympic holy flame (*shenhuo*) was relayed overseas, a small number of Tibetan separatists and China bashers performed one fuss after another, which outraged numerous Chinese patriots . . . In order to let more overseas Chinese have the five-star red flag, cheer for the ancestors' land, and pray for the Olympics and the sacred flame, the *Tianya* community has decided to urgently collect and deliver a large number of five-star red flags at any time."[43] The call appeared immediately on many Internet discussion boards. Within days, more than one hundred netizens in Australia, Japan, and South

Korea provided their real names, addresses, and contact information to *Tianya*. Many in China offered to donate money, flags, or stickers. By 1:30 p.m. on April 15, *Tianya* received 430 Chinese flags from Chinese donors, and also purchased 130 flags. By seven o'clock, the first set of 560 flags and 1,000 flag stickers were delivered to Australia, Malaysia, and other places by a Chinese delivery company for free. *Yangcheng Evening News* (based in Guangzhou) published a major story on April 16 entitled "Overseas Patriotic Sons and Daughters Urgently Need Five-Star Red Flags."[44] This article was immediately reprinted on *Tianya* and other Chinese Web sites such as *CCTV, Sohu*, *QQ*, *Alibaba,* and *Baidu*, and several government Web sites.

Within a week, *Tianya* helped create a sense of urgency among Chinese Internet users and organized five more waves of Chinese flag donations and deliveries. Altogether, netizens in China donated 44,770 flags. *Tianya* purchased another 4,860 flags and 1,500 booklets of flag stickers. They were delivered to Australia, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Hong Kong. *Tianya* constantly updated flag demands and delivery information. *Tianya* also formed a team dedicated to flag donations. The team worked overtime and on weekends. Though most donors were young, some parents also participated. Numerous stories were shared online to inspire netizens to work for a common cause.

Interestingly, the enthusiastic donation of flags also served as a criticism of prevalent money worship and materialism in China. Many participants said the flag donations deeply moved them, because such actions reflected personal sacrifice. Some expressed their indignation at overflowing greed and materialism in China these days. For example, a call for the sixth wave of Chinese flags stated,

> We had only one thought . . . within these ten days: to deliver more flags, allow the five-star red flags to be planted in every place where there is a Chinese, and let our love spread to every corner of the world! In our society that overflows with materialistic desires, thinning human love (*renqing danmo*), and excessive monetary pursuits that are smothering everything (*jinqian chongchi yiqie*), our hearts are really touched by the boxes of flags. We cannot but feel a small tremor in our hearts as if . . . an intense emotion jumped out to us (*pumian erlai*) . . . Our hearts are filled with love . . . In the loving moment, there are you and me.[45]

This post not only criticized materialism in China, but also expressed a yearning for something more communal and transcendental. *Tianya*

also posted an article summarizing touching moments in the flag donation movement.[46] Publicizing such stories helped further develop a sense of global community among the Chinese diaspora.

The Proactive Use of Internet Resources

Chinese Internet users utilized various English Web sites and forums to post pro-China messages and antiseparatist comments. They participated in many online polls and poured in complaints and comments to newspaper editors. For example, the *New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof announced on March 30, 2008 his intention to write his next column about China and welcomed comments from Chinese readers. There were 761 extensive comments posted within a month, and most appeared to be written by ethnic Chinese.[47] Almost all the Chinese messages expressed that Tibet had belonged to China for centuries, that the biased Western media were damaging China's reputation, and that China's Tibetan policy was fundamentally correct, despite its minor problems.

Youtube became another battleground where Chinese netizens tried to win over world opinion. A keyword search on May 6, 2008 of "Tibet" resulted in 58,500 hits. An examination of the top 200-rated videos found that 68 were pro-China and among them 66 were posted after March 14 when Tibetan demonstrations turned violent.[48] Only two were posted before the Tibetan uprising, which indicates that pro-China videos were largely a response to the events. Pro-Tibetan supporters also used *Youtube* to express their views.[49] For example, on March 16, a fifteen-year-old Chinese Canadian uploaded a video called "Tîbet was, is, and always will be a part of China." It became popular immediately, and there were about 1.2 million viewings and more than 72,000 comments within three days.[50] An immediate response video was posted titled, "Tîbet is not, was not, [and] will never be a part of China." Generally speaking, five kinds of pro-China videos were uploaded on *Youtube*: those (a) aiming to undermine the reputation of the Dalai Lama and his Tibetan movement; (b) demonstrating the economic development of contemporary Tibet; (c) showing violent Tibetans attacking Han Chinese and the Olympic torch; (d) pointing out distortions in Western media coverage; (e) and portraying recent pro-China rallies. Chinese supporters also flagged pro-Tibetan videos as offensive materials and added pro-China videos as favorites on *Youtube* in the hope of either getting the former removed or the latter elevated to the *Youtube* home page. In addition, supporters from both camps posted comments on *Youtube* videos, some of which were

rational, whereas others resorted to racist and verbal attacks. Ironically, China had blocked *Youtube* initially. Even when the block was partially lifted, many Tibet-related materials were still censored.

Nationalism as a Double-Edged Sword

Overwhelming patriotism on the Chinese-language Web sites means suppression of other views. Pro-China nationalists often labeled rational analysis of Western media or the views of Western politicians and Tibetan activists as "simple" or "naïve." Those who favored or were sympathetic toward Western media or Tibetan supporters were called Chinese traitors or foreign slaves. For example, Wang Qianyuan, a Chinese student at Duke University, was ostracized after she expressed her support for Tibetan activists and her willingness to be a mediator. Her contact information, home address, and parents' address were revealed over the Internet, resulting in a deluge of threatening emails to her. The Carolinas board at *mitbbs.com* was full of posts calling on "traitor Wang" to apologize. Wang's father published an open letter and apologized to all Chinese and asked for forgiveness. CCTV uploaded a video clip on April 17 on its home page and called Wang Qianyuan the ugliest Chinese student overseas. Wang's family in Qingdao was reportedly robbed, and her high school expelled her as an alumnus.[51] Even though some Internet posts since mid-April supported her on *mitbbs.com*, nationalistic views prevailed on the Chinese Web site.

Nationalism seemed to have granted some Chinese a sense of justice, ultimate truth, and thus moral superiority in dealing with dissidents. Because the West was viewed as a primary enemy buttressing the Dalai Lama, nationalists conveniently dismissed Tibetan suffering. Such a binary thinking severely reduces the possibility for rational deliberation or political dialogue. Rising nationalism also restricts Beijing's political options. For example, many Chinese overseas, especially those *mitbbs.com* users, expressed feelings of betrayal and disagreement in April 2008 after China announced that it would resume negotiation with the Dalai Lama's representatives.

Extreme nationalistic expressions can also hurt China's international image. South Korean and Western newspapers, for example, reported the violent behaviors of a few Chinese demonstrators in Korea. However, Chinese supporters argued that the Western media would cast the rallies in a negative light regardless of how Chinese demonstrators behaved. Indeed, the Western media tended to ignore the rallies of

the Chinese diaspora most of the time. If the rallies were reported, they were either underrepresented to show their insignificance or overly exaggerated to imply a perception of the Chinese threat. Nevertheless, the Chinese diaspora unintentionally reinforced the perception among some Westerners that Beijing might be secretly mobilizing overseas Chinese as its agents. An overwhelming number of Chinese supporters waving a sea of red flags might also unintentionally strengthen the Western perception that Tibetans, as a minority, were suppressed by the majority Han Chinese. Indeed, a *Financial Times*/Harris Poll released in April 2008 following the riots in Tibet and during the early stage of the controversial torch relay found that an average of 35 percent of the respondents in Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Spain saw China as a bigger threat than any other country and that the percentage had dramatically increased from 2007. In the United States, 31 percent of those surveyed thought China was even a larger threat than Iran and North Korea.[52]

Though the torch relay was intended as a "journey of harmony" and a dress rehearsal for Beijing to showcase China's modern development and integration with the international community, its journey turned out to reinforce China's image as a repressive regime. Wasserstrom argues that the United States framed post-1989 China in its public imagination as "big bad China and the good Chinese."[53] To many in the West, Wang Qianyuan may have symbolized an ideal Chinese student similar to the lonely man who defied the tanks in 1989, and pro-China demonstrators reinforced their worst fear that the Chinese, including the Chinese diaspora, could become collaborators with Beijing.

The Internet played a central role in sharing information, and organizing and mobilizing the Chinese diaspora communities. It helped to create an "imagined community" of the global Chinese, which mobilized Chinese to show support and commitment to a unified China. This imagined community was strengthened by such collective actions as flag donation and delivery. It was reified through images and narratives circulated on the Internet about the global Chinese community's frustration, humiliation, and ultimate triumph. Despite myriad differences among Western countries, such as the United States, Britain, Germany, and France, the West was imagined by China supporters as a unitary whole that was attempting to contain China. Although people living in the West make distinctions between the government, the judiciary, the legislature, the media, and the people, Chinese nationalists conveniently lumped them together. Any bits and pieces of anti-China

or anti-Chinese government comments and actions could be viewed as part of an orchestrated plan to obstruct China's rise.

This chapter certainly does not imply that the nationalistic fervor and support for China was embraced by all Chinese. Indeed, many Chinese criticized such expressions of extreme nationalism and did not participate in or identify with the movement. Even in China, alternative views were expressed and circulated on the Internet. For instance, 29 leading Chinese intellectuals signed a letter on March 22, a few days after the crackdown on the Tibetan demonstrations, calling for the government to conduct an thorough investigation on the Tibetan uprising. Other critics included Chang Ping (who published an article in the *Financial Times* on April 3), Han Han, Ai Weiwei, and other prominent Chinese. He Qinglian, a Chinese dissident writer, criticized Chinese nationalists and linked them with "the boxers" of the Qing Dynasty. She questioned their cowardice in not daring to challenge Chinese authorities.[54]

Among the Chinese diaspora, there is also ambivalence toward China. Chinese Americans, for instance, generally viewed China (not necessarily the Chinese government) more favorably than the American public.[55] On the other hand, China also has a large number of political refugees in the West who are critical of the country, such as political dissidents who fled the country after the Tian'anmen Square movement in 1989, Falun Gong dissidents, and Tibetan refugees. They actively engage in efforts in the West to challenge the Chinese government. Even among the Chinese students, who make up the bulk of China's overseas supporters, many often try to distance themselves from the country's official representations. Some pro-China demonstrators expressed unwillingness to be involved with associations affiliated with Chinese embassies or consulates. Before the Canberra rally, for instance, a few netizens expressed disagreement when one organizer proposed that they should ask the Chinese consulate to help provide buses for transportation. For the Atlanta rally, an April 18 post on *mitbbs.com* included a disclaimer, "the organizing committee is a grass-roots organization. It has nothing to do with any governments or governmental agencies. It will not accept any donations from any governments or governmental agencies." Others suggested that future rallies should have "no contact with the embassies." While there was evidence that Chinese embassies at different places supported the pro-China rally, the pro-China movement was mobilized largely because of the Chinese diaspora's sense of mission to defend an idealized image of China. China, in other words, is constructed as an ideal that connects all ethnic Chinese globally.

Conclusions

Anderson calls diasporic nationalism a "long distance" movement that has the capacity to produce a "national hero on the other side of the planet."[56] The Chinese press enthusiastically reported the demonstrations, and the diaspora were hailed as patriots. Chinese diasporic nationalism is a complex phenomenon. A strong sense of mission motivated the overseas communities to organize and defend China. They shared an interest in protecting their homeland's image and reputation. Their sense of identity, belonging, and their daily experience of racial prejudice constantly reinforce this interest. In a sense, patriotism among the Chinese diaspora is a reaction to current China bashing specifically and to the historical victimization of the global Chinese community in general. The construction of a global ethnic Chinese community centered on mainland China is thus internalized. Moreover, the Chinese diaspora constructed a unitary West that was viewed as orchestrating its plan to obstruct China's rise onto the world stage. The Chinese diaspora's remarkable support for the Beijing Olympics seems to also suggest that China's efforts in cultivating a long-term relationship with them appear to have been effective.

Though the pro-Tibetan activists argued that the Beijing Olympics were an endorsement of the Communist Party, the pro-China demonstrators countered that Tibetan protesters infringed on their rights to enjoy the Olympics and to celebrate Chinese achievements. Westerners focused exclusively on China's human rights record during the torch relay, whereas the Chinese diaspora stressed China's accomplishments in the past few decades. Many Chinese view Tibet as an issue of sovereignty and development, in contrast to the Western view of it as an issue of freedom and human rights.

To sum up, nationalism among the Chinese diaspora is performed and constructed around media(ted) events. In this case, it was by and large in reaction to perceived Western media biases, activism on the part of Tibetan supporters, and the Chinese diaspora's daily experience with prejudice and their difficulties in the West. Such expressions can also polarize the Tibetan issue, limit room for rational discussion and policy options, and even run the risk of justifying violence in the name of national interests, hence hurting rather than helping China's international image. The Internet plays an important role in organizing the Chinese diaspora, creating multiple fronts for overseas Chinese

to fight for their mother country. It also blurs the line between the Chinese within and outside China, producing a global Chinese community geared toward the nation-state. The case study implies that dispersal does not automatically produce cosmopolitanism, but rather the diaspora can be transnational in kind but national in their hearts. This has significant implications for a country's outreach and public diplomacy efforts in the global arena.

Notes

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CHAPTER NINE

China's Image Management Abroad, 1920s–1940s: Origin, Justification, and Institutionalization

Yong Z. Volz

"Much injustice has been done to China because of ignorance of Chinese condition on the part of foreigners and of the failure on the part of Chinese leaders to make her cause and aspirations understood by the world... The Chinese are hoping that better means and facilities may be devised and greater effort made by their own leaders and friends to bring Chinese news and views uncolored and unprejudiced before the world."

—Huang Xianzhao, 1922[1]

"During the last few decades China has been struggling hard in hope to raise her standing in the community of nations... The organization of a Chinese Associated Press will be able to present China's case to the world by her own means, thus freeing herself from the undue domination of foreign forces, over which she has no control whatever."

—Shen Jianhong, 1935[2]

"My task in the Chinese Government was to serve as a bridge between my struggling nation and world public opinion. It was to interpret China's little understood struggle to a democratic world which was only too often complacent and apathetic."

—Dong Xianguang, 1948[3]

These quotations, all from Chinese journalists with American training, give a glimpse of the prevalent concern among Western-trained Chinese regarding China's image abroad during its Republican period. Their writings also reveal their eagerness to deliberately shape this image through media directed at foreign audiences. They hoped through the use of such international propaganda to rescue China from what Edward Said later would call "the discursive violence" in the Orientalist representations of the "other."[4] In fact, the above three journalists, joined by other Western-trained Chinese, helped establish the International Department for the Kuomintang government in 1937—the first government institution in Chinese history mandated to coordinate overseas publicity—and thus transformed themselves from professional journalists into avid propagandists.

International propaganda is certainly not a Chinese invention, nor was it a uniquely Chinese phenomenon. During World War I, for example, prominent American journalists Walter Lippmann and George Creel helped President Woodrow Wilson establish the Committee on Public Information to campaign for American intervention in the war with commissioners' offices in nine foreign countries.[5] During World War II, international propaganda departments were created in countries on both sides as a key component of the war efforts, such as Britain's Political Warfare Executive and Nazi Germany's Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda.

But in Western countries, international propaganda is often associated with distortion, deception, and disinformation. It is seen as a government function and as opposed to professional journalism. Though international propaganda's appeal and acceptance often increases during national crises and wartime, professionalism usually resurfaces as the dominant journalistic paradigm during peacetime.[6] This general discomfort with international propaganda in Western democracies derives from Western journalism's historical roots and political culture. Western journalism's legitimacy and credibility stem from its fundamental distrust of the state and its self-claimed "checks-and-balances" power over the government. News media are supposed to function as the public's watchdog in holding the government accountable. They are expected to serve as an adversary rather than a cheerleader for the government. From the Western liberal perspective, international propaganda is a betrayal of democracy and journalism; it not only entails the media working in concert with the government, but also requires media to sacrifice professional standards.[7]

How, then, did international propaganda emerge and develop in different historical contexts and journalistic traditions? How was international propaganda justified in social and political discourse, especially for Third World countries that were historically deprived of national voices on the world stage? And how was it practiced and who practiced it? This chapter attempts to address these questions by exploring the context and emergence of international propaganda—both as an idea and as a social institution—in early twentieth-century China. This study is particularly interested in how Western-trained Chinese intellectuals, as key promoters and practitioners of international propaganda, articulated the necessity of international propaganda in carrying Western support for China's national reconstruction.

I contend that the Chinese concept of international propaganda took shape in the aftermath of the anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement of 1919, a turning point marking the rise of Chinese nationalism and a growing acute awareness of China's weak position in world politics. International propaganda was Chinese intellectuals' proactive response to the intensified national crisis, and, more directly, a corrective reaction to perceived bias and criticism in the foreign press's coverage of China. In the following, the first section will discuss the historical context of the Chinese nationalist movement and document the prevailing sentiment against the foreign press in the 1920s and 1930s. The second section shall examine how Western-trained Chinese intellectuals justified the idea of international propaganda within the grand narratives of "national crisis," "world peace," and "ultimate truth." Their discourses—often in reference to the Western experience—lent legitimacy to and provided practical ideas for the Kuomintang government to institute an international propaganda system in hopes of garnering international support, both moral and material, during its anti-Japanese war in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The third section will detail the International Department's founding and expansion, which realized and institutionalized the idea of international propaganda for which the Chinese intellectuals had been campaigning. The conclusion will further discuss the historical implications of Chinese international propaganda in the Republican period.

The Nationalist Movement and the Sentiment Against the Foreign Press

The May Fourth Movement in 1919 cultivated radical thoughts and attitudes toward the West, signaling the upsurge of Chinese nationalism.

The Japanese aggression of Manchuria in 1931—and the Western powers' lack of will to stop such Japanese conquest in China—further intensified the anti-imperialist impulse among the Chinese, leading to protests against all aspects of foreign involvement in China. This included a growing sentiment against the foreign press among the nation's leading intellectuals and newspapermen. Perceiving a deep bias in Western coverage of China, they openly criticized foreign correspondents and endorsed the position that a modernizing China had to defend itself and influence world opinion through its own means.

Those who were trained in the West often took on the role of principal critics of the foreign press and became the de facto "China's voice" in the international journalistic community. At the first Pan-Pacific press conference organized by the Press Congress of the World in Honolulu in 1921, the Chinese delegation demanded significant improvement in Western press coverage of China. Xu Jianping, a graduate from the University of Michigan and then working for the *China Press* of Shanghai, gave a speech at the conference, claiming that "the confidence of the Chinese journalists in the foreign press for the time being is being totally shaken" because the Chinese journalists had realized that the foreign pressmen "were but cat's paws in the hands of their statesmen and carried out their instructions for the furtherance of a political program."[8] He attributed the misunderstanding among different nations to "the failure of the press to perform its sacred duty of telling the 'truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.'"[9] Wang Boheng, a representative from Shanghai's leading newspaper, *Shen Bao*, also complained that "any reading materials about China published in foreign papers mostly consist of short reports of insignificant events and wrong representations of political and social problems."[10] "In rebuilding China into a great nation," he contended, "the assistance and cooperation of the press of other friendly powers are most earnestly solicited."[11] In his address to the Press Congress, Dong Xianguang criticized the Western press for being inaccurate and excessively negative when China was "passing through a great period of transition or transformation." He further called for "a journalistic mission to China":

> I take it that the first function of the press is to supply news, to purvey information, and that the second is to endeavor to direct the minds of men in such a way as to enable them to reach true and dependable judgments on the issues of the movement. I plead with the Western newspapers and news agencies to send to China

> highly trained journalists who will make at least some attempt to get in touch with the real life and thought of our people.[12]

China's national modernization was a grand narrative behind this apparent anti-foreign-press sentiment. This sentiment was particularly acute among overseas Chinese who became aggressively concerned with China's standing in the international community. In particular, they were worried about how China was perceived in the West. It is telling to examine the master's theses written by Chinese students who were studying at the Missouri School of Journalism in the 1920s and 1930s. Among the twenty-three theses we were able to locate, more than half picked the topic of foreign media coverage of China. Tang Dechen, for example, looked at how China's Manchurian dispute was covered in three American newspapers from 1931 to 1932. "Although the American correspondents strived for accuracy," he concluded, "their reports were not, by all means, authentic."[13] Comparing the news coverage of the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 in the London *Times* to the facts recorded by historians and official reports, Lu Qixin argued that the news coverage was "in most cases unreliable and conflicting." He suspected that foreign correspondents and news agencies in China "did not get their facts by covering the events but by picking up wayside rumors and tea-house gossip."[14] Shen Jianhong, in his thesis, also complained that foreign correspondents portrayed the Chinese people as bandits and kidnappers to make scoops and sensational headlines. He especially reproved those foreign propagandists whose work was to "paint the Chinese picture as black as possible so as to discredit China before the world."[15] "Most of such special interests are enjoyed by aliens often to the considerable detriment of China's sovereignty and the welfare of her people as a whole," Shen wrote.[16]

The anti-foreign-press sentiment seemed to be prevalent in China, even among otherwise pro-Western intellectuals. A number of the nation's foremost liberals endorsed the position that national interest should outweigh freedom for the foreign press. Lin Yutang, China's leading liberal intellectual who was trained at Harvard and Leipzig, charged that some foreign correspondents had "caused the Chinese people more damage than had the foreign gunboats."[17] He accused the British-owned *North China Daily News* of being a "bully,"[18] having done "more to arouse anti-British feeling among the Chinese than any of its English contemporaries."[19] "What the reading public, both foreign and Chinese, has a right to demand," he said, "is that it maintain a decent standard of news accuracy and does not insult the public's

intelligence by administering self-contradictory and palpably false reports from its Hankow correspondent, who picked up tidbits from the 'longest bar.' "[20]

Chinese newsmen working for the foreign press also joined the critique. *China Weekly Review*, a Shanghai-based English-language newspaper edited by John Powell and several U.S.-trained Chinese, charged that the misinformation distributed by foreign correspondents was "making it most difficult for the leaders of the National Government who are striving to bring order to the country, and especially for well-wishers of China in America and Europe, who are trying to assist China in every way possible to unify the country and enable the National Government to strengthen its position."[21] Lu Yi, editor of the American-owned *Shanghai Evening Post* (*Da Mei Wan Bao*), contended that "the only way out" for people suffering under semicolonial subjugation to imperial powers is to "start a news policy that aims for national liberation to oppose our enemy's news policy!"[22]

But what kind of news policy should China adopt to gain the world's support for its nationalist movement? In a *China Weekly Review* editorial titled "Something Got to be Done About Peiping's News," two approaches were proposed: "The National Government ought to either establish an office in Peiping for the purpose of supplying accurate information to the newspaper correspondents who are still hanging about the old Legation Quarter, or it should establish some kind of censorship to prevent cabling of misinformation to newspaper abroad."[23] Liang Shichun, a DePauw University journalism graduate who then chaired the journalism department at Beijing's Yenching University, called the former approach "the positive news control" and the latter "the negative news control."[24] Although censorship might more effectively prevent unfavorable news from being spread, he argued, propaganda can help the government to restructure hostile attitudes and push for its foreign policy.[25]

The Formulation and Justification of International Propaganda

Western-returned Chinese intellectuals attached great importance to international propaganda, partly because they sensed the vital need of Western support for Chinese reconstruction. To promote the idea of international propaganda, however, they had to contend with what Roy Howard called "Oriental stoicism," a prevailing unwillingness of

the Chinese government to reveal to the outside world its problems and internal politics.[26] As Dong Xianguang once explained, "the Chinese official mind was not yet awake to the necessity of propaganda since, as a nation with no expansionist designs, China had never felt the need of justifying herself in world opinion."[27]

However, the increasing Japanese aggression and the intensified national crisis in the 1920s and early 1930s provided an opportunity for Chinese intellectuals to promote the establishment of an international propaganda system. In justifying the inclusion of propaganda courses in the journalism curriculum at Yenching University, Liang Shichun stressed the utmost importance of promoting China's image abroad in winning international support against the Japanese.[28] The goals were not only to transform Western countries' attitudes from apathy to concern for China, but also to acquire material and financial support for Chinese resistance and reconstruction. Sun Fu, then national railway minister, made an appeal in *China Weekly Review* to the Western countries to help Chinese industrialization and democratic evolution: "We are confident that these problems can be solved by us. But we are also convinced that these problems will be solved more efficiently, more quickly, and more scientifically if we can obtain the technical and financial assistance from abroad. It is to America and to Western Europe that we are now looking for such technical and financial assistance."[29]

While campaigning to request the government to set up propaganda goals and channels, the proponents also had to battle the resistance of the foreign press and to persuade them to cooperate with China's publicity efforts. To do that, propaganda was justified through the framework of international peace and democracy. At the 1921 conference of the Press Congress of the World, Wang Boheng of Shanghai's *Shen Bao* urged the foreign press to "give a helping hand to China to restore her life and vigor again, to insure peace and order in the Pacific regions, and to make the world safe for democracy."[30] Specifically, he asked the foreign press to present the Chinese story in a sympathetic light: "Proper and authentic publicity about China should supersede ridiculous story telling, and friendly and helpful advices should be introduced in place of sarcastic and sometimes contemptuous comments . . . If the peoples of the world cannot sympathize and help one another to bring about the world's salvation, what will be the hope and destiny of the world's civilization."[31] Huang Xianzhao, who graduated from the Missouri School of Journalism in 1911 and was then editor of the English-language newspaper *Star of Canton*, delivered a similar

message at the conference: "Much misconception regarding things Chinese exists, and it is high time that definite steps should be taken by Chinese and others interested to bring to the attention of the world the existence of a greater people with incalculable natural resources capable of bringing peace, prosperity, and happiness to mankind if properly developed and appreciated or curse and war to the world if misunderstood and mistreated."[32] Dong Xianguang, in his address to foreign press members, urged them to have an empathetic understanding of Chinese national feelings as well as Chinese economic, political, social, and educational development. He asked the foreign correspondents to understand the "immensity of the democratic task in China" and to cheer "such small but heartening advances as we have made toward our ultimate goal."[33] "When the press world has acquired an intimate knowledge of Chinese affairs," he asserted, "the world at large will be even more ready to concede China's international importance, either for peace or for war, and by conceding it, may minimize the possibilities of international strife."[34]

Reproving the foreign press for "telling the partial truth in a colorful manner,"[35] many leading Chinese intellectuals also justified international propaganda as a route to the final truth. Wang Shijie,[36] a European-trained law professor who later took charge of the government's Ministry of Information, defended propaganda as a means to seek truth, justice, and the right of national self-determination under imperial domination. Wang addressed a committee from the American Society of Newspaper Editors that was invited to China. He pointed out the biased coverage of China in the foreign press and expressed concern that Chinese newspapers had not developed sufficiently and "would have little chance to express itself."[37] Without an articulate press of our own, he stressed, the whole truth about China would not be revealed to the world.

In line with Wang's concern about China's image in world public opinion, Mei Jiju, a veteran journalist with an American education, exhorted China to develop her own voice in the international community. He wrote, "The American people are not satisfied to have developments reported to them by foreign correspondents only. They think the Chinese are in a better position to tell the world what is going on, and the sole reliance should not be placed on foreign correspondents for interpretation of these development… The Chinese people themselves, it is felt, can give the world a better picture of happenings in China with their meaning."[38] Shen Jianhong, who was a student at the Missouri School of Journalism, also argued that a well-organized

propaganda system would "be able to present China's case to the world by her own means, thus freeing herself from the undue domination of foreign forces, over which she has no control whatsoever."[39] Similarly, Gao Keyi argued that the best weapon against imperial domination was to "present China's case to the general public through truth-telling publicity."[40] In their view, propaganda was not distortion, deception, or disinformation—as often perceived in the Western culture—but was a way to give China a fair chance at success in the world community by correcting bias and revealing the truth.

The Western-trained Chinese intellectuals constantly referred to the Western experience to make the case for Chinese propaganda. The Western propaganda system was introduced in journalism trade journals and textbooks to convey the impression that international propaganda was a widely used and effective tool in world politics. In a leading article in *Baoxue jikan* (Journalism Quarterly), Liang Shichun explained how U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt utilized the media to popularize his New Deal policies during the Great Depression. Liang praised Roosevelt for developing close relationships with prominent journalists and initiating the famous radio "Fireside Chats," calling those propaganda techniques "the most modern, most civilized and most effective methods of molding the public opinion." He urged the Chinese government to make similar efforts in the time of national crisis.[41] In another article, Liang continued to preach the crucial role of media in international propaganda, especially during the war. "The major European news services are all key institutions for their governments to conduct international propaganda," he argued. "Some are government organs and some are semi-official, semi-private, and some self-claimed private news agencies such as Reuters actually have very close relationships with their governments."[42] Similarly, in pressing the Chinese government to build a news machinery for the distribution of Chinese news abroad, Zhao Minheng asserted in his highly acclaimed book on the foreign press in China that "every intelligent government of today spends millions of dollars each year on publicity and puts many of its best minds in this field. They realize that the power of public opinion is tremendous."[43] Wu Tianfang, also an American-trained journalist, claimed that all the major foreign powers—such as Britain, the United States, Japan, Italy, Germany, and others—had established national news agencies as a key institution for international propaganda.[44]

But what would be the best mechanism and techniques for China's international propaganda? An editorial in *Da Gong Bao*—arguably the most influential and liberal newspaper of the time—suggested

providing two means to help foreign press correspondents "obtain news here accurately and efficiently." First, the government should "grant regular interviews to foreign press correspondents, so that the latter may have an opportunity to obtain the latest and most authentic information about political events." Second, the government "should have special publicity representatives to be in constant touch with the foreign press correspondents in order to give them every facility in their work of news gathering in this country."[45] Zhao Minheng also proposed the government to decrease cable rates for sending news abroad. He suspected that the high cable tolls limited the foreign press correspondents to only turning in the most sensational stories that focused on the negative aspects of Chinese life such as rebellions, banditry, and uprisings. Lower cable rates, he believed, would encourage the foreign correspondents to "give a more comprehensive and fair representation of the latest development in this country."[46] Wu Tianfang made four additional recommendations to the government: (a) to publish daily newspapers in Washington, London, Paris, Tokyo, and Roman to gain world attention; (b) to set up publicity offices in foreign countries in charge of translating and distributing work on Chinese politics and society, making propaganda movies featuring Chinese political figures, and introducing Chinese curriculum in foreign universities; (c) to patronize foreign correspondents in China to win their loyalty and support; and (d) to establish a Shanghai-based news agency with stations in the international centers of London, New York, Moscow, Tokyo, and Geneva to supply favorable Chinese news to the foreign press.[47]

The organization of an efficient international news agency was almost unanimously considered as "the best remedy" to the "absence of authentic and valuable information about China" in the foreign press.[48] But there were disagreements among the Chinese on the composition and ownership of such a news service as an international publicity tool. Some argued that the Chinese and foreign press should jointly organize this news service as an international cooperative. "Such an agency should invite upright newspapermen both from China and from other nations to be on the staff so that all parties concerned could get the best benefit therefrom," Wang Boheng of Shanghai's *Shen Bao* claimed. "If such an agency should include all principal countries of the world and work together in proper co-operative basis, it would be a useful and important journalistic enterprise of the world."[49] Along the same lines, in an address to the 1921 Press Congress of the World, Huang Xianzhao proposed that the Chinese and leading foreign news services help organize a Shanghai-based international press service to undertake

publicity work "in accordance with the desire of the Chinese and as demanded by the foreign public for accurate presentation and fair interpretation of Chinese news and views."[50] Believing that this joint effort would guarantee a greater level of impartiality, Huang hoped it would function to "discourage unreliable information" and "minimize distortion" in presenting Chinese affairs to the rest of the world.[51]

Others, however, strongly felt that the Chinese government should organize this news service on its own terms. Lamenting that "China may be an independent nation, but its publicity channels abroad are in the hands of foreign news agencies and newspapers," Zhao Minheng argued that a government-sponsored news agency could more effectively distribute Chinese news abroad and present China's own viewpoint.[52] Shen Jianhong held a similar distrust of the foreign press correspondents, arguing that "language difficulties and peculiarities of China's political and social life often make it extremely hard for them to attempt to interpret Chinese events with any degree of accuracy and authority."[53] In his master's thesis—which was entitled "Proposed: A Chinese Associated Press" and completed at the Missouri School of Journalism in 1935—Shen championed the establishment of "an articulate press of our own" to enable China to "stand on her own feet in the field of international news communications"; to present China's case "to the world by her own means"; and to "create sound understanding and good impression among foreign peoples about China and the Chinese people."[54] But instead of a government-controlled news agency as some publicists advocated, Shen suggested that Chinese newspapers organize an independent news agency. An official, government news agency "will necessarily arouse suspicion in foreign countries," he wrote. He further explained that

> I hold that this news agency should have no relationship, financial or otherwise, with any branch in the government... To have a governmental news agency filter all news coming into the country would place too powerful and too dangerous a weapon in the hands of any administration in any country at any time. Especially when national and party interest meet and clash, politicians in China as politicians elsewhere would always have the temptation of heeding their immediate interests first.[55]

Wu Tianfang echoed Shen's pragmatic approach, arguing that a news agency jointly organized by existing major privately owned Chinese news agencies would be more preferable than an official one. He

suggested that Shenshi News Agency, Guowen News Agency, and Guomin News Agency collaborate with overseas Chinese to establish an international news agency in the fashion of America's Associated Press.[56]

Who, then, could be trusted with this formidable task of presenting China to world opinion? Who had the qualifications to defend China's interests while making allies with the foreign press? In his influential book, "A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China," Lin Yutang gave a job description: "trained and professional bureaucrats, who understand something of the world situation and the world press, the working of news agencies, and above all, what is good for our country."[57] Shen Jianhong, also American-trained, particularly preferred those who were educated in Western journalism programs for his proposed national news agency. "They are young, industrious, and aggressive," he wrote, "and they should be recruited to form the backbone of the new organization."[58] He even went so far as to recommend three individuals to take charge of China's publicity work, who were both Western-trained and had substantial journalistic experience: Li Cai, an Oxford graduate who was then the publisher of the Kuomin News Agency;[59] Mei Qiju (a.k.a, E. K. Moy) of Shenxun News Agency, who received a doctorate from Syracuse University in New York;[60] and Dong Xianguang, a veteran editor of English-language newspapers, who studied journalism at Missouri and Columbia. American colleagues called Dong "China's first American-trained journalist," saying he "writes and thinks as an American."[61] It was Dong who ultimately took up the task in 1937 and formed China's first official international propaganda agency. But unlike the news agency envisioned by Shen, Dong's organization was established as a department under the Chinese Kuomintang government. Given the exigencies of China's intensifying war effort against Japan, however, Shen Jianhong, Li Cai, and dozens of other Western-returned Chinese journalists were more than willing to assist in the project.

The "International Department" and the Institutionalization of International Propaganda

Although the idea of international propaganda was formulated in the 1920s and early 1930s—and private organizations had already made

efforts to form news agencies to furnish pro-China news to the foreign newspapers—it was not until the Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937 that the Kuomintang government formally instituted an overseas publicity department within its party structure.[62] The department was originally installed as the Fifth Board of the National Military Council, but it soon became a separate organization, the International Department of the Ministry of Information. Its goal was to "encourage the foreign correspondents to say more of what China herself wanted publicized."[63]

The International Department was an idea largely initiated by Soong May-ling (a.k.a. Madame Chiang), who urged her husband Chiang Kai-shek to hire Western-trained professional newspapermen to handle overseas publicity.[64] As the daughter of a prominent Chinese Methodist pastor and businessman who made much of his living off of publishing bibles, Soong was intimately familiar with Western culture and values. She attended American missionary schools in China until age eleven, when she moved to America. Growing up in the United States and educated at Wellesley College, Soong gained a deep appreciation for Western journalistic values and the crucial role of the press in shaping public opinion. After returning to China, Soong became actively involved in Chinese politics and attached great importance to promoting the budding Nationalist government among Western audiences. She subscribed to a large number of American periodicals and followed closely American opinion trends concerning China. When war against Japan broke out, and China urgently needed both material and moral support from Western countries, Soong convinced Chiang Kai-shek to hire a like-minded individual, Dong Xianguang, to organize an overseas publicity department in hopes of gaining Western support.

To Dong, building an international propaganda machine required three essential elements: recruiting and training qualified professionals, building and coordinating a global network, and establishing, normalizing, and expanding functions. Because Western audiences were his target, Dong Xianguang felt it was essential to hire people who were familiar with Western sensibilities and had the training necessary to enlist Western sympathies for the cause of the Chinese government.[65] For Dong, this meant finding Western-trained journalists who were familiar with Western news media and had sufficient fluency in English to present China's point of view persuasively to Western audiences. Dong also sought sympathetic Westerners to join his program. In his search, he relied mostly on professional connections he had developed

during twenty years of working for various English-language newspapers in China, especially the *China Press*.

Although Dong often complained about the difficulty of finding qualified personnel, he did manage to recruit a capable team consisting mainly of Western-trained Chinese. A string of Missouri journalism graduates came to work under Dong: Huang Xianzhao, Shen Jianhong, Gao Keyi, and Lu Qixin.[66] Other Chinese staff whom Dong enlisted were all highly educated in the United States or Britain: Wen Yuanning, a Cambridge graduate who was then editor-in-chief of *Tian Xia*, an English monthly published in Shanghai;[67] Xia Jinlin, an experienced diplomat who received his doctorate at the University of Edinburgh;[68] Lin Mousheng, who earned a doctorate from the University of Chicago;[69] Lin Lin, an economics graduate from Ohio State University who was also the nephew of Lin Sen, Chairman of the Kuomintang Party in the 1930s;[70] and Zhu Fusong, who graduated from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Dong also hired as his official assistants Zeng Xubai and Wei Jingmeng, both of whom studied Western journalism at American missionary institutions (Yenching University and St. John's University) and formerly worked closely under Dong's editorship at *Yong Bao*.

Dong also found no shortage of sympathetic Westerners who were professionally trained and willing to join his efforts as "Chinese spokesmen." H. J. Timperley, formerly a Nanjing correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, was appointed as an adviser to the International Department and was sent to set up offices in the United States and Britain.[71] Earl Leaf, a former United Press correspondent, was hired to take charge of Dong's New York office; he collected data on American opinions and attitudes toward China, while developing channels to present China's stories to the American public. John B. Penniston, chief editorial writer for the *China Press*, was enlisted to work in the Shanghai office to supply foreign correspondents with the war information from inland China. In Chongqing, Melville Jacoby, who had a master's degree in journalism from Stanford, and James McCausland, a graduate of Cambridge University, helped Dong set up the International Broadcasting Stations.[72] Those joining the Chongqing office also included Maurice Votaw, chair of the journalism department at St. John's University; Hubert Freyn, a former Shanghai publicist; Teddy White, a Chinese history graduate from Harvard; and W. A. Farmer, a former reporter and editor in Australia. In 1943, Dong secured temporary assistance from four more American newspapermen through the arrangements of the U.S. Department of State, including

Floyd Taylor of the *New York World Telegram*; *New York Times* photographer George Alexanderson, *Minneapolis Star-Journal* radio director George Grim; and feature writer Frank Buchner.[73]

The International Department first started its operations in Shanghai, the news center where most foreign correspondents resided and most foreign-language newspapers were published. But the department was able to expand its international reach considerably. Early on Dong found the resources to establish additional branches in Hong Kong, London, New York, Berlin, Moscow, and Geneva. When the war further intensified, Dong and his staff were forced to retreat with the government, first to Nanjing, then Hankow, and eventually to Chongqing in late 1938. Despite the instability of wartime conditions and limited financial resources, Dong expanded his global network, opening additional offices in Washington D.C., San Francisco, Chicago, Sydney, Mexico City, Paris, Montreal, and Kolkata.[74]

In addition to this geographic expansion, Dong also managed to extend the department's specialties and functions. He created a photographic section in Chongqing to produce and distribute photographs and newsreels documenting China's fight against Japan. One of the newsreels the department produced was titled "China Fights Back." It was included in "The March of Time," a newsreel series created by Time Inc., and shown in thousands of American theaters in 1941.[75] The International Department also set up two international broadcasting stations, Chongqing's XGOX and XGOY, to broadcast daily news bulletins and a number of programs to the United States. Two listening posts—one in Ventura, California, and the other in Phoenix, Arizona—often picked up the broadcasts. The recordings were transcribed and sent directly to Dong's New York office and to Chinese newspapers published in the United States.[76] Moreover, in 1942, Dong also helped to form the United Information Committee of the Anti-Aggression Powers to solicit American and British support for China's publicity activities.[77]

But the Press Hostel for foreign correspondents was perhaps the most prominent facility and function that the International Department added during the war.[78] As soon as the International Department resettled in Chongqing with other government agencies in late 1938, Dong secured substantial funding ($20,000 in the Chinese national currency) from the Department of Finance to build the Press Hostel to house the growing number of permanent and transient foreign correspondents who were in desperate need of living accommodations in the wartime capital. Inaugurated in late 1939 with only thirteen rooms,

the Hostel had grown into a 48-room cluster of buildings by 1942. Located just across the street from the headquarter of the International Department and a few minutes walk from the *Central News Agency*, the Press Hostel became a convenient institution through which the International Department could centralize its supervision and management of the foreign press corps. Major news agencies—AP, Reuters, Havas, Tass, D.N.B., and Transocean—all set up their offices in the hostel. Dozens of foreign correspondents made the hostel their home, including A. T. Steele of the *Chicago Daily News*; Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times,* Teddy White of *Time,* Spencer Moosa of the Associated Press, Randall Gould of the *Christian Science Monitor,* Jack Belden of the *International News Service,* and numerous other "China hands" whom the Chinese government sought to utilize to present China's case to the Western world.

The International Department's daily functions in Chongqing were to hold regular weekly press conferences, feed news releases and translated official speeches to the foreign press corps, and send staff to accompany the foreign correspondents on their field trips. The Department would also help the reporters to secure interviews with China's high-ranking officials and military personnel, hoping the granted interviews would not only curry appreciation from the reporters but also lead to a more favorable presentation of China's point of view. For instance, Dong arranged for the London *Times*' Far Eastern correspondent Peter Fleming to interview Chiang Kai-shek. He found with satisfaction that the article Fleming wrote afterward "did its share in creating greater confidence in China among readers of the London *Times*."[79]

Though Chongqing remained the headquarter of the International Department for the rest of the war, Dong chose New York—the news center of the United States—to serve as his primary overseas operation. He directed his primary propaganda efforts toward the American public, having realized that the United States was the dominant influence on other Western powers' attitudes and actions toward China.[80] He reorganized the New York branch in early 1941 and changed its name to the more professional-sounding Chinese News Service (or CNS). With an enlarged Western-trained staff, the work of CNS was now threefold: publicity, liaison, and intelligence.[81] First, CNS published a series of publicity materials, including a daily bulletin (*Voice of China*), a weekly summary (*The Week in China*), a fortnightly publication (*Contemporary China*), and a monthly general magazine (*China at War*). A film section was organized to edit propaganda films sent from China and to find channels for distribution to American audiences.

Second, a liaison section was set up to work with various Chinese organizations in the United States, especially with the newly chartered United China Relief agency, the first nationwide organization raising money for humanitarian aid to China. CNS also kept close contact with New York newspapers, furnishing them with the latest Chinese news. Additionally, CNS handled all direct inquiries from American private citizens, especially those writers interested in China. Third, CNS conducted research on American public opinion and collected American scholarly and popular works concerning China to report back to Chongqing.[82]

Although the Sino-Japanese War largely motivated the department's creation, Dong did not envision international propaganda as merely serving a wartime function. Indeed, he considered publicity to be essential in winning continued international support for China's reconstruction after the war, which entailed the training of Chinese professional propagandists. In 1942, he proposed to Chiang Kai-shek the establishment of a journalism graduate school to "train young people in English-language journalism."[83] On the 1942 trip accompanying Soong May-ling to the United States to appeal for war support, Dong managed to acquire half of the startup and operation funding from the American government, as well as faculty support from Columbia University for his proposed training school. The first class was inaugurated in October 1943 with thirty students Dong hand-picked. Harold Cross, a Columbia professor, served as the school's dean. Columbia also sent three media professionals—Richard Baker, Anthony Dralle, and Floyd Rodgers—to serve on the faculty.[84] While the American professors taught news writing and editing, political classes such as "Structure and Organization of Chinese Government" and "Three People's Principles" were also required. Although the program ended at the close of the Sino-Japanese War, many graduates became the Ministry of Information's core staff or served in other government branches to continue the overseas publicity efforts.[85]

Discussions and Conclusion

Although the idea of international propaganda did not appear in the Chinese public discourse until the 1920s, the idea of propaganda, or *xuanchuan* in Chinese, was nothing new in Chinese history. Indeed, derived from traditional Confucian values—which emphasized conformity and subservience to authority—propaganda as a tool of mass

mobilization did not evolve into a pejorative term in early twentieth-century China as it did in the Western democracies. When the Western idea of professional journalism was introduced into China at the turn of the twentieth century, it was often interpreted as a modern form of propaganda. Contrary to the anti-propaganda sentiment in the West, Chinese intellectuals considered propaganda to be a proper journalistic role. They expected the press to serve as a channel between the ruler and the ruled and as a tool for molding public opinion into uniformity. The goal was to organize China into a smoothly functioning society. For example, Liang Qichao, the most prominent Chinese literati intellectual of that time, wrote extensively on the function of modern journalism to "mobilize the masses" and be "beneficial to the national interest."[86] Later, Xu Baohuang, who studied journalism at the University of Michigan and wrote the first Chinese journalism textbook in 1919, described the "public service" role of journalism, a Western concept, as the "mouthpiece of people": a typical Confucian elitist concept that bestowed moral legitimacy on the role of Chinese intellectuals as advocates for the people, while enlightening the masses.[87]

This Confucian understanding of modern journalism certainly provided the ideological framework for Chinese intellectuals to interpret the idea of international propaganda. But the idea of international propaganda was barely known until the Chinese diplomatic failure at the Paris Peace Conference. The resulting loss of Shandong to Japan through the Versailles Treaty in 1919 forced Chinese intellectuals to realize the importance of winning over world opinion in international diplomacy. The Japanese aggression in Manchuria in 1931 further convinced the Chinese of the importance of rallying moral and material support from the international community during the national crisis. It was these evolving events that provided the political and social context for the introduction of international propaganda.

Fueled by the apathetic coverage of China affairs in the foreign press, Chinese intellectuals not only appealed to the foreign press to present their country in a more sympathetic and constructive light, but also advocated that the Chinese establish an international propaganda system on their own terms. They justified using media for international propaganda, saying it was necessary for international peace and national modernization. The Western-returned Chinese intellectuals also used "truth" as the most powerful argument for adopting international propaganda. They argued that international propaganda would give China a fair chance at success in the world community by correcting bias and revealing the truth. Unlike the American pragmatism that envisioned

truth to be the result of objective inquiry and a consensus-building process, Chinese intellectuals considered truth to be the outcome of an ideological and political battleground, depending on political power rather than rational discussion to achieve consensus. This attitude toward truth consequently exerted a significant impact on Chinese intellectuals' willingness to sponsor the propaganda movement. With truth seen as a contest of competing national interests and ideological forces, propaganda as an exercise of political power could actually be seen as a route to truth.

Inspired by the Western liberal ideal of professional journalism, Dong Xianguang, Huang Xianzhao, and many other Western-trained Chinese journalists were avid advocates for freedom of the press and devoted themselves to newspaper publishing from the 1910s to the early 1930s. Many of them were also actively involved in Chinese journalism education, hoping to train young generations of journalists to improve Chinese newspapers' professionalism. Huang Xianzhao and Liang Shichun headed China's foremost journalism program at Yenching University; Lu Qixin and many others taught at numerous journalism programs in Beijing and Shanghai. In accordance with their journalistic ideals, they maintained independence from the government in their early careers, but they lost no time in joining the Kuomintang government to establish the International Department as the Japanese war broke out. The overwhelming sense of intellectual responsibility in the time of national crisis brought these otherwise unlikely collaborators to work for the government and transformed them from professional journalists into avid propagandists. This is perhaps not uncommon among the experiences of many Third World countries forced to find their own voices in an international community dominated by the West.

Notes

1. Hin Wong, "A Journalistic Mission to China," in *The Press Congress of the World in Hawaii,* ed. Walter Williams (MO: E. W. Stephens, 1922), 315–316.
2. James Chien-Hung Shen, "Proposed: A Chinese Associated Press" (Unpublished master's thesis, University of Missouri at Columbia, 1935), 11.
3. Hollington K. Tong, *China and the World Press* (n.p., 1948), 4.
4. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978).
5. Robert Jackall and Janice Hirota, *Image Makers: Advertising, Public Relations, and the Ethos of Advocacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 14; Robert Jackall and Janice Hirota, "America's First Propaganda Ministry: The Committee on Public Information during the Great War," in *Propaganda,* ed. Robert Jackall (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 137–173.

6. International propaganda is historically contingent. Numerous studies have shown that during wartime Western news media and war correspondents often join their government's propaganda effort and prioritize their duty to discredit the opponents and to win international endorsement. When peace comes, however, the canons of journalistic professionalism often recover and the media resume their watchdog role. Harold Evans, *War Stories: Reporting in the Time of Conflict from the Crimea to Iraq* (New York: Bunker Hill, 2003); John Brown, "The Anti-Propaganda Tradition in the United States," Bulletin Board for Peace, http://www.bulletinboardforpeace.org/articlebrown.htm
7. Jeremy Hawthorn, *Propaganda, Persuasion and Polemic* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987); Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
8. Walter Williams, ed., *The Press Congress of the World in Hawaii* (Columbia: E. W. Stephens, 1922), 286.
9. Ibid., 289.
10. Ibid., 204.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 169.
13. The-chen Tang, "The American Press and the Manchurian Question: A Quantitative Study" (Unpublished master's thesis, University of Missouri at Columbia, 1933), 128.
14. David Lu, "The Siege of Peking as Recorded in the London Times" (Unpublished master's thesis, University of Missouri at Columbia, 1932), 212.
15. Shen, "Proposed: A Chinese Associated Press," 10.
16. Ibid., 9.
17. China Weekly Review, "The Case of Chinese Republic versus the New York Times," *China Weekly Review*, May 30, 1931, 453.
18. Yutang Lin, "The N.C.D.N. as a Bully," in *Letters of a Chinese Amazon and War-time Essays* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1934), 180–183.
19. Yutang Lin, "A Sad Confession," in *Letters of a Chinese Amazon and War-time Essays* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1934), 176.
20. Ibid., 179.
21. China Weekly Review, "The Proposal for a Law Governing the Press," *China Weekly Review*, January 5, 1929, 225.
22. Yi Lu, "Ban zhimindi de guojia neng tongzhi xinwen ma (Can a semi-colonial country control the news)?" *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury,* January 16, 1936, 3.
23. China Weekly Review, "Something Got To Be Done About Peiping's News," *China Weekly Review*, January 26, 1929, 355.
24. Shichun Liang, "Xinwen tongzhi yu guoji xuanchuan (News control and international propaganda)," *Baoxue jikan* (Journalism Quarterly), 1, no.4 (1935): 1–2.
25. Ibid.
26. Roy W. Howard, "preface," in Hollington Tong, *Dateline China: The Beginning of China's Press Relations with the World* (New York: Rockport Press, 1950), vii.
27. Hollington Tong, *China and the World Press* (n.p., 1948), 99.
28. North China Star, "Yenching Dept. of Journalism Gives Account of Itself," *North China Star*, June 26, 1936, n.p., found in Western Historical Manuscript Collections, Williams Papers, Folder (1074), Columbia, Missouri.
29. Fo Sun, "The Pressing Problem of Reconstruction," *China Weekly Review*, December 22, 1928, 165–167.
30. Williams, ed., *The Press Congress of the World in Hawaii*, 204.
31. Ibid., 205.
32. Ibid., 315–316.
33. Hollington Tong, *Dateline China: The Beginning of China's Press Relations with the World* (New York: Rockport Press, 1950), 269.

34. Ibid.,159.
35. China Weekly Review, "Journalistic Ethics," *China Weekly Review*, December 29, 1928, 192.
36. Wang Shijie was a graduate from the University of London and the University of Paris Law School. He became Minister of Information overseeing the foreign correspondents at the beginning of the anti-Japanese war.
37. Tong, *Dateline China*, 263.
38. E. K. Moy, "A School of Journalism for China in Peiping," *China Weekly Review*, May 18, 1929, 519.
39. Shen, "Proposed: A Chinese Associated Press," 10.
40. Keyi Gao, *Huangru zuori: qiaozhi gao zixuan ji* (Just Like Yesterday: Selected Essays of George Kao) (Hong Kong: Tiandi Publisher, 2003), 322–336.
41. Liang Shichun, "Meiguo fuxing yundong yu xuanchuan (American Revival Movement and Propaganda)," *Baoxue jikan* (Journalism Quarterly), 1, no. 2 (1935): 1–4.
42. Liang Shichun, "Xinwen tongzhi yu guoji xuanchuan (Press Control and International Propaganda)," *Baoxue jikan* (Journalism Quarterly) 1, no. 4 (1935): 1–2.
43. Thomas Ming-hen Chao, *The Foreign Press in China* (Shanghai: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1931), 4.
44. Wu Tianfang, "Zhongguo dangqian zui zhongyao de guoji xuanchuan wenti (The Most Important Issue of International Propaganda in Today's China)," *Baoxue jikan* (Journalism Quarterly) 1, no. 1 (1934): 3–9.
45. "Editorial," *Da Gong Bao*, April 13, 1931, 1. Cited in Chao, *Foreign Press in China*, 7–8.
46. Chao, *The Foreign Press in China*, 9.
47. Wu Tianfang, "Zhongguo dangqian zui zhongyao de guoji xuanchuan wenti," 5.
48. Williams, ed., *The Press Congress of the World in Hawaii*, 204.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., 318.
51. Ibid.
52. Chao, *The Foreign Press in China*, 6.
53. Shen, "Proposed: A Chinese Associated Press," 81.
54. Ibid., 97.
55. Shen, "Proposed: A Chinese Associated Press," 71. Ironically, although Shen advocated for an independent, commercial-oriented news agency for the purpose of international propaganda, he immediately joined the Government's International Department after he returned from his studies in the United States.
56. Wu Tianfang, "Zhongguo dangqian zui zhongyao de guoji xuanchuan wenti," 4.
57. Yutang Lin, *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), 179.
58. Shen, "Proposed: A Chinese Associated Press," 81.
59. After returning from study in Britain, Li Cai founded *Guangzhou Daily*, the first English-language daily in South China. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, he served as managing editor of the Shanghai-based Kuo Min News Agency. See Hallett Edward Abend, *My Life in China, 1926–1941* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1943).
60. Hallett Edward Abend, *My Life in China, 1926–1941.*
61. Howard, "Preface," viii.
62. Before the Sino-Japanese War, the Kuomintang's Ministry of Information had already set up offices in Nanjing and Shanghai in hopes of feeding propaganda materials to foreign correspondents. Their releases, however, were considered to be too biased and unreliable to be used. It was not until Dong Xianguang took charge of the responsibilities that the international propaganda machinery became formalized.
63. Tong, *China and the World Press*, 16.
64. Ibid. 16.

65. Ibid., 32.
66. Shen Jianhong worked at the *China Press* in the early 1930s, which was then edited by Dong Xianguang. After returning from studies at the Missouri School of Journalism, he was recruited by Dong to work for the newly organized International Department. He worked closely with Dong during the Hankou period, and was sent to San Francisco to set up a publicity office in 1943, and headed the bureau for four years. Gao Keyi was hired to work for the Chinese News Service in New York, which was subsidized jointly by the Chinese Ministry of Information and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A few other Missouri graduates also worked for the Ministry of Information through Dong's connection. Ma Xingye, for example, established a Department of Journalism at the Kuomintang Central Political Institute to train propagandists and served as director of the news department in the Ministry of Information during wartime. See James Shen, *The U.S. and Free China: How the U.S. Sold Out Its Ally* (Washington: Acropolis Books, 1983); Shen Jianhong, *Bansheng youhuan*: *Shen Jianhong huiyi lu* (Memoir of Shen Jianhong) (Taibei: Lianjing, 1989); Gao, *Huangru zuori*, 322–336; Zhao Minheng, *Caifang shi wu nian* (Fifteen Years of Interviews) (Chongqing: Dadi chubanshe, 1945) (Reprint, Taibei: Longwen, 1994).
67. Tong, *China and the World Press*, 27.
68. Before joining the International Department, Xia had undertaken a number of important publicity missions for the Kuomintang government: a delegate to the Kyoto Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations, a China's delegation member at the League of Nations, an attaché of the London Embassy, and a first secretary in the Chinese Embassy in Washington. See William E. Daugherty, "China's Official Publicity in the United States," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 6, no. 1 (1942): 84.
69. Gao Keyi, *Shuzui ji* (The collections of George Kao's work) (Taibei: Lianhe chubanshe, 1991), 322–327.
70. Ibid.
71. Tong, *China and the World Press*, 100.
72. Daugherty, "China's Official Publicity in the United States."
73. Tong, *China and the World Press*, 184–186.
74. Wu Yanjun, "Kangzhan shiqi de guoji xuanchuan chu (International journalism during the anti-Japanese war)," *Minguo Dang'an* (The archives on the republican period), 2 (1987): 118–119.
75. Gu Linghui and Li Jun, "Lun kangri zhanzheng shiqi guomin zhengfu de guoji yulun dongyuan (Mobilization of international public opinions by the Nationalist government during the anti-Japanese war)," *Jianghai xuekan* (Academic Journal of Jianghai), 5 (2005), n.p.
76. *Washington Post*, January 5, 1942, 15.
77. The International Department also initiated or helped the establishment of several international associations to promote cooperation between China and other Western countries. For example, the Chinese-American Institute of Cultural Relations was founded in February 1939, with one-year funding of $18,000 secured from the U.S. State Department in supporting its activities. The same year also saw the organization of the Sino-Burman Cultural Association, and the Sino-French-Belgium-Swiss Cultural Association. The Chinese Ministry of Information, *China Handbook, 1937–1943* (New York: Macmillan, 1943), 146, 822–823.
78. The Press Hostel became a central story in memoirs of both Chinese staff of the International Department and the foreign correspondents who resided there during wartime Chongqing. Zhao, *Caifang shi wu nian*, 89–96; Tong, *China and the World Press*, 232–251; Shen Jianhong, *Bansheng youhuan: Shen Jianhong huiyilu* (My destiny for half of a lifetime: The memoir of Shen Jianhong) (Taibei, 1989); Zeng Xubai, *Zeng Xubai zizhuan* (An autobiography of Zeng Xubai) (Taibei: Lianjing, 1990); Hallett Edward Abend, *My Life in China, 1926–1941* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943); Teddy White, "The Press, Empty Hostel,"

Time, May 6, 1946; Teddy White, "The Press: Chungking Cubs," *Time*, Oct. 25, 1943; Walter Logan, "Reminiscence of Nationalist China," the *Brvan Times*, Dec. 23, 1978, 10; Freda Utley, *Last Chance in China* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1947); Stephen MacKinnon and Oris Friesen, *China Reporting: An Oral History of American Journalism in the 1930s and 1940s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

79. Tong, *China and the World Press*, 103.
80. Gao Keyi, *Shuzuiji*, 322–327; Tong, *China and the World Press*, 105.
81. Zeng Xubai, *Zeng Xubai zizhuan*; Gao, *Huangru zuori,* 322–336.
82. Daugherty, "China's Official Publicity in the United States," 83–85.
83. Tong, *China and the World Press*, 277.
84. For the history of the collaboration of Columbia University with Dong Xianguang's wartime journalism school in Chongqing, see James Boylan*, Pulitzer's School: Columbia University's School of Journalism, 1903–2003* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 94–101; Richard Baker, *A History of the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 113–115; Tong, *China and the World Press*, 276–282.
85. The prominent graduates of the program include Wang Hongjun, who became a professor of the Department of Journalism at the government's Zhengzhi University; Yu Mengyan, founder of the English language daily, *China Post*; Zhou Sengyong, Lin Congxi, Li Huiling, Yin Shangu, among others, later served as diplomats of the Taiwan government. See Zeng Xubai, *Zeng Xubai zizhuan*.
86. Liang Qichao, "*Qingyi bao* yibai ce zhuci bing lun baoguan zhi zeren ji benguan zhi jingli (Congratulations on the 100th issue of *Qingyi bao* together with an essay on the responsibility of the press and the history of the journal)," *Qingyi Bao*, no. 100, December 21, 1901. In *Zhongguo xinwen shi wenji* (Collections of works on Chinese journalism history) (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1987), 43–53; Liang Qichao, "Lun baoguan youyiyu guoshi (On the benefit of newspapers in national affairs)," *Shiwu Bao,* no. 1, August 9, 1896. In *Zhongguo xinwen shi wenji* (Collections of works on Chinese journalism history) (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1987), 24–27.
87. Xu Baohuang, *Xinwenxue dayi* (Basics of Journalism) (Beijing: Beijing daxue xinwenxue yanjiuhui, 1919).

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CHAPTER TEN

Itching the Scratches on Our Minds: American College Students Read and Re-evaluate China

Judy Polumbaum

In the 1950s, as the cold war was heating up and Asia's two largest nations were emerging from legacies of colonialism and war, Harold R. Isaacs set out to study how ordinary U.S. citizens viewed China and India. Through focus groups and interviews, along with analysis of portrayals in news and popular media, Isaacs illuminated the vague and contradictory nature of Americans' mental constructions of these countries and their peoples. His results—published initially as *Scratches on Our Minds*, and reissued after the dramatic Sino-U.S. rapprochement of the Nixon era as *Images of Asia* and again nearly a decade later under the original title—might seem dated in the era of instantaneous computer-mediated communications, but his fundamental findings remain resonant and instructive.[1] His observations with respect to China constitute the enduring backdrop to this chapter, which considers the role of reading and discussion in shaping U.S. college students' impressions of the People's Republic in the early twenty-first century . . . more than five decades after Isaacs examined the mindsets of prior generations.

Isaacs traced his findings about U.S. views of Chinese culture and character to more than a century of interactions generating both sentimental attachments and mutual animosity—a history ably updated by Thompson et al. in *Sentimental Imperialists,* which incorporated the patronizing spirit of missionary ventures, racist and exclusionary

responses to Chinese immigration, the common cause of World War II alliance followed by Korean War enmity, and the multitudinous reflections of these diverse images in cartoons, film, and literature.[2] In the American mental map of China, Isaacs found impressions of timelessness and stability juxtaposed with unpredictability and chaos, and the admirable and heroic coexisting with the despised and villainous. He wrote,

> Our notions of Chinese traits have included sage wisdom and superstitious ignorance, great strength and contemptible weakness, immovable conservatism and unpredictable extremism, philosophic calm and explosive violence. Our emotions about the Chinese have ranged between sympathy and rejection, parental benevolence and parental exasperation, affection and hostility, love and a fear close to hate.[3]

The breakdown in communication after the Communist victory in 1949 had only accentuated the contradictions, Isaacs added, with American views of China by the late 1950s exacerbated by "all the distortions of the unknown, dimly seen and greatly feared across a great distance."

Then and Now

When Isaacs undertook his study, the context for examining U.S. perspectives on China could hardly have been more inflammatory: China and the Soviet Union, erstwhile allies in the fight against fascism, now were considered Red threats allied in a plot for world domination—the Chinese troops were characterized as a "human sea" that had turned the U.S. military back in North Korea, the Sino-Soviet split was still some years off, and the sort of domestic anti-Communist witch hunts that had gone on hiatus during World War II had resumed, pursued through Congressional inquisitions, loyalty oaths, and encouragement of general hysteria.

Isaacs, who as a journalist had covered early stages of the Chinese revolution and reported on the Pacific War for *Newsweek*, undertook his exploration of American attitudes toward Asia as a researcher at MIT's Center for International Studies. Although Isaacs does not reference Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, Lippmann's meditation on "the pictures inside our heads" as dangerously influential is an obvious

precursor to Isaacs' project. Indeed, Isaacs' book may be read as a manifesto of Lippmann's concerns about the power of stereotypes, with Isaacs setting about to confirm such expectations—thus undermining any assertion of social science rigor.[4] As Rotter notes in an otherwise appreciative retrospective, "Isaacs's method of selecting his subjects would make a modern pollster shudder: many of them were friends of his, and many more were his acquaintances or friends of friends. Pollsters would also be appalled by Isaacs's objectives and interview techniques."[5]

Nonetheless, Rotter deems the results useful indicators of dominant views about China and India at the time and persuasive evidence that "Asia in general was a subject of American ignorance."[6] And to be charitable, something of a case can be made for both the validity and the reliability of Isaacs's work. Isaacs himself conceded that his 181 informants, interviewed over 14 months, did not constitute a representative sample in the scientific sense, and he made no statistical claims for his findings. However, he did strive for a form of quota sampling, incorporating views from Americans of varying educational, religious, and political backgrounds that could yield "common patterns" providing a basis for broader generalizations. He also sought corroborating evidence from other sources of information, including a chronological accounting of the history of U.S.–China relations and American mass media depictions of China and the Chinese, on the assumption that media portrayals both influenced and reflected prevailing U.S. attitudes.

Isaacs identified the following conceptions of the Chinese as prevailing among Americans to greater and lesser degrees at differing times, seeing these as sequentially emerging but also recurring and easily magnified images: "inferior people," "superior people," the object of bigotry expressed by the epithet "Chink," the mission-inspired notion of "wards" to be rescued and taken care of, "attractive people" in various incarnations (including the hardworking farmers of Pearl Buck's fiction and the dedicated revolutionaries of Edgar Snow's reportage), "heroes risen" in the resistance against Japan, "heroes fallen" in paralysis and corruption, "ungrateful wretches," and "the ungrateful dragon."[7] In sections devoted to each of these representations, he endeavored to explain the origins, persistence, and pendulum swings of both favorable and unfavorable visions of China's people and culture.

Publishers who reissued the book 14 years and 22 years after its initial appearance, with new prefaces by the author, evidently concurred that Isaacs's findings had continuing relevance—and the China portion

was what mattered, given that both bilateral relations and the global context of U.S.–China relations had changed so much whereas India remained on the margins of American consciousness. In his preface to the 1972 edition, Isaacs heralded a "great turning in American-Chinese relations" sparked by the Nixon trip and the resumption of travel, trade, and other bilateral connections, but anticipated no attenuation of the U.S. propensity to juggle "plus and minus images" of China. To the contrary, he predicted that "the new, immeasurably swifter, brighter, farther-reaching lights of worldwide television" would only multiply and amplify distorting tendencies. In his preface to the 1980 edition, Isaacs spoke optimistically of "a reencounter with China and the Chinese" over the previous decade, but ventured that images from earlier decades would still "glint familiarly" even among younger readers. He noted that although realities of life in China had become "more visible" since the rapprochement of the late Mao and post-Mao years, U.S. attitudes continued to vacillate between extremes, from euphoric admiration to suspicion and dread.

Moving on another several decades, are the shadows of history fading away or merely lengthening? This is the very question I address in my introduction to a book of interviews with Chinese journalists, noting that although global flows of products, money, people, and ideas presumably offer plenty of avenues for better understanding among nations, "simplistic, outmoded stereotypes about China and Chinese people—yellow peril, red menace, blue ant—somehow maintain traction in the U.S. imagination."[8] Journalist James Fallows has often remarked upon similar misconceptions of Chinese as cogs in a totalistic machine; in an article about Chinese internet controls, he writes that, "Most Americans think this is an all-powerful central government; most of the time, it looks like a relatively weak, remote titular leadership trying to tell the equivalent of warlords (provincial governors) what they should do."[9]

Meanwhile, Chinese concerns about how the world portrays them also have gained momentum, with responses taking varied forms. The book *Behind the Demonization of China*, with its defensive and polemical tone, exemplifies an older style of polemical reproach toward perceived American errors, slights, aspersions, and lies. The Web site Anti-cnn.com (later accn.com), begun in 2008 as a rejoinder to Western coverage of unrest in Tibet, represents a newer mode.[10] The web scribes behind the latter effort "want the world to understand that they're doing this of their own volition because they love their country and want their fellow citizens to think more critically about global media," reports

scholar-blogger Rebecca MacKinnon, adding that, "The site has evolved from its CNN-bashing origins . . . into a more general forum for media criticism—focused primarily on Western media."[11] And, as this volume makes clear, more sophisticated and arguably more constructive programs aimed at shaping China's international image are emerging alongside these academic and popular critiques.

This chapter examines another site of image-construction that is less clamorous but perhaps no less significant for China's international image than political events, media accounts, public expression, scholarly deliberation, and concerted public diplomacy—namely, the context of the American liberal arts education.

A Hothouse Experiment

The most obvious challenge confronting an American teacher wishing to introduce college students to something approaching realities of contemporary China is distance; China is far away in terms of geography, culture, language, and political traditions. U.S. students find it hard to imagine China and Chinese people as "like" ourselves, and few have the sort of direct experiences that can help bridge the presumed divide.

This situation is changing, of course, especially on university campuses, where students from China have long been the largest international contingent. In the past, the workings of government and university funding ensured that most of those Chinese students were graduate students; but many in China's growing middle class now have the means to send their children abroad for undergraduate study. The University of Iowa, for instance, reports a surge of undergraduate students from the PRC arriving over just two years, with 443 enrolled in the fall of 2009, up from 218 in fall 2008 and 68 in fall 2007, while PRC graduate student numbers remained fairly steady, at 411 in 2009, 393 in 2008, and 402 in 2007.[12] China is a growing destination for study abroad as well, furthering direct interaction between young Chinese and young Americans.

For me, an invitation to teach an undergraduate honors seminar about China in the fall of 2009, geared especially for entering students, represented an opportunity to promote learning and conversation in this new environment. The course provided a framework for a kind of natural experiment, in which students with varying degrees of past exposure to direct as well as indirect knowledge of China—e.g.,

through high school classes and via mass media—could monitor how their own thinking about China developed and changed in the course of reading, writing, discussions, and presentations on a succession of topics.

The class had an enrollment of 17, and met for two and a half hours Monday afternoon for 14 weeks, with most sessions revolving around a set of readings in a focused area—including human rights, journalism philosophy and practice, the economy, the environment, the Cultural Revolution, the 1989 Tian'anmen demonstrations, U.S.–China relations, unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang, and the 2008 Beijing Olympics. In assigning required and recommended readings, I attempted to provide diverse materials, drawing on reports from international and U.S. agencies, and on American and other Western media accounts and scholarship, as well as using Chinese perspectives such as translations of PRC government documents and English-language reports from Xinhua News Agency and *China Daily*. In teams of two, students took turns presenting the subject matter and leading discussion. They also wrote weekly response papers to readings and had a take-home final exam.

As might be expected, the composition of the class was not random: All the students had honors status, and most had explicit interest in China—only a few signed on because they wanted an honors course and the description sounded "interesting" in a vague sense. Also not surprising, students' family backgrounds and personal experiences often figured importantly in their interpretations of the material and the trajectory of our discussions. Among the group were an international student from Beijing starting her second year at Iowa, the son of Chinese parents who had emigrated to the United States, and the daughter of Southeast Asian refugees who had settled in Iowa. One young man had studied Chinese in his high school and during a summer on Taiwan, two young women had had Chinese roommates in the dorms, one female student had studied and worked in India, and several students had taken world history or social studies courses in high school emphasizing or including substantial segments on China. On the roster were one senior, one junior, three sophomores, and 12 first-years; their majors included English, journalism, international studies, economics, biochemistry, political science, and several others. A beguiling aspect of the class was the fact that all but three students—the Beijing native, a New Mexico native, and a first-year student from Illinois—had grown up in Iowa. Given the large proportion of out-of-state students attending Iowa, approaching 40 percent of the undergraduate population in

2009–2010, we all found this remarkable, indicative, perhaps, of an affinity between Middle America and the Middle Kingdom?[13]

At the last class session, I left students a survey soliciting self-reports of their attitudes and assessments of their learning, to be filled out anonymously and submitted in a sealed envelope; I did not view the results until after I had turned in final course grades. The sample obviously was one of pure convenience; the study is preliminary and exploratory; the results, nevertheless, yield some intriguing patterns.

The first part of the survey asked students to identify what they regarded as positive and negative attributes they associated with Chinese people and American people, as well as attributes that were neither positive nor negative for each nationality. I provided a litany of sample attributes, but encouraged them to come up with their own answers, up to three in each category. Below are the attributes mentioned by more than one student, along with attributes mentioned only once but suggesting similar meanings or with connotations related to those listed more than once.

Positive attributes of Chinese: *Hardworking* was far and away the most common, listed by 12 students; *friendly* had four mentions; *long culture/tradition* had four mentions; *smart/intelligent*, two; other concepts included *disciplined, diligent, endurance*.

Positive attributes of Americans: *Open* had five mentions; *individualistic* also had five; *hardworking*, four; *freedom/democracy*, four; *wealthy/rich*, two; *bold/courageous*, two; *innovative*, two; *patriotic*, two; other ideas included *independent, outspoken, straightforward, motivated, entrepreneurial, ingenuity, pioneering.*

Negative attributes of Chinese: Thirteen students described or alluded to a *controlling/devious/censoring/authoritarian/repressive government;* two mentioned *human rights violations*; the only other repeated attribute was *noisy*, with two mentions; other ideas were *naïve, mild, quiet*.

Negative attributes of Americans: *Lazy* had six mentions; *violent* and variations such as *aggressive/bullying/threatening/trying to be on top,* six; *greedy*, four; *arrogant, condescending/self-important*, four; *inefficient*, three; *ignorant/stupid*, three; also, *hasty, impatient, rude, argumentative;* and *individualistic* was listed as negative by two.

Neither negative nor positive attributes of Chinese: *Timid/shy* had three mentions; *traditional/tied to past*, three; *scientific/modern*, three; *superstitious*, two; *secular,* two; *poor*, two; *complex*, two; *nationalistic,* two*; also*, *honest, sensible, friendly, socialistic, communal.*

Neither negative nor positive attributes of Americans: *Rich/wealthy* had five mentions; *religious*, five; *complex*, four; *modern,* three; *competitive,* three; *individualistic*, two.

The survey also inquired about perceived similarities and differences between the United States and China and their peoples and cultures. Regarding commonalities between Americans and Chinese, the most commonly mentioned were *modern* and *hardworking;* other attributes mentioned multiple times included *diversity, capitalistic, entrepreneurial,* and *scientific.* As for differences, the most common were that Chinese emphasize tradition and have a better work ethic, whereas Americans are more individualistic and have a freer information/expression environment.

In addition, students were asked whether they thought their views of either China or the United States had changed as a result of taking the course.

Only one student said that because of substantial prior knowledge, the course had not changed his/her opinions of China's people and/or culture. Others said yes, in some cases dramatically; comments included the following:

This course made me review Chinese modern history in a . . . non-textbook way.

I never knew much of traditions, historical events, or relations between the US and China.

I have a deeper understanding of the culture and its people . . .

Chinese people are much more innovative than I thought.

My feelings and perceptions have immensely changed . . . my previous knowledge was the result of Western perceptions and basic info from my education.

The censorship in China is more complex than I originally understood.

I better understand censorship and Chinese views of the Western world.

I learned more about . . . major issues . . . Learning the restrictions Chinese people endure gave me more respect for them.

I was surprised at the level of involvement of the government in minute details. Also, the activist nature and outspokenness of some [Chinese].

I've started to realize that not all Chinese people are afraid to voice their opinions.

I have a much better idea about China as an evolving country; my mental concept of it is much more well-rounded . . .

My total mindset has changed . . . I used to hold the belief that China's government was all-powerful over the robotic people . . . I now know there are many different aspects to China . . .

My feelings about China were primarily negative before . . . Now I feel . . . America and China might be different, but not too different.

. . . now I see that America and China have some [things] in common.

China is not as bad as the Western media portrays them, and a lot more complex.

As for whether the course had changed their opinions of U.S. people and/or culture, six students said no or not much, with the following explanations:

Not much; since I live here and have been raised all my life to believe in what the US does is good, I have trouble seeing it any other way.

Not really; this class was definitely intended for a liberal 'audience' or set of students.

No, because I kind of knew how we felt . . . and know the history of our own country.

No, I have always thought we were arrogant and judgmental.

Not in this semester particularly . . . [previous study] abroad perhaps did.

It served to reinforce some ideas . . . [i.e.,] the US as a whole pretends to know far more than it really does, and our two countries really aren't that different!

A majority, however, said their views of U.S. people and culture had changed, mainly to a more questioning, critical or comparative stance; although one student expressed enhanced appreciation of the United States. Comments included the following:

. . . this course has helped me question the beliefs . . . engrained in my mind about our country . . .

I've started to realize how closed American media is, and how much we are affected by it.

I realize that the culture is not as open as it seems.

The US [seems more] closed to the world [than I previously thought].

I have realized how basic the general US knowledge is about China, and how stereotypes and ignorance have created a slanted, narrow perspective. Distance and cultural differences contribute to this.

Didn't realize how shut out to the rest of the world some honors kids are.

My feelings on United States censorship . . . changed . . . the United States and China are more similar than either will admit.

I feel more grateful to be living in America; there seems to be a lot of controversy within China . . .

These comments must be viewed with caution; in a liberal arts environment that emphasizes expansion of critical faculties, intelligent students surely pick up on an instructor's desire to broaden horizons and help transform habits of mind, and even on an anonymous survey they are likely to lean toward what they deem socially desirable responses. To the extent we can take the answers at face value, however, the course experience seems to have encouraged closer scrutiny of received wisdom and the familiar, suggested commonalities across cultural and geographic distance, and fostered the more general notion that the world is more complicated than one might suppose.

Imaginative Renderings

Some images of China that Isaacs discovered evidently endure, even among a group of college students after a semester of engagement with varied perspectives. It seems noteworthy, though, that students' positive or neutral views regarding China generally applied to national character and culture—Chinese people's hardworking nature, appreciation of tradition—whereas negative views about China often emphasized societal restrictions attributed to government. By contrast, with assertions such as "greedy" and "lazy," students seemed to be harder on Americans when it came to negative attributes of culture and character, while seeing more positives in the U.S. social environment.

The final requirement for the course, a take-home exam asking students to imagine a dialogue between a Chinese journalist from Beijing (surnamed Wang) and a small-town American journalist (surnamed Jones) who had struck up a friendship at a conference in Hawaii, provides additional material for reflecting on the potential of education to expand minds. These papers, which ranged from the personal to the political and the domestic to the bilateral and global, certainly reflect a sense that conversation on equal terms can promote mutual understanding. The results provided me with an enjoyable and optimistic way to conclude the course; and I believe the following excerpts—a

compilation drawing on the work of the entire class—supply an enjoyable and hopeful conclusion to this chapter.

Wang: In China, as I think it is in much of the rest of the world, there is an image of Americans being a very violent and aggressive people who achieve their desires through force. Instead, every person I have met so far has been very nice.

Jones: *I've heard that stereotype before. America's involved in a lot of military operations, but not everyone supports everything the government does. You need to separate the American government's actions from the American people, because they're not the same.*

Wang: *You are correct. I apologize for the misconception.*

Jones: *No, please, it's good that you mention this. I actually wanted to remark on how open and inquisitive you are. I've never met a peer from China before, and based on the pieces we get from the AP to publish on Chinese media outlets, I would have figured you for a quieter and more passive person . . .*

Jones: *So . . . what religion do most people practice [in China]?*

Wang: *. . . Um, I think people do not believe in god as much.*

Jones: *Yeah?*

Wang: *Well our government is atheist.*

Jones: *I never knew that.*

Wang: *The US government is Christian, right?*

Jones: *That's a charged question. In theory, not really, but in practice . . .*

Wang: *I have seen your politicians on the news, and they say "God bless" so often.*

Jones: *Yes, they do have that tendency. Our religious institutions are important here, and not just for religious purposes. Community, like I was saying—I mean, my kids are at a camp in Wyoming right now run by our congregation.*

Wang: *You have a child?*

Jones: *Three girls.*

Wang: *I have one son.*

Jones: *Oh, I've heard about the one-child law in China. I don't know much about it, but you can only have one, right?*

Wang: *Well, it is not the same rule everywhere and for everyone. If you have special circumstances, it can be different.*

Jones: *Like what?*

Wang: *Some villagers are exempt, and some families who have had only one child per couple for generations. And parents who lose their first child.*

Jones: *Have you ever wanted another?*

Wang: *I have not really thought about it. Maybe it would be difficult to raise too many kids in Beijing.*

Jones: *Really? I suppose I have heard that it is somewhat congested.*

Wang: *How is China covered in the national papers in the United States?*

Jones: *There is a lot of focus on the censorship and wrongdoings on the part of the Chinese government and it is assumed that the journalists just follow what they say. Basically that the journalists have no problem with being censored and do not try to get the real stories out, but it sounds like that's what you try to do.*

Wang: *There are actually a lot of journalists in China, not just me, that make it their duty to find a way to get the true stories out without having to watch what they say because of the government. The government is also not as controlling as it sounds like the U.S. media makes it appear. We really just have to watch what we say and there are certain lines that cannot be crossed otherwise our publishing will be shut down. These boundaries include the military, religion, ethnic disputes, and the inner workings of the government. These topics are considered taboo in China and you are never to report on them. There are also some other boundaries but you can sometimes find a way around them depending where you make the fault seem to lie. There is an invisible line in China*: *we do not discuss certain topics. . . .*

Jones: *Is Tibet one of those unmentionable topics?*

Wang: *Yes, along with Tian'anmen and Taiwan.*

Jones: *Shouldn't a country know its history? The United States has had its share of embarrassing moments and events, but we can write about them. Writing and discussing mishaps allows the country to understand, analyze, and develop their own conclusions. Reporting allows us to heal.*

Wang: *I see your point, but I also see where the Chinese government stands. Tian'anmen happened fairly recently . . . It is quite complicated. The riots were so chaotic; no one had a clear idea of what was truly happening. China also prides itself on tradition. In order to keep the routine, the "harmonious society" if you will, Tian'anmen could simply not be discussed.*

Jones: *Not discussing Tian'anmen still seems so obscure to me. I know that the Cultural Revolution happened in the 1960s . . . do people speak of that?*

Wang: *It seems like it should be, since 1966 feels like it would be enough time to heal. Yet again, the idea and fear of spreading capitalism may*

offend others. Perhaps we do not discuss it because the generation that lost their education is still around. Would it be fair to them?

Jones: *I've done some research into American censorship practices, just for my own curiosity, you know, and I think we have plenty to criticize here at home, too. I mean, we censor books out of school libraries all the time, for the strangest reasons. One of the more interesting ones that I read about was a children's book being challenged because a boy rolled over his evil aunts with a giant peach. Ridiculous!*

Wang: *So you believe that there should be no censorship in schoolbooks? What about content that is inappropriate for children?*

Jones: *I don't have a good answer for you. I think there are certain boundaries for children, certainly, but . . . I'm not sure exactly where those boundaries are. You have very clear-cut ones about certain things in the adult sphere, right? I heard somewhere that you aren't allowed to write about some subjects because it reflects badly on the government.*

Wang: *We are not encouraged to write about Tian'anmen Square or the Cultural Revolution. I believe that this is perhaps a mistake on my government's part. To facilitate national cohesiveness and stimulate cultural healing, I think Party leaders should open up channels for dialogue in our society instead of keeping them quiet.*

Jones: *Especially on the Internet, the [Chinese] government seems really concerned about blocking sites with controversial topics including Tibet, Pro-Democracy, and challenging the government.*

Wang: *The Internet is not as censored as you may think.*

Jones: *But doesn't the government have its own special team to create filters and censor information?*

Wang: *Yes, it has a very advanced group of specialists who work on filtering information, but it is a cat and mouse game. Every time they come up with a more efficient filter, we come up with proxies and other words to communicate topics that are off-limits.*

Jones: *In the U.S. we've been going through our own type of "green movement," and now it's a cultural trend. Everyone wants to be a part of it; some people simply buy reusable grocery bags or use more efficient lighting and heating.*

Wang: *So Americans have stopped using plastic to package and transport their groceries, but have people reduced the number of products they put in those bags?*

Jones: *Well, not necessarily . . . but we're saving millions of plastic bags that would go to landfills.*

Wang: *But it seems like Americans would still buy the same amount of products because they think plastic bags are the real cause of the waste*

problem. Aren't a lot of groceries and other products made of plastic or packaged in it?

Jones: *Of course, but that's really unavoidable. At least it's a movement that has reached the general public; even if people do something as small as using reusable bags, they feel like they're making a difference. And when everyone uses these bags, it really does make a difference.*

Wang: *Why doesn't the U.S. government just put a ban on plastic bags? Some provinces in China have ordered bans on certain types of plastic bags, and they are also no longer free in many places.*

Jones: *I don't know why they haven't banned plastic bags yet, but I know that some stores charge you for using plastic bags, at least in my hometown. Although the U.S. government has implemented a lot of car emission and heavy industry standards in the past few decades, a lot of the action has come from the people and public organizations. People care about the movement, and they want to "go green." Companies have profited from this because they now sell "green" products, which fuel the movement.*

Wang: *That's interesting. The Chinese government has been at the forefront of a lot of the environmental changes in China, especially prior to the Olympics.*

Jones: *All just because of the Olympics? Wow, China really wanted to change and make an impression on the world. But did any of those changes even last?*

Wang: *Actually, they did. The government reduced the number of cars on the road by limiting the days that people could drive.*

Jones: *How could they get people to actually do that?*

Wang: *Well, based on your license plate number, you could drive either Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Everyone can drive on Sunday.*

Jones: *You're kidding! What would the people do on the three days that they couldn't drive? That seems impossible.*

Wang: *They used the underground trains and the bus system. Our public transportation has improved a lot, and is very clean.*

Jones: *That's a great idea. I can't see something like that ever working in the U.S. If the government told people they couldn't use their cars three days a week, well, people would just go plum crazy. It would never work.*

Wang: *What did your friends think of the Olympics? Did you happen to watch any of the games on television?*

Jones: *I did watch quite a bit of the games, actually. The opening ceremony was breathtaking. It was a great insight into your culture from*

your own point of view. My favorite part had to be the light up drums at the beginning. It seems like your culture is so rooted in its past, which I find admirable. I also noticed the extreme care that went into every detail of the games . . .

Wang: *We are very much appreciative of our past, and I also thought the opening ceremony was fantastic. During it, we honored our past while showing our technological advances of the present. That is the one of the great things about China*: *even when presenting our present state, we never forget our past. The Olympics was such a great opportunity for our country to come out to the rest of the world and break some of the stereotypes that other nations have against us. China was finally able to show the rest of the world that we are powerful and united.*

Wang: *I have read [U.S.] articles where my countrymen are being criticized for working in factories and considered to be underneath everyone here in America, but have you ever thought that maybe those jobs are considered to be good jobs and that America and other countries would not have as many nice, cheap general merchandise items if not for China stepping up to the plate and doing those jobs?*

Jones: . . . I understand that we as Americans can sometimes be a little cruel when it comes to viewing other countries as different. It seems like we have a hard time accepting people and their views because they differ from the way that we view things, but I also think that part of it has to do with your government and how they make you look. . . . For some reason we see countries in the eyes of what has happened and not what is happening sometimes. . . .

Wang: *I am starting to understand, so it is not that you think of China as a bad place, but more like a place that is just being discovered and it is taking a while for China to be accepted as a new and different place. It is like being the new kid in town and everyone is so use to their own cliques that they are not ready to welcome in the new kid yet.*

Jones: *I can see how it would be beneficial to both of our countries to become closer friends, especially since the two of us are the biggest world powers right now, but I also think that neither of the countries are going to get everything that they want out of this friendship unless each one gives just a little bit. Each country is going to have to accept that the other country has its own culture and ideals.*

Wang: *For over 20 years, the western world has recognized the flattening world of diplomacy and standards of living. You have sought investments in China and in many other Asian countries. However, for some reason you thought those investments would continue to always obey*

the commands of the investor. Now, the age of China's independence is growing from being a child to an adult—so to speak. We are creating products and governing in the same light you are. However, you seem to think that this relationship of the United States and China will forever be like father and son or mother and daughter. The new news for you and the western world is that this is no longer the case. We are now business partners. We both work for bettering our lives, but we can do it just as well or better than you. Your pro-American attitude fails to understand that.

Jones: *Ok, I take your assumptions and understandings with great respect. You come with the proposition that China feels it is being seen as a child when it is actually working as an adult.*

Wang: *Exactly to my point. The Chinese culture and way of living should no longer be seen as an idea for a Halloween party.*

Jones: *In light of this newfound understanding for China and the developing world shall we take this conversation to a Chinese restaurant?*

Wang: *[stated with confusion] Hmm . . . sure!*

Jones: *Therefore, we can discuss human rights, the economy, and the environment. I even know a great place to go. There is a Panda Express down the street.*

Wang: *Haha! Oh . . . my! You do not seem to understand one bit. This may be a long conference if I have to stand by you. However, in light of China's growing power in the world I see this as an opportunity for a teachable moment . . .*

Notes

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CONTRIBUTORS

Ni Chen is an associate professor at the Department of Media & Communication, City University of Hong Kong. Her areas of teaching and research are public relations and integrated communications. She was a coeditor of *International Public Relations: A Comparative Analysis* (Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996). Her recent research has appeared in journals such as *Public Relations Review* and *Journal of Contemporary China*, and in the book *Global Public Relations: Spanning Borders, Spanning Cultures* (Routledge, 2009) edited by A. R. Freitag and A. Q. Stokes.

Gladys Pak Lei Chong is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. She received her B.A. from the University of Hong Kong, and her M.A. in sociology from the University of Amsterdam. Her research examines how the Chinese government seized the Olympic spectacle to promote itself to its citizens and to the world.

Ingrid d'Hooghe is a research fellow and a China specialist with the Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael" in The Hague. Before joining Clingendael, she was an academic staff member at the Sinological Institute of Leiden University where she also served as editor of *China Information*. She has worked as Policy Officer at the Netherlands Embassy in Beijing and as guest lecturer at the Foreign Affairs College in Beijing. She has recently published on China's image and public diplomacy, China-EU relations, China-U.S. relations, and China's diplomatic strategy. She is coeditor of *China's Legal Developments and Their Political Limits* (Curzon Press, 2001) and editor of *Discussion Papers in Diplomacy.*

Jeroen de Kloet is an assistant professor of media studies at the University of Amsterdam. He is coeditor of *Cosmopatriots: On Distant Belonging and Close Encounters* (Rodopi, 2007). His research articles have appeared

in journals, including *The China Quarterly*, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, and *Visual Anthropology*. He has led a major research project, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, to examine the communication aspects of the Beijing Olympics. His monograph, titled *China with a Cut: Globalization, Urban Youth and Popular Music*, was published in 2010 by Amsterdam University Press.

Stefan Landsberger holds the Olfert Dapper Chair of Contemporary Chinese Culture at the University of Amsterdam and is an associate professor with the Sinological Institute at Leiden University. Landsberger has published widely on topics related to Chinese (visual) propaganda, and maintains an extensive Web site exclusively devoted to this genre of political communications (http://chineseposters.net). He has one of the largest private collections of Chinese propaganda posters in the world.

Hongmei Li is an assistant professor of international communication at Georgia State University. She worked as a George Gerbner Postdoctoral Fellow at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania in 2008–2010. Her research interests include globalization, consumer culture, public diplomacy, and the Internet culture in China. Her research has appeared in academic journals including *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *International Journal of Communication*, and *Public Relations Review*, and in several edited books.

Judy Polumbaum is a professor at The University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication, where she has taught since 1989. Her research interests include media in contemporary China, freedom of expression, and the interactions of sports, media, and culture. Polumbaum earned a bachelor's degree in East Asian studies from McGill University, a master's from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and a Ph.D. in communication from Stanford University. She has worked as a news reporter in Vermont, Oregon, and California, and for English-language news outlets in China. Her most recent book, *China Ink: The Changing Face of Chinese Journalism* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), is based on interviews with 20 young Chinese journalists.

Lu Tang is an assistant professor with the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Alabama. Her research examines the impact of globalization on communication practices within and across organizations, such as knowledge management, corporate culture, networks, and corporate social responsibility. Her research has been published in

the *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Public Relations Review,* and *Journal of Health Communication*.

Yong Z. Volz is an assistant professor with the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri. Her research interests lie in transcultural and comparative perspectives of journalism history, especially concerning history and sociology of Chinese journalism and Western influences in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her recent work includes articles on the Protestant missionary press in nineteenth-century China, the transplantation of the Missouri model of journalism into China in the 1920s and 1930s, and British and American press competition in semicolonial China. Her research has appeared in a number of refereed journals, including *Media, Culture & Society*, *Journalism*, *Journalism Studies*, *International Communication Gazette*, *International Journal of Advertising*, and *Communication, Politics & Culture*.

Hongying Wang is an associate professor of political science and director of the Moynihan East Asia Program at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University. She received a B.A. from Beijing University, an M.A. from Ohio University, and a Ph.D. from Princeton University. She was a Woodrow Wilson Center Fellow in 2005–2006. She is author of *Weak State, Strong Networks: The Institutional Dynamics of Foreign Direct Investment in China* (Oxford University Press, 2001). She has also published articles in *Asian Survey*, *China Quarterly*, *Global Governance, Journal of Asian Business*, and *Journal of Contemporary China*, among others.

Jian Wang is an associate professor at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, University of Southern California. He has worked for the international consulting firm McKinsey & Company as a senior communications specialist, and has also taught at Purdue University and Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is author of *Foreign Advertising in China: Becoming Global, Becoming Local* (Iowa State University Press, 2000) and coauthor of *China's Window on the World: TV News, Social Knowledge and International Spectacles* (Hampton Press, 2002). His research has been published in journals, including the *Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Broadcast & Electronic Media*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Public Relations Review*, and *Asian Journal of Communication*.

Xiaoling Zhang is an associate professor of Chinese Studies with the School of Contemporary Chinese Studies at the University of Nottingham. She was a visiting research fellow with the East Asia Institute at the

National University of Singapore. Her research interests include the Chinese media and culture, and the rise of China's soft power. She is coeditor of *China's Information and Communications Technology: Social Changes and State Responses* (Routledge, 2009). Dr. Zhang has published research articles in journals, including *Media, Culture & Society*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, *China Information*, *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, and *China: An International Journal*.

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