

I. Introduction

Motivation

We are one decade into the 21st century; already the geopolitical landscape is much different than that of the turn of the millennium. The ashes of the Cold War have long settled, the Soviet Union has been dissolved, and the United States remains the sole superpower dominating global affairs. However, with the recent global economic meltdown in 2009 and the U.S. military tied down on two fronts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States' continued status as the global superpower is not a foregone conclusion. The United States reduced military commitment to the Asia Pacific region is causing a structural change in the balance of power. As realists predict, a potential power void is being created in the international community.¹ A void in which no single nation has the capability to immediately fill, yet the People's Republic of China (PRC), hereafter China, is arguably the next contender who is portrayed as the "hegemon on the horizon."²

China's image in the international community was elevated during the 2008 Olympic Games held in Beijing. Hundreds of millions of spectators witnessed as China took the center stage displaying its magnificent social and economic development. For the Chinese, it was a proud moment, one in which the world reveled in China's rapid transformation from a backwards, alienated state to a beacon of cultural heritage. Developing nations looked on in awe, inspired by what they too may accomplish one day. However, "China's rise" as displayed by the 2008 Olympics, has not been received with ease in other parts of the globe. Many concerns have been raised about the expansion of China's soft power influence in the international community, particularly by the United States, whose soft power has been waning in recent years.

¹ Denny Roy, "Assessing the Asia-Pacific 'Power Vacuum'" *Survival* 37, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 50-55.

² *Ibid.*, 50-55.

Recent scholarship of China has been all too focused on purely the hard power argument, which will be discussed at greater length in the next section of the paper. China's soft power strategy is relatively new to the field of international relations. One piece of literature comes to mind when China's soft power strategy is mentioned. It is the *Charm Offensive* by Joshua Kurlantzick. His work does a splendid job of analyzing China's broad soft power strategy across the globe. However, one point of contention is Joshua Kurlantzick's insistence upon including economic inducement into China's soft power strategy.³ Economics can only be relegated to hard power, thus I find this to be the major flaw in his argument. Another piece of literature broadly examining China's soft power strategy is *The Dragon Looks South: China and Southeast Asia in the New Century* by Bronson Percival. The author focuses on China's soft power strategy in Southeast Asia.⁴ Tactically, I agree with the author's premise that before China looks to charm the entire globe, it must first play the role of a good neighbor.

Arguably, one of China's most important neighbors is Taiwan. China and Taiwan's tumultuous relationship dates back to the Chinese Civil War, after the Republic of China's (ROC) Nationalist party was defeated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) they retreated to the island of Taiwan. Since 1949, these two sides have lived on opposite sides of the Taiwan Strait at complete political loggerheads, yet they both share similar cultural backgrounds.

Culture is one of the most crucial elements of China's soft power strategy, especially against Taiwan. As Samuel P. Huntington's thesis of "clash of civilizations" argues, in the post-Cold War international system, alignments will be shaped by culture and not political ideology.⁵ This thought is further supported by professor Chao Chien-min, "Cultural commonality facilitates cooperation and cohesion among people, while cultural differences promote cleavages and conflicts. As a result people rally to those

³ Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World* (Yale University Press, 2007).

⁴ Bronson Percival, *The Dragon Looks South: China and Southeast Asia in the New Century* (Praeger Security International, 2007).

⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs*, (Summer, 1993): 22.

⁶ Chien-min Chao, "Will Economic Integration between Mainland China and Taiwan Lead to a Congenial Political Culture?" *Asian Survey* 43, no. 2 (March/April): 288.

with similar ancestry, religion, language, values, and institutions.”⁶ In the end, Samuel Huntington, contends that China’s cultural attraction is pulling the three lesser Chinese regions--Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the various Diaspora Chinese communities in Southeast Asia--toward China.⁷

To date, the author of this paper is not aware of any comprehensive academic work which has explained China’s “soft power” strategy against Taiwan and its implications for cross-Strait relations. Certainly, no books have been published on the topic, and one finds that the journal articles that have been published on the matter largely tend to follow pre-existing viewpoints and arguments. It is hoped that this study on China’s soft power strategy against Taiwan can help fill in the missing links. The rise of China will arguably be the single most important event of twenty-first century international relations.⁹

Purpose

In recent years, many China watchers in Taiwan have watched China’s “peaceful development” with a mixture of optimism and anxiousness. This paper, seeks to explore the implications of China’s soft power strategy for cross-Strait relations. Many in Taiwan foresee the great economic opportunities of the potential Chinese marketplace while others, mostly pan-Green, view China’s “peaceful development” as a direct threat to their sovereignty. Many view China’s “charm offensive” as a part of a grand strategy aimed at unifying China and Taiwan.

This paper seeks to first identify the soft power strategy China is wielding throughout the global community. The paper will take a closer look at China’s soft power instruments (culture, political values, and foreign diplomacy). I will note here, the paper will focus on the cultural, agenda setting, value, and institutional aspects of soft power. I am intentionally omitting economic inducements, as it does not adhere to the

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1996): 127.

⁹ G. John Ikenberry, “The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?” *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2008): 23.

tenets of soft power as set forth by Joseph S. Nye, Jr. Then, this paper will aim to closely examine China's specific soft power strategy against Taiwan. I will divide this portion of the paper into two separate parts: the first is Jiang Zemin's era and the second is Hu Jintao's era. The time period is roughly the early 1990s to the present day. Then, I will test the effects of China's "goodwill gestures" on the Taiwanese public. I will specifically isolate two variables: The first variable is the Taiwanese public's perception of China's hostility towards the ROC government and the Taiwanese people. Does the Taiwanese public perceive China to be friendly towards Taiwan? The second variable is the independence vs. unification question. Is China's soft power strategy moving Taiwan closer to unification?

I propose, when we compare the past hard power approach of Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao's present day soft power strategy, we will see that the past hard power approach of Jiang Zemin resulted in negative public opinion in Taiwan, thus leading to a more independence-minded Taiwan. However, with the new soft power strategy of Hu Jintao, we will witness a positive change in Taiwanese public opinion, thus increasing the likelihood of future reunification.

Methodology

The research for this paper will be conducted both through quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data will rely on the collection of second-hand sources, primarily the use of public opinion polls. I chose public opinion polls because it is the best way to determine others' perception of China's image. After all, the goal of soft power is to attract others to get them to want what you want. Specifically, this quantitative research will first portray how China is perceived throughout the global community, and then, demonstrate how Taiwan's public perceives China. Ideally, this data will depict how significantly the cross-Strait relationship has changed over the last fifteen years. It will visually display the ineffectiveness of Jiang Zemin's hard power strategy, thus resulting in the Taiwanese independence movement. Conversely, with the implementation of Hu Jintao's soft power strategy, we will visualize an improvement in cross-Strait relations.

These sources will primarily come from two public opinion polls: The first public opinion poll used in this paper will come from The Chicago Council on Global Affairs.¹⁰ This public opinion poll was more complicated because it took place in six separate countries: United States, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Indonesia. In the United States, the survey was conducted by Knowledge Networks (KN) between January 17 and February 6, 2008 with a total sample of 1,029 American adults and a margin of error of approximately 3.1%. The survey was conducted via the Internet. The survey in China was conducted by Globescan between January 25 and February 19, 2008 with a total sample of 1,237 samples, and the margin of error was approximately 3%. All interviews were conducted by telephone. The survey in Japan was also conducted by Globescan from January 16 to 29, 2008 with a total sample of 1,000 respondents and a margin of error of approximately 3.1%. All interviews were conducted by telephone. The survey in South Korea was conducted by Hankook Research Company for the East Asia Institute and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The survey was conducted between January 22 and February 5, 2008 with a total sample of 1,029 respondents; the margin of error was unlisted. All interviews were conducted face to face. The survey in Vietnam was conducted by Globescan between February 22 and March 8, 2008 with a total sample of 1,000 respondents, and the margin of error was approximately 3.1%. All interviews were conducted face to face. The survey in Indonesia was conducted by Synovate between January 19 and 29, 2008 with a total sample of 811 respondents and a margin of error of 3.5%. All interviews were conducted face to face.

The second public opinion poll used in this paper will come from the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC)¹¹ who commissioned the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University to conduct a telephone survey of adults aged 20 and over in the Taiwan area from April 17 to 20, 2009. A total of 1,132 effective samples were collected, with a sampling error of about 2.91% based on a 95% confidence level.

The qualitative research will be conducted through the collection and review of second-hand academic journals, books, and newspapers. The general purpose qualitative

¹⁰ Surveys can be found at The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, available at http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/dynamic_page.php?id=75.

¹¹ Surveys can be found at Mainland Affairs Council, Public Opinion Surveys, available at <http://www/mac.gov.tw/english/index1-e.htm>.

research is to provide background to China's Taiwan strategy and the evolution of the cross-Strait relationship, comparing Jiang Zemin's hard power strategy to Hu Jintao's soft power strategy.

