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Song, Jiaying

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The Manifestation of China's Soft Power Agenda in American Higher Education:
The Case of the Confucius Institute Project in America

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

Jiaying Song

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

China's Soft Power Strategy in American Higher Education:
The Case of the Confucius Institute Project in America

by

Jiaying Song

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Val D. Rust, Chair

Along with the development of China's economic and military power, China is perceived by its competitors as a threat to the international system. In order to have a "peaceful rise" and to project a benign national image to the world, China began taking a series of actions to market itself. The Confucius Institute project is one of the public diplomacy actions in education in response to Beijing's "peaceful rise" slogan.

The Confucius Institutes are non-profit public institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China whose stated aims are to promote Chinese language and culture, support local Chinese teaching internationally, and facilitate cultural exchanges. The increasing number of Confucius Institutes has received world-wide attention. This phenomenon has also precipitated an important debate in America on Chinese's soft-power agenda. According to Joseph Nye, the founding father of "Soft-Power Theory," soft-power is the power of attraction without coercion. Nonetheless, results from this study suggest that the Confucius Institutes create

mutually beneficial consequences for both China and America, and tend to promote educational opportunities and social justice in America.

This multiple case study is comprised of data from four of the Confucius Institutes in different geographic locations in America (one from the Southwest, one from the Northwest, one from the East Coast, and the other one from the Midwest). Further data were also collected on other Confucius Institutes in the United States. Through document analysis, informal interviews, participant-observation, and semi-structured interviews, I primarily focused on the perceptions and beliefs from key personnel based in America, who set up and/or work for the Confucius Institutes in America.

My inquiry is guided by the following research questions: 1) What is the nature of the Confucius Institute? 2) Why would a U.S. host institution want to house a Confucius Institute? 3) What trends are evident toward this Confucius Institute in its host institution? The study aims to find out what the Confucius Institutes at American universities do, to what extent they serve as a political tool for China, what benefits are there for host institutions in America, and what the future trends of the Confucius Institutes are in America.

Across all four sites, staff members and key personnel suggested that the political influence from the Confucius Institutes is limited, as the programs offered by the Confucius Institute are low level; additionally, American Directors appointed by host institutions are in absolute leadership positions, ensuring the purpose and contents of Confucius Institute programs are strictly guided by the host institutions. This dissertation argues that the Confucius Institutes create a win-win situation for both China and the U.S. However, while the number of Confucius Institutes is growing aggressively in America and worldwide, the future of the Institutes abroad remains unknown. Its lack of self-sustainability, under-developed management from *Hanban*

(the Confucius Institutes' headquarters in Beijing), and unstable policy/funding resources from the Chinese government are the key issues that could hinder the Confucius Institutes' longevity.

The dissertation of Jiaying Song is approved.

Edith Omwami

Deborah Larson

John Hawkins

Val D. Rust, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2017

DEDICATION PAGE

This project is dedicated to enthusiastic inter-culturalists, international educators, and people who are devoted to Sino-U.S. relations and world peace. Their passion has deeply moved me, and I am motivated by them every day to promote educational opportunities and spread international understanding.

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I am also thankful for my parents, Shanna Guo and Li Song, who love me with their unconditional support. During my study in America, they have always been understanding and supportive of what I pursued and what kind of person I wanted to become. They have never doubted my potential, my capability, and my decisions in life. Also my grandparents, Baozhen Cheng and Shumin Song, who I have lived with since I was 4 years old. My grandma taught me how to be a fighter, a strong woman while staying elegant; I have learned from my grandpa that no matter how difficult life has become, do not forget to take a break and appreciate simple happiness in life.

My husband Sam Lin, who is my partner in crime, has motivated and encouraged me throughout my entire Ph.D. process. His courage and persistence in pursuing his dream career inspires me; his firm support in feminism and equality always impresses me. I have never doubted a single second that being with him is the best choice I have ever made.

I am also thankful for Sarah Lillo's friendship, help from my editor Annie Preston, the guidance and kindness from my committee member Professor John Hawkins, Professor Edith

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Last but not least, I would like to thank all my interviewees and people who have helped me during my seven years of graduate study in America. I will pass on all the positivity and kindness to the people in need. May the world be one of more peace, more love, and more helping hands.

VITA

Jiaying Song

EDUCATION

2017 – Candidate for PhD at UCLA: Doctor of Philosophy in Education

2011 – M.A. in Comparative and International Education

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, MN

2009 – B.A. in Japanese Studies

Guangdong University in Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China

EXPERIENCE AND FELLOWSHIPS

2016 Alice Belkin Memorial Scholarship

2015 Phi Beta Kappa International Student Fellowship

2012-2015 Reader in UCLA Department of Asian Language & Culture

2013-2014 UCLA Graduate School of Education Departmental Fellowship

Special Reader in course Comparative Education

Graduate Student Co-director: Center for International Development

Education

2011-2012 Mandarin Chinese teacher at Liberty Ridge Elementary

Minnesota

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Song, J. (2011, March) *Adaptation, Adjustment, and Awareness: Integrating Intercultural Theory into Short Term Programs*. Poster presented at Internationalizing the Curriculum and Campus Conference, Minneapolis, MN.

Song, J. (2011, March) *A Qualitative Case Study of a Customized Study Abroad Program-Education for a Global Citizen*. Paper presented at New York University International Education Conference, New York.

Song, J. (2011, May) *A Case Study of a Customized Study Abroad Program-Education for a Global Citizen*. Paper presented at Comparative and International Education Society, Montreal.

Song, J. (2013, March) *Teaching Critical Thinking across Borders*. Paper presented at Comparative and International Education Society, New Orleans.

Song, J. (2013, May) *A Project for The American University in Iraq-Building Center for Expertise in teaching and learning*. Paper presented at Comparative and International Education Society, Western Regional, Los Angeles.

Song, J. (2014, March) *The Manifestation of China's Soft Power Agenda in American Higher Education*. Paper presented at Comparative and International Education Society, Toronto.

CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

1.1 My Journey to This Research

My passion for international education was triggered by my great-grandfather, who was a pioneer in internationalizing higher education in China. After finishing his research in Cornell University in the 1920s, he went back to China and became a professor in Wuhan Agricultural College in Wuhan China, which later became Huazhong Agriculture University. He then founded various exchange programs in the University with U.S, U.K, Russia, Germany and Japan. Being able to speak seven languages, he always encouraged me to embrace diversity and differences. I have always looked up to him and aspired to be an educator who cultivates young minds.

Coming to the U.S. to study comparative and international education seemed to be a thing that was destined to happen on me. My upbringing was heavily influenced by exposure to Western culture and ideals. I vividly remember my great-grandfather teaching me the English words “nose, mouth, and ears,” when I was a toddler. I learned to recite Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech in my seventh grade English class; I was also familiar with Hollywood celebrities and American TV shows, because knowing them promoted me to the “in-crowd” at school. I was mesmerized by the portrayal of American life in the media. My admiration of America flowered into a passion to learn.

I have truly enjoyed living my dream for the past six years as a graduate student in the U.S. I also realized how much I have benefitted in the process— I learned to think critically, objectively, bi-culturally and developed a holistic perspective. After getting my Master’s in America, at the University of Minnesota twin cities, I became a Mandarin Chinese teacher at an

elementary school, in St. Paul. The Chinese program in our school was funded by a Chinese governmental project called “The Confucius Institute,” and my classroom was one of those “Confucius Classrooms.” My class quickly became one of the most popular classes in the district. Many students told me how much they enjoyed learning about Chinese culture, and that they eagerly wished to visit China.

However, being a Mandarin teacher to elementary school kids was not an easy job. I and my other colleagues, who were also Mandarin teachers (some of them were sent by Hanban, some of them were local trained teachers), worked very hard to create an entertaining, politics-free and ideology-free curriculum. Our goal at that time was simply to stimulate the kids to have an interest in learning Chinese, Chinese culture, and China. Our experience with the local Confucius Institute was quite pleasant. The Confucius Institute staff, who reached out to us, were mostly Americans, and they were very supportive in terms of providing educational resources and opportunities for professional development.

From my elementary school teaching experience, I came to a realization that I wanted to concentrate on the study of education from a macro perspective. In 2012, I started my doctoral program at UCLA. In 2013, the worldwide growth of the Confucius Institute project drew negative media attention. The Institute was portrayed as China’s soft power propaganda tool. Within the first 10 years of development, almost 500 Confucius Institutes have been established around the globe, and 109 of them are located in America. All the Confucius Institutes are partnered with a local university or an educational organization. In 2010, 2012 and 2014, several universities terminated their contracts with the Confucius Institute because of “brain-washing” and “academic freedom” concerns, including the Mandarin class program I used to teach. The

elementary school I used to teach ceased the Chinese program. Some of my old students and their parents even wrote me emails expressing their disappointment.

The news upset me, but it also piqued my interest in the true purpose and influence both educationally and politically of the Institute. The news also triggered a heated debate on global competition in soft power in America. Therefore, I decided to do a multi-case study on the Confucius Institute in America as my dissertation project. I wanted to find out what the other Confucius Institutes did, and to what extent the claims made by western scholars on the Confucius Institute are true. In the meantime, I also decided to use soft power theory as my conceptual framework. Soft power theory lends me a critical perspective, and helps me to take a neutral stance considering my Chinese background.

During my data collection, I was fortunate to have met and worked with a group of individuals with diverse cultural and ethnical backgrounds, who share the same vision and passion in international education, China-US relations and the development of Confucius Institute project. I feel touched and empowered by them, and I sincerely hope the results of this study can be of use and beneficial to them.

1.2 Background

The rise of the knowledge economy has led to dramatic shifts in global competition. Education, particularly global university ranking has been seen as an important indicator of this global competition in hard power (e.g., economic influence, military forces). More importantly, education has gradually become the contested terrain of the global competition in soft power. Soft power, as Joseph Nye (2008) defined it, as: “a political strategy used to foster appreciation

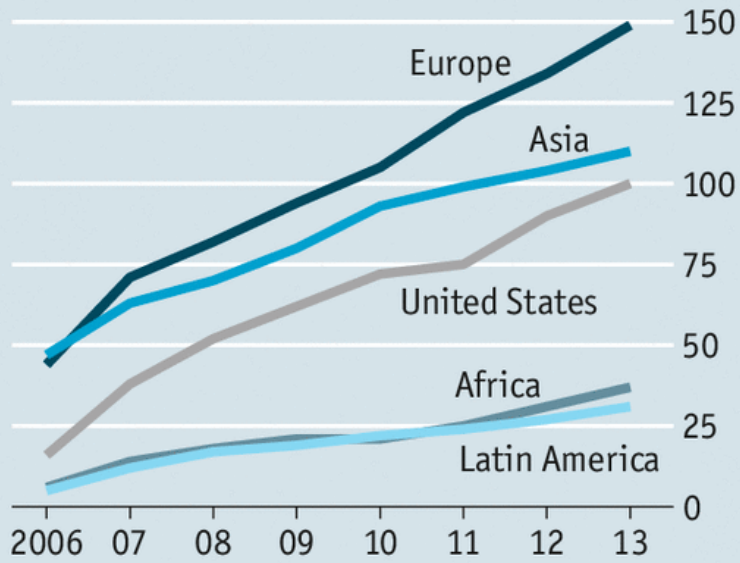
and acceptance of a nation's culture and values" that "draws on subtle effects of culture, values, and ideas, in contrast to the more direct, tangible measures that hard power encompasses."

The competition in soft power started a long time ago. America is seen as the soft power hegemon in the world. For instance, the influence and popularity of Hollywood movies, the NBA, McDonald's, and Coca-Cola are huge. In the field of education, America is the number one study abroad destination in the world in the past few decades. However, China's increasing hard power and its rise in international status seem to have changed its status in soft power competition. In the meantime, China has consciously and deliberately attempted to extend influence through an aggressive strategic use of soft power, particularly in the field of education. More and more students are now studying in China on the scholarships offered by Chinese government. Among all the soft power strategies, one the most consequential ones are called the Confucius Institute project.

In 2004, the very first Confucius Institute was established in Seoul, South Korea. By the end of August 2014, 443 Confucius Institutes and 648 Confucius Classrooms had been established in 104 countries and regions in the world. Among the 443 Confucius Institutes, 97 of them are located in the United States. Moreover, according to Hanban, the number has reached 500 and the number of Confucius Classrooms has been over 1,000 in 2015, with 1.5 million registered students. The United Kingdom, so far has the most extensive network of the Confucius Institutes in Europe; France has been the location of one of the most spectacular increases in the teaching of Chinese in recent years (Starr 2009, p. 75). Within ten years, the number of the Confucius Institutes grew exponentially, and millions of people around world have participated in educational activities offered by the Confucius Institutes.

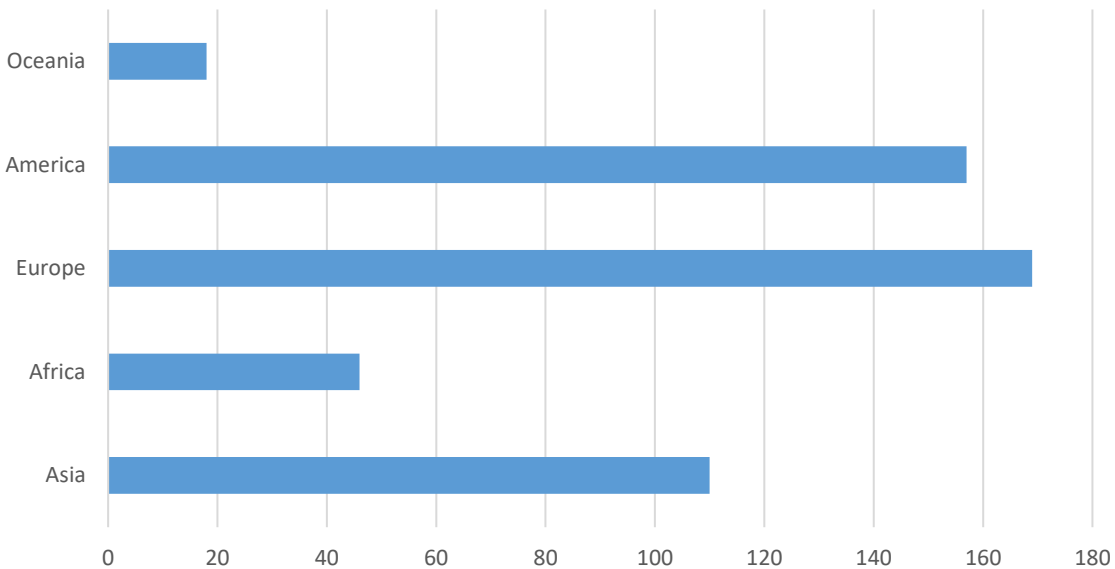
The sage's spread

Number of Confucius Institutes by location



Source: Hanban

Number of Confucius Institute Across the Globe (as of 2016)



Source: Hanban http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm.

The Confucius Institutes are non-profit public institutions affiliated with China's National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. According to Hanban, the Confucius Institute is to cater to the sharp increase in the world's demands for Chinese learning. Therefore, benefiting from the British Council from the UK, the *Academie Francaise* from France, the *Goethe Institut* from Germany's experience in promoting their national languages, China began its own exploration through establishing non-profit public institutions, which aim to promote the Chinese language and culture in foreign countries. These public institutions were given the name: The Confucius Institute. The Confucius Institutes/Classrooms adopt flexible teaching patterns and adapt themselves to suit local conditions when teaching Chinese language and promoting culture in foreign primary schools, secondary schools, communities, and enterprises (Hanban, 2011).

1.3 Controversies on the Confucius Institutes

During the last ten years, the Confucius Institutes have experienced exponential growth, and the increasing number of the Confucius Institutes has brought the Institutes world-wide attention. This phenomenon has also raised a huge debate on China's soft-power agenda in American higher education.

The controversies and anti-Confucius Institute activities started a few years ago and have escalated in recent years. According to *Wall Street Journal*, on September 30, 2014, Penn State University has become the second major U.S. research university in a week to announce it is cutting ties with the Confucius Institute program, an international chain of academic centers run by the Chinese government. Earlier on September 29th, 2014, the University of Chicago allowed a five-year contract with its center to expire. In June, the American Association of University

Professors urged universities to cut ties with the institutes unless they agree to greater transparency and academic freedom (Belkin, 2014).

In 2010, Hacienda schools, a Southern California school district turned down \$30,000 a year from the Chinese government for establishing a Confucius classroom in one of their middle schools, after being pressured by community members, who criticized cooperation with the communist country. In 2012, dozens of Chinese teachers at the Confucius Institutes in the United States were told that they could be forced to leave by June 30, due to a State Department directive. The directive stated that academics, under a college's J-1 exchange program that teach students of elementary or secondary school age are in violation of visa regulations, and it said they must return to China by the end of June to reapply for an appropriate program (*New America Media*, 2012).

In 2013, McMaster University in Hamilton, near Toronto, refused to renew a five-year contract with the Confucius Institute on its campus, citing the institute's requirement that its instructors have no affiliation to organizations that the Chinese government has banned, including the spiritual movement Falun Gong (*Times Higher Education*, 2013). In the past few years, too, the University of Manitoba and the University of British Columbia have turned down proposals for Confucius Institutes to open on their campuses.

In 2014, at the European Association for Chinese Studies conference in Portugal, conference materials were seized and several pages removed from the conference program – including an advertisement for the Taiwan-based Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, a conference cosponsor -- after the chief executive of Confucius Institute Headquarters, Xu Lin, objected to the contents (*Inside Higher Education*, 2014). Western universities have raised the question of compromising their academic integrity in collaborating

with the Confucius Institutes. In 2015, Stockholm University announced that it will close its Confucius Institute—which was established in 2005, after the University of Chicago and Pennsylvania State University closed their Confucius Institutes. Stockholm University’s vice chancellor, Astrid Söderbergh Widding, is quoted in the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* as saying (in translation) that it is generally dubious, or questionable, to establish institutes within a university that are financed by another nation (*Inside Higher Education*, 2015).

1.4 Significance of the Study

There are two major facts that make the Confucius Institute project significant. First, the number of the Confucius Institutes has become a concern of China’s growing soft power policies in America. Soft power is a concept developed by Joseph Nye of Harvard University to describe the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, use of force or give money as a means of persuasion. In recent time, the term has also been used in changing and influencing social and public opinion through relatively less transparent channels and lobbying through powerful political and non-political organizations. The Confucius Institute is now seen as China’s tool of its political propaganda, which aims to influence the world with its fast-developed institutionalized language and culture learning centers.

Second, the headquarter of the Confucius Institute is the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, which is also known as Hanban. Hanban, located in Beijing, is directly managed by the Ministry of Education of China. Each Confucius Institute is located in a host institution abroad, and all the foreign host institutions are universities. A local Director and an assistant Director from China are co-managing a center. Finance-wise, the startup funding is provided by Hanban, subsequent annual operation funding is provided by Hanban with matching

funding from the foreign partner institution (Oh & Selmier, 2012). The money offered by Hanban covers all the activities in the Confucius Institutes, including salaries for teachers, educational supplies and other kinds of expenses. Although the Confucius Institutes are “jointly-financed and jointly-run” on paper, it might not be so in reality as in some centers, Hanban is the one who “seems” to offer cash all the time, and the assistant Directors’ Confucius Institute’s roles are debatably dominant. These phenomena also add some conspiratorial elements to the Confucius Institute project, and has raised concerns over the Confucius Institutes influences on academic freedom, and the possibility of industrial and academic espionage.

Nevertheless, as my pilot study result suggests, many of the criticisms made are only based on the superficial facts of the Institutes without looking at what is really happening inside and outside the Institute. One of the Confucius Institutes on the West Coast has a strong social justice focus, and its diverse programs do not only emphasize language and culture education, but also aim to empowering underrepresented local populations in inner-city areas. Many minority students were given a chance to study a foreign language, work on international projects and go abroad at no cost. Moreover, the American Director has absolute autonomy in running the center. Therefore, this particular center actually created a win-win situation for both China and the U.S.

China on the one hand, is able to spread its culture and promote national image; America on the other hand, is able to empower its students with more free educational opportunities and possibilities. It will be a great loss for students if the opportunities are taken away by the so-called political concern.

The majority of the research on the Confucius Institute focuses on its organizational structure, and how it is being used as a tool of China’s national soft power strategy. Yet little

research has been done on the receptivity of Confucius Institutes by its host institutions, why a U.S. institution wants to host a Confucius Institute office, their role on campus and to what extent they serve as China's political propaganda on a U.S. campus and how. How do they integrate into the American higher education system? Do the U.S. host institutions receive any benefits from having a Confucius Institute on campus? If so, what are they? Some host institutions have ceased their partnership with Hanban, some others still maintain a strong relationship. If the partnership is strong, how likely would this relationship sustain in a long run? The purpose of this research is to fill in this gap and find out if it is true that the Confucius Institutes do more "harm" than good.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Soft Power Theory

This study is grounded in Joseph Nye's soft power theory. According to Nye, the primary currencies of soft power are an actor's values, culture, policies and institutions – and the extent to which these "primary currencies," as Nye calls them, are able to attract or repel other actors to "want what you want." Soft power, represents the third behavioral way of getting the outcomes you want. Soft power is contrasted with hard power, which has historically been the predominant realist measure of national power, through quantitative metrics such as population size, concrete military assets, or a nation's gross domestic product. But having such resources does not always produce the desired outcomes, as the United States discovered in the Vietnam War. The extent of attraction can be measured by public opinion polls, by elite interviews, and case studies (Nye, 2004).

Power

According to Nye (2005), people tend to have a narrow understanding of power, words such as command, coercion, and control might be the first few that come to mind. More specifically, power can be understood as the ability to influence the behaviors of others to get the outcome one wants. However, there are several ways to affect the behaviors of others. You can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; you can also attract and co-op them to want what you want. Sometimes we can get the outcome we want without commanding it.

Soft Power

The notion of soft power was initially introduced in political science. Soft power as the second face of power, rests on the ability to shape the preference of others. For example, a country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries—admiring its value, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness—want to follow it. In this sense, it is also important to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, and not to force them to change by threatening military or economic sanctions (Nye, 2005). Ultimately, soft power is the ability to attract an attraction power that leads to acquiescence.

The tools of enhancing soft power are several; institutional power is one of them. As Nye points out, both Britain and United States advanced their values by creating a structure of international rules and institutions that were consistent with the liberal and democratic nature of the British and American economic systems: free trade and the gold standard in the case of Britain; the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the United Nations in the case of the United States. When a country makes their power legitimate in other's eyes, they encounter less resistance to their wishes. If a country's culture and ideology are attractive, others will become more willing to follow. If a country can shape international rules that are consistent with its interests and values, its action will appear more legitimate in the eyes of others. If it uses institutions and follows rules that encourage other countries to channel or limit their activities in ways it prefers, it will not need as many costly carrots and sticks (Nye, 2005).

2.2 Other Similar Organizations

Confucius Institutes are sometimes compared to language and culture promotion organizations such as Britain's British Council, France's *Alliance Française* and Germany's

Goethe-Institut. The similarity between these institutes is that they are all governmental, non-profit organizations which promote language and culture learning. Yet, one thing that makes the Confucius Institutes different from them is that they are operated within established universities, colleges, and secondary schools around the world, and Chinese government provides funding, teachers (in some centers) and educational materials. This has raised serious concerns over their political influence on education.

2.3 China's Soft Power Strategy

While the Olympic officials have espoused the creed of universal participation for the betterment of mankind, the nations of the world have interpreted participation in the Games as an opportunity to express national identification, and a tool of propaganda. The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games were intended to show off China's spending and organizational power, and they were reckoned to have cost about \$40 billion. The Beijing Olympics was just a beginning, Beijing has also pledged to invest \$1.25 trillion worldwide by 2025. Analyst estimated that China's annual budget for "external propaganda" is about \$10 billion (Shambaugh, 2015).

Building soft power commensurate with China's major power status and influence has become an urgent task in China's development strategy (Li, 2008). Many scholars in China believe that a great power needs material or hard power as well as soft power to enjoy flexibility within international politics and maintain advantageous positions in international competition. Since China's economic power has risen dramatically, the enhancement of soft power is inseparable with China's rise (p. 299). Another use of soft power is for self-defense. It could shape a better perception of China by the outside world, and refutes the "China threat" thesis so

as to facilitate a better understanding of China's domestic social economic reality and convince the outside world to accept and support China's rise.

Beginning in the late 1990s, China changed its focus and began to concentrate on soft power. China has consciously and deliberately attempted to extend influence through the strategic use of soft power (Kurlantzick, 2007; Paradise 2009; Rui, 2007; Lai, 2006)). China wants to create a peaceful international environment in which its economic development can continue and in which it can portray itself as a responsible and constructive player in world politics (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 37; Gil 2008, p. 117). Ding explained that such an idea such as attraction and agenda-setting have always been embedded in Chinese philology and culture, even though Nye is the one who first coined the concept (Ding, 2008). There is a strong connection between the idea of soft power and "harmonious world" in ancient Chinese political philosophies (p. 196).

According to Kurlantzick (2007). China employs several tools in order to implement its soft power, including the tools of culture (Chinese culture, language, arts and ethnicity), as well as the tools of business (aid, trade, investment, and the appeal of Chinese economic model). Ding (2008) commented that China's current global strategy is multidimensional, and is manifested in a number of ways, including becoming a major player in terms of economic assistance to the developing world. It is now the source of the largest economic assistance to countries such as Vietnam, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. And its engagement with Africa has become increasingly evident.

Ding (2008) stated that China is very sophisticated in using its international aid to establish a favorite national image in Africa. "Compared to traditional foreign aids which are often diverted into elite pockets, Beijing's financial supports have been mainly provided to some

infrastructure projects...which will benefit African people in the long term. More importantly, unlike foreign aid from Western countries, Beijing's help came with no preconditions (p. 200).” Additionally, this assistance is also directly tied to China's soft power policies in that the aid is directed to the development of educational and cultural programs. China has promised to up its efforts in human resource training for Africa, this includes sending a variety of African specialists to visit China to learn technologies and professional skills; China also dispatches many Chinese experts to African countries to give lectures in universities, visit hospitals and advise farmers on agricultural production techniques (He, 2007). The Confucius Institutes are also up and running in African countries. The growth of China's soft power is beyond language and culture. China respects African countries' sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity, which have won the trust and goodwill from African countries; China's historic achievements in economic reform and national construction and its successful leap from a backward to a developing nation is the practical yet profound reason for China's appeal to Africa. Africa will be a frontier where China will test and perhaps cultivate that identity along with its newly-found soft power (p. 30).

Ellis (2011) in his case study of China's soft power in Latin America, stated that the core of China's soft power in Latin America, as in the rest of the world, is the widespread perception that China, because of its sustained high rate of economic growth and technology development, will present tremendous business opportunities in the future, and will be a power to be reckoned with globally.

The impact of these soft power policies is huge. However China's soft power policies extend throughout most of the world. Kurlantzick (2007), who calls China's soft power policies “charm offensive,” cited polls in Africa and Latin America showing that the people appreciate

China more than the United States. He cites other polls indicating that people around the world wish to emulate China's ideas, values, and models more than those of the United States. "China clearly promotes its socio-economic model through speeches overseas, a model of top-down control of development, and poverty reduction in which political reform is sidelined for economic reform (Kurtlantzick, 2007)". This model which is also referred as "Beijing Consensus" by Joshua Cooper Ramo, is said to be characterized by a "desire to have equitable, peaceful high-quality growth" but "does not believe in uniform solutions"—such as economic and political liberalization often propagated by the West—but has a "ruthless willingness to innovate and experiment" and "a lively defense of national borders and interests" (Roma 2004, p. 4 & 33; Suzuki 2009, p. 782). Additionally, the attractions of these ideas and the Chinese model of development are assumed to result in the growth of China's soft power, which will ultimately make it a competitor to the USA (Suzuki, 2009).

2.4 Language and Culture as a Strong Means of Building a Nation's Power

Ding and Saunders (2006) pointed out that many nations have been using the power of language and culture to enhance their national power and international status, and claim that the Confucius Institute serves as a global-local keystone for China's commercial, cultural and linguistic proselytization, and this undertaking represents a clear step in developing the "soft architecture" to become a global player. Yet they also found that although Beijing's bold step in promoting Chinese language and culture is impressive, the rise of China is still seen as peripheral and unconvincing. "The dragon still needs to shed some of its skin if it wants to spread its wings" (Ding & Saunders, 2006).

2.5 Endeavors in Education

Yang pointed out that despite China's global presence in international aid and other issues, little attention was on the role of higher education in projecting China's soft power. China is reaching out globally and investing heavily overseas, its use of international exchange and cooperation in higher education as an exercise of soft power is unprecedented, and has gone far beyond traditional theories. The Confucius Institute programs have demonstrated a new form of China's higher education internationalization, featured by a much improved balance between introducing the world into China and bringing China to the world within an altered global landscape of higher education (Yang, 2010).

Indeed, China's endeavor in global higher education competition is apparent and should not be underestimated. China has designated thirty-nine of its universities to become world class, a major part of the strategy to become world class is to send students and scholars abroad for advanced study and research. The Open Door report (*Institute of International Education, 2016*) issued in 2013 has explicitly illustrated the current situation. In 2015-16 academic year, 328,547 students from China were studying in the United States. China remains the leading place of origin for students coming to the United States for the seventh year in a row, comprising 31.5% of all international students studying in the U.S. The total number of international students in America is 1,043,839. Compared to ten years ago, the number has increased almost 100 percent. While large numbers of students and scholars come to the United States, other countries also are receiving them. For example, there are about 80,000 students are now studying in Japan.

Apart from China's investment in higher education, China's aid in k-12 in developing countries is tremendous, as well. By the end of 2009, China has already helped other developing

countries build more than 130 schools, and funded 70,627 students from 110 developing countries to study in China (Hartig, 2014).

2.6 Comments on China's Soft Power Strategy

It seems that many scholars do not hold a positive view towards China's soft-power endeavor. Wang holds the opinion that the success of China's soft power building lies in China's soft power strategy. China should use a better public diplomacy strategy as a "lubricant" to smoothen their "peaceful rise," and as for America, this would help both China and the U.S. to build up a harmonious world and create a win-win situation (Wang, 2008). However, scholars also think that although China's endeavor in enhancing its soft power is huge, the results are not accordingly amazing. For example, the Confucius Institute projects have contributed positively to China's image and has attracted learners in significant numbers, but there are still obstacles standing in the way; the outcomes still remain to be seen (Gil, 2008). Some think that China itself is in a state of change—cultural, economic, social and political. This state of flux also implies that many sources of Chinese soft power are still uncertain, pending the ultimate transformation of the Chinese state and society (Li, 2008).

Huang and Ding (Huang & Ding, 2006) claimed that China's soft power still remains under Beijing's belly, and China still has a long way to become a global leader. Similarly, Suzuki (Suzuki, 2009) points out that the study of China's soft power, especially the results from the USA is both a myopia and fantasy, as America is the sole superpower in the international system with a specific interest in Asia-pacific region, it is most likely to be sensitive to the effects of China's rising power. America, because of its fear of losing its popularity and status, tends to constantly "search for enemies," and this also results in a fantasy of "anti—Western"

coalition led by China. In fact, as noticed by many scholars, China's soft power does not always seem to be directed against the West, the world does not know where China is going and neither does China (p. 790). Servaes (2016) commented that while China is learning fast to move from propaganda to public relations or strategic communication, it still loses out in the battle of winning the hearts and minds of people, especially in the West, but increasingly also in other parts of the world—including China itself.

Callahan (2015), claimed that China adopts a negative soft-power strategy, that through promoting a largely negative portrayal of foreign countries, China aims to safeguard the Communist Party's regime legitimacy. However this strategy has gained little traction abroad; it failed to attract foreign audiences. He then suggested that China should stop its negative strategy, such as censoring academic materials (which he referred to the incident at European Chinese studies Conference, Madame Xu Lin objected to the contents regarding Taiwan), and adopt a positive strategy of spreading Chinese culture.

2.7 Confucius Institute and China's Soft Power Agenda

There is a growing literature on the relationship between the developments of Confucius Institutes and China's soft power strategy. Starr claims that Confucius has gradually become a global brand. He states that from the Chinese point of view Confucianism makes a lot of sense and the Chinese leadership wants to emphasize its values. No matter it was just by default that the name Confucius was chosen to represent China to the world, or if it really was the best choice, there is little doubt that the institutes are among the nation's most successful modern soft power tactics (*The Diplomat*, 2011). Pan argued that the Confucius Institute project can be understood as a form of cultural diplomacy that is state-sponsored and university-piloted, a joint

effort to gain China a more sympathetic global reception (Pan, 2013). Paradise (2009), interestingly, argued that the success of the Confucius Institute project is highly dependent on the attractiveness of Chinese culture, which makes it essentially a soft power activity, or an activity with a large soft power component. However, it is not entirely a soft power strategy, as Nye defined that approach: while it may not rely on coercion, it does rely on payments. Since Hanban is the one who has been supporting the center financially, the concern has been that Hanban will have a great deal of power in influencing teaching and other language and cultural promotion activities, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, Paradise stated that the best way to think of the Confucius Institute project is as a type of impression management, an effort by China to craft a positive image of itself in a world fraught with danger. The Confucius Institutes help create the impression of a kinder and gentler China.

Hartig (2012) described the Confucius Institute as cultural diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. He stated that the Confucius Institute as a collaborative tool of cultural diplomacy, which mostly works through strategic stakeholder engagement, presents both advantages and disadvantages for both sides involved in this project. The advantages for the international partners are obvious in the capabilities to teach Chinese language and to introduce the Chinese culture to local audiences. The disadvantages are also quite obvious. International partners see themselves confronted with the accusation to be a mere propaganda tool of the Chinese Communist Party.

Jeffery Gil (2009), a professor from Australia, stated that the Confucius Institute project has a positive effect on China's soft power building, and "is likely to have contributed to shaping preferences for learning Chinese through making it a more conspicuous option and providing opportunities to do so through the services offered by the Confucius Institute." He also cited the

finding from Wang and Higgins' study in UK (Wang & Higgins, 2008), that the educational activities offered by Hanban is the main reason for the expansion of Chinese language teaching in the UK, and the Confucius Institute plays an important networking role between teachers, learners and education system. Additionally, Gil claimed that Chinese language learning may result in learners developing positive attitudes toward China and Chinese people given there is research result to support this point. He, in the end, concluded that China is using the Confucius Institute project as a long-term investment in building China's power and shaping people's attitudes; although the result may not be immediate, it may turn out to be a significant factor in China's international relation in the future (Gil, 2009).

Zhou and Luk (2016) claimed in their paper "*Establishing Confucius Institute as a Tool for Promoting China's Soft-power*," that the Confucius Institutes as a channel of cultural influence contributing to national soft-power, is actually not so soft. Their research results show that the establishment of the Confucius Institute has triggered another level of "China threat," and it is in fact Beijing's hard power under soft-power disguise, as it includes inducement and bribes.

2.8 Operation of the Confucius Institute Project

Yang (2010) explained three kinds of Confucius Institutes, categorized by funding sources: one kind of Confucius Institute is wholly operated by Hanban; one kind is joint-ventures with local foreign partners; the other kind is wholly sponsored by local partners but licensed by Beijing headquarters (Hanban, 2011). The majority of the Confucius Institutes around world are partnerships with foreign universities, which is the second category. Hartig (2012) thought that this kind of partnership is a smart and effective way of doing a project like this. He defined the

Confucius Institute project is an act of public diplomacy, and traditionally most nation-states have employed public diplomacy that involved one-way communication, following the simple sender-message-receiver model. Most other cultural institutions are independently planted in foreign countries, whereas the Confucius Institutes do differently and promisingly is that they are grafted into local cultural settings through their partnerships with prominent indigenous educational institutions. This enables the Confucius Institute to engage with local communities.

Zaharna in her latest publication further confirmed that the Confucius Institute's network communication approach is effective and successful. She states that (Zaharna, 2014) appreciating the importance of culture and relationships and China's networked communication approach to building soft power components maybe the most valuable insights and lesson from the Confucius Initiative. The Confucius Institutes seek to build relationships both internally (between each institutes and Hanban) and externally (engaging in local communities and host institutions). The Institutes do not only rely on the attractiveness of China's culture and language (which is within Nye's concept of soft power), but made its appeal and power emerge through the network communication approach that generates a relational structure and relational dynamics (p. 25).

2.9 Receptivity of the Confucius Institutes & Benefits for Host Institutes and Countries

Siow (2011) stated that, generally speaking, the Confucius Institutes in fact catered effectively to the growing worldwide demand for learning knowledge and insights about China. This ongoing outreach on China's behalf (through Confucius Institutes 'programs) not only helps eliminate stereotypes, but will also lead to a better and more nuanced understanding about this Asian giant. For host institutions, the Confucius Institutes "are succeeded in raising the standards of learning Chinese language and research within host institutions. Furthermore, host educational

institutions have improved their capacity to offer a globalized education through exchange and cooperation with Chinese educational institutions” (Siow, 2011). Lien, Oh and Selmier did research on the effects of the Confucius Institute on China’s trade and FDI (Lien, Oh & Selmier, 2012), and conclude that the Confucius Institutes do contribute positively to the volume of export and FDI from China to the host country, when the latter is a developing country. And no evidence of trade effect is found when the host country is a developed one. This is one of the few researches on the benefits of the Confucius Institutes could bring to the host countries and institutes.

Lien (2012) also did a study on the financial effects of the Confucius Institute using qualitative modeling method. The study tried to analyze the effects of the Confucius Institute on the number of individuals who will acquire Chinese language and the interaction between Confucius Institute and pre-existing schools (p. 95). The results suggest that The Confucius Institute will successfully induce more individuals in the host country to acquire Chinese. Also although there will be fewer self-learning individuals and fewer students enrolled in the local schools, the enrollment in Confucius Institute classes is sufficient to overcome these contractions; meanwhile the negative network effect causes fewer Chinese to acquire the language of the host country. The study concludes that the host country is expected to benefit from the establishment of the Confucius Institute. Indeed, it is delightful to have friends come from afar to teach us Chinese (p. 96).

Marshall Sahlins (2013), a professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago, made some criticism on the Confucius Institute in his newest article *China U. Confucius Institutes censor political discussions and restrain the free exchange of ideas. Why, then, do American universities sponsor them?* He indicated that the Confucius Institute is a “setup,” that even

though the Confucius Institute is operated cooperatively by the host institute and China headquarters, China is actually in charge of everything, at least at the University of Chicago where he conducted his case study. According to Sahlins, China appoints teachers and decides the content of courses as well as which textbooks to use. There has been virtually no serious journalistic or ethnographic investigation on how the Chinese teachers are trained or how the content of courses and textbooks are chosen. In addition, the use of only simplified characters promoted by the Chinese government ensures that the critical and popular literature in traditional characters in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and elsewhere will remain inaccessible to the semi-literate. The Confucius Institute students are trained to read only what is acceptable to the Party-State (Sahlins, 2013).

Sahlins (2013) implied that the establishment of the Confucius Institute is a “setup,” a “national scheme,” rather than a legal partnership. By using the Confucius Institute at his own university as an example, he claims that the language used in the constitution and bylaws of the Confucius Institute are very tricky, so that some administrators are not “aware of its provisions.” And as for America, the reason why they still want to house “a China office” is the money: “Directly or indirectly, but ever-increasingly, American institutions of higher learning are heavily dependent on Chinese money.” However, Sahlins did not dig further on what kind of money that the American institution has received from China, how much, how host institutions use the money, and whether this “Chinese money” would make a big difference or not.

Sahlins ended his article by providing the possible actions that universities which are “trapped” in the same predicament of hosting a Confucius Institute on campus such as the University of Chicago and other universities should take, in order to combat with the China power. He suggested that the Confucius Institute hosts should take the lead in reversing course,

the issues involved are larger than their own particular interests: by hosting a Confucius Institute, they have become engaged in the political and propaganda efforts of a foreign government in a way that contradicts the values of free inquiry and human welfare to which they are otherwise committed.

In terms of academic freedom. Hartig's study (2012) on the Confucius Institutes in Australia did confirm the problem of self-censorship. Although there are no restrictions, and the professors in universities would not want to promote Chinese agenda on purpose, based on their past experiences of dealing with the Chinese, they would try to avoid bring up sensitive topics. In addition, they would not want to risk losing money from China by covering anti-Chinese topics. Hartig also did not think that the Confucius Institute might not have a large influence on China's image. "As long as the Chinese government is still arresting human rights lawyers, is censoring journalists and is covering up disasters and the like, all efforts by the Confucius Institutes to shape China's image can only hit a wall (Hartig, 2012).

Siow holds a different point of view toward the large number of the Confucius Institutes and their potential negative influence. She pointed out that even though the center is named after Confucius, the study of Confucianism is hardly ever on the agenda. Therefore, it not fair to say that the center is trying to steer clear of politics and ideology (Siow, 2011). In addition, Siow also identified many operational and programming problems within Hanban, it would be inaccurate to think that the Institutes have the sway and influence that is commensurate with its numbers. Last but not least, Siow pointed out that Hanban's annual budget for the Confucius Institutes in 2009 was only US\$145 million, and 145 million is much less than the \$1billion that the British Council spends on its programs; it is also less than the budget of Hollywood movie

Avatar which is \$237 million. Thus, it would be false to conclude that China has been spending massively on these institutes (Siow, 2011).

Whittaker (2013) studied how the Confucius Institutes have been framed and presented to the America public, by doing a content analysis of all the articles, transcripts of mass media broadcasts relating with the Confucius Institute. The results suggest that, first, the Confucius Institutes are being framed neutrally, if not positively. The overwhelming use of words such as “language,” “culture,” and “teach” indicate that the Confucius Institutes have been framed to emphasize that they are culturally outreach programs rather than menacing organizations; second, even when concerns are raised about the Confucius Institutes, the issue at hand tends to be related with soft power competition rather than concerns over preserving academic integrity.

He also held the opinion that the Confucius Institutes will be an integral part of China’s strategy to shape American policy towards China. “If met with less local resistance, the Confucius Institutes will be able to promote Chinese language and culture more effectively, making China less threatening as a whole to the American public (p. 102).” In addition, Whittaker states that the primary activities of the Confucius Institutes are educational, “being so frequently associate with a topic that signals a threat to American interests, not only negatively affects Chinese foreign affairs and grand strategy, but also the academic institutions that rely on the Confucius Institute for language program funding (p. 106).

Hubbert (2014) used an anthropological approach to analyze the receptivity of one of the programs sponsored by the Confucius Institutes. She concludes that students would more likely continue to learn Chinese as a foreign language but would be less likely to go to China. Hubbert served as one of the chaperon teachers who went on a two--week trip to a number of high schools. She discovered that, although China uses “witnessing the modern” and “embodied

performance of tradition” these two mechanisms as the intended production of Chinese soft power as demonstrated during the tour, they both failed to resonate with students. In her case, the “chineseness” of the Chinese language is less relevant for its link to “China” than it is for its ability to differentiate students, who find themselves confronting a recession-prone society in which successful futures are increasingly privatized within rapid shift of late capitalism that quickly make certain kinds of knowledge obsolete as a source of future success (p. 42). Taken Hubbert’s research one step further, Albrow (2015) suggested that these kinds of “image-projection” soft-power strategies often undermine intercultural dialogue, while promoting boundary—patrolling discourse that serves more to re-entrench national differences, than to cross them. He then proposed that policy makers should consider the diplomatic potential of proliferating US—China transnational and collaborative advocacy networks. This way the network would generate more shared frames rather than agonistic arguments.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the Confucius Institute?

Sub questions: How is it being set up? What does it do? What role does it play on campus? How does it integrate into American universities? To what extent does it serve as a tool for Chinese political propaganda?

2. Why would the U.S. host institution want to house a Confucius Institute?

Sub questions: How does this U.S. institution benefit (directly and indirectly) from having a Confucius Institute on campus?

3. What appear to be the future trends toward this Confucius Institute in its host institution?

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Rationale for Using the Case Study as My Methodology

Thomas (2011) offers the following definition of a case study: "Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame — an object — within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates." The case study approach can allow for explanation of reasons for the problem, the background of a situation, insights into the causes of innovation failure or success as well as for discussion of alternatives (Merriam,

1988). As a research methodology, the case study approach is used in many situations, to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, and related phenomena (Yin, 2009).

In addition, many scholars argue about using both qualitative and quantitative methods as a strength of doing case studies. Yin (1994) explained that a case study is a comprehensive research strategy that deals with situations “in which there will be more variables of interest than data points,” and it “relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to be converged in a triangulating fashion,” and it benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.” Stake (2000) also argued that a case study is not so much a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. However, most case study researchers (Yin 1994; Stake 2000; Stoecker 1991) explained that a case study can employ the best of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.2.2. Multiple Case Studies

Multiple case studies are a variant that includes two or more observations of the same phenomenon. This variant enables replication—that is, using multiple cases to confirm independently emerging constructions and propositions. It also enables extension—that is, using the cases to reveal complementary aspects of the phenomenon (Santos & Eisenhardt 2004).

Although each Confucius Institute is the same in terms of its structure, management and mission, each Confucius Institute also differs from its geographical location, programming and organizational culture. For example, some Confucius Institutes are under the big International Institute/Center umbrella, whereas some of them are set to be independent “China offices” on

campus. This gives each Confucius Institute some unique characteristics as different U.S. institutions have different missions and expectations in terms of their internationalization plan. Some Confucius Institutes offer quite a variety of programs on campus such as a lecture series, while some put more efforts in the communities. Moreover, as mentioned above, there is one executive Director assigned by the host institution and an assistant Director from the Chinese partner university (which is designated by the headquarters: Hanban), the Confucius Institute is in fact, under the management of two bosses--a China boss and a U.S. boss. My pilot study result shows that, in some centers the U.S. Directors have autonomy to design and operate programs, whereas in some of the centers the assistant Director from China is also involve heavily in program design and operation.

Doing a case study can best answer ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions. Besides, various stakeholders in these cases such as the program staff members, university administrators, and the Hanban would benefit from the results of this study. Generally speaking, the case study is the most suitable methodology for this research in that it could best help the investigator to answer the research questions and provide in-depth knowledge about the Confucius Institutes at their U.S. host institutions to invested and concerned individuals and organizations.

In my study, each case would be a particular Confucius Institute. To find out the differences in programming and goals of the centers across the nation, I selected four Confucius Institutes in different geographical locations in the U.S.: two from the West Coast (North West and South West), one from the Midwest and one from the East Coast. The reason to do a purposive sampling is under the assumption that each Confucius Institute operates different programs according to its geographical and population differences, and the culture of the center varies from one location to another. This assumption was also tested during my visits to my four sites.

In addition, I spent almost a week in at each location to ensure I have enough time to collect data in depth. Many overlapping themes have appeared after my second site visit, therefore I decided that four sites are sufficient for my in-depth data collections and are representative enough for the Confucius Institutes in America in general.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Due to the context of this case, I decided to use the following data collection methods in this case study: informal interviews, document analysis, participant-observation, and semi-structured interviews. Interviews produce rich multifaceted data that go beyond factual information from documents. I expect this triangulation strategy could reduce the risk that my conclusion will reflect only biases or limitations of a specific source or method, and also allows me to gain a broader and more secure understanding of issues which I am investigating.

3.3.1. Document Analysis

Document analysis is employed to help set the framework for conducting and understanding interviews which will be conducted in the later stage of this study. Use of both document analyses and interviews also contributes to triangulation of the data and helps identify the discrepancies in publicly announced and real practices.

First, before I visited my four sites, I initially sought to gain a general picture of the Confucius Institutes by surveying all the official websites, of the Confucius Institutes in America, their annual reports, and the growing literature on Confucius Institutes, particularly the controversies surrounding them. I have categorized the information I collected from browsing

their websites. The categories include variety of the programs offered, partners in China, time when the partnership began, management structure and position/function in host institutions. I also made a call to the centers if the information online is limited. The purpose of doing a document analysis before visiting sites, is to guide and tailor my in-depth semi-structured interview, so that the questions and data in particular I seek were contextualized.

3.3.2 Participant-Observation

According to Yin (2009), participant-observation is a special mode of observation that goes beyond simply being a passive observer. Instead, the researcher is able to act in a variety of roles within a case study situation and may actually participate in the events being studied. Participant-observation provides certain unusual opportunities for collecting rich case-study data. The most distinctive opportunity is to gain access to the events and groups; another distinctive opportunity that participant-observation offers is the ability to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone inside the case study rather than external to it. Other opportunities would arise, too, such as the researcher will have the ability to manipulate minor events, and get to know a group of people or individual in the case.

In this case, I did participant-observations in the various programs which the Confucius Institute offers on four campuses. The A, B, C, and D Confucius Institutes offer a variety of programs on campus such as non-credit Mandarin class, lecture series, Mandarin contest, Mandarin teacher training and cultural showcase. I participated in some of the above programs, observed how the programs are carried out and who the participants are. Meanwhile, I also talked to the participants to gain an idea of how they like the programs. Other than participating

in on-campus programs, I also spent time in the Confucius Institute offices on the A, B, C and D campus. This is to make sense to the staff member's daily routine and the office culture.

Through doing participant-observation, I gained a deeper understanding of what exactly the Confucius Institute is doing on campus, how they carry out the programs and the extent to which the political agenda is embedded in these programs.

3.3.3. Semi-Structured Interviews

After doing participant-observations, I carried out several in-depth interviews with the Confucius Institute administrators as well as the university administrators who were directly involved in the establishment and the management of the Confucius Institute at A, B, C and D universities. The reason why I decided to use semi-structured interviews is because the questions are mostly open-ended. This gives the researcher, and the interviewees the flexibility to explore the topics, and also allows them to play an active role in the information that is conveyed.

From the interviews, I was successfully obtained a sense of how the partnership was established, how the center is financed, and the vision for the Confucius Institute with its larger academic structure. I also learned about the changes that the Confucius Institute has brought to A, B, C and D University, and what these changes mean to them. Additionally, each Confucius Institute establishes a partnership with a Chinese university, I additionally understood what the role and images of the Chinese assistant Director, in the eyes of the host institutions, and what the working dynamics are like between these two directors.

Here are some sample interview questions:

1. How was the partnership established? Who were the decision makers?

2. What is the role of the Confucius Institute at its host University? What is its main function?
3. Where does the funding come from? How is the funding being used?
4. What is the role of Chinese Director at the Confucius Institute? What are the differences between the American Director and the Chinese Director in terms of job duties?
5. From the perspective of university administrator, is the host institution satisfied with the achievements made by the Confucius Institute so far? Why?
6. What do you think of the controversy about the Confucius Institute? Is the partnership between your university and Hanban going to be sustained for the long run?

3.4 Data Analysis

I relied on Nye's soft power theory to analyze the documents related with the Confucius Institute, field notes of my observations as well as my interview responses and to look for patterns and themes.

To answer my first research question about the nature of the Confucius Institute, I synthesized all the current literature on Confucius Institute and available information on its mission statement, host institute requirement, and by-laws, if accessible. In addition, data from participant-observation of its on campus programs and interviews with administrators also contributed to answer this research question.

Secondly, to answer my second research question on the reason why U.S. institutions would host a Confucius Institute, I primarily analyzed the data from participant-observation and interviews. Data from participant-observation provided me a deeper understanding of the actual audiences and targeted audiences of the Confucius Institute's programs, as well as the impacts that

the programs have on their participants from the participants' perspectives. Data from interviews allowed me to gain an understanding of what has the Confucius Institute brought to A, B, C and D universities from an administrator's perspective, as well as their attitudes toward the presence of the Confucius Institute on campus.

Last but not least, to answer my research question on the future trends of the Confucius Institute in America, I mainly looked at the data from interviews with the administrators, both from the four universities and the Confucius institutes. This data provides me with a big picture of people's attitudes toward the Confucius Institute in general. It will also will help me to understand whether this China's soft power strategy is working in the U.S. or not. The interviews with administrators from four universities and the American Directors of the Confucius Institutes will provide me with their attitude and vision of the Confucius Institute in long term from the host institution's perspective with more detail; the interviews with the China Directors would allow me to understand China's attitude toward their current partnership with the three university, and China's plan and future move for the Confucius Institute as their soft power agenda on an U.S. campus as well as in America in general.

My coding analysis consists of three rounds. First, in my preliminary analysis of my field notes, I first loosely coded my data into "U.S. institute as a beneficiary," "China as a beneficiary," and "others as a beneficiary." In my second round of analysis, following my three categories codes "U.S. institute as a beneficiary", "China as a beneficiary", and "others as beneficiary." I have identified evidence which would fit into the above three categories. They are: the presence of the Confucius Institute on campus; the American Director has the autonomy in programming and administration; programs in the Confucius Institute at American institution, emphasize on language and culture promotion, the formats and delivery of different programs are largely

depending on local culture, demographical characteristic, American Director's background and interests, and local needs. I have identified the purposes of all the programs at the Confucius Institute, and potential audiences and beneficiaries for each program. I have also identified the main reason why the American institutions are interested in having a Confucius Institute on campus—the attraction lies in the charm of China itself and the tangible (both financial and human resource-wise) supports from China.

In the last round of analysis, I used a bottom- up approach to analyze my data in order to see convergences and divergences across my four Confucius Institute sites, and more common themes emerged. For instance, the Confucius Institute suffers from its long-term sustainability, without Hanban's support, it is possible that American host institution would not fund the Confucius Institutes, and is unlikely that most of the Confucius Institutes would survive by themselves. Hanban, as Confucius Institutes' headquarter, also suffers from establishing an exhaustive evaluation system for the Confucius Institutes abroad. From here I landed on my central assertion: the Confucius Institute project at A/B/C/D University has created a win-win situation for both China and the U.S.; however, the sustainability of the Confucius Institute is largely depending on the localization of each Confucius Institute, and Hanban needs to improve its management so that CIs abroad can be developed and supported healthily and strategically.

CHAPTER FOUR: INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDIES

4.1 Case A Report

Founded in 2006, the Confucius Institute (CI) at University A is located on the West Coast. Confucius Institute used to be located in Bush Hall along with other units under the big umbrella of the International Institute. Unlike other units at the International Institute, which the central foci are area studies and research projects, Confucius Institute at University A offers a variety of language and culture learning programs on campus, as well as in surrounding communities. In 2015, the Confucius Institute was relocated to the Art School building, which is a separate building from the International Institute. It has been said (but never proved) that the Confucius Institute moved out of the International Institute building for political and administrative reasons.

There are four full-time employees in the office. Janet is the Director, she is a Caucasian American; Mr. Zhang is the assistant Director, who is appointed directly by China; Hailey and Jing are both program managers. Jing is Chinese and has been working for the Confucius Institute at University A for almost five years. As I am writing up my report, Jing was promoted to Assistant Director.

The time I visited Confucius Institute, it was still located at the International Institute building, about to relocate to its new building. Therefore, when I walked into the building, it was hard to tell if it there was a Chinese learning center there. The hallway was full of moving boxes and stationery. However, once I entered the office, I was able to discern from the Chinese cultural decorations around the room and on the wall that this was a Chinese-related space.

Main assertions from this case study

1. The charm of China as a fast-developing economic entity is growing. The Confucius Institute at University A serves as China's propaganda tool, and is also a product of diplomacy.
2. Because the Chinese Director is not involved in office management and programming, Janet, as the head of the Confucius Institute at University A, has the autonomy to use her creativity and expertise in programming.
3. The diverse programs in the Confucius Institute at University A not only emphasize language and culture promotion, but also stresses empowering the under-represented local population in inner-city areas. This also makes the Confucius Institute at University A different from other traditional Confucius Is, as it has a strong social justice focus.
4. Hanban Headquarters has always been explicit about its political intention and position; yet, they are also open-minded about what they can offer, not just what they can get out of the project.

Assertion One: The charm of China as a fast-developing economic entity is growing. The Confucius Institute at University A serves as China's propaganda tool, and is also a product of diplomacy.

Although the Confucius Institute at University A is one of the units at the International Institute (an academic department which mainly focuses on area research and academic exchange), it shares a different goal from the other units in the International Institute at University A. The Confucius Institute is not a research-oriented academic unit; instead it does programming on campus and in local communities. In this regard, why would University A want to host such a center, if its main purpose does not seem to align with the goals of the

International Institute in general? From Chinese Director Zhang's perspective, this is America's recognition of China's soft power, and a diplomatic action.

The interview with Mr. Zhang took place in his office in the Asian Language and Culture department building. Mr. Zhang did not work in the same office space with American Director Janet, for his main duty is to teach language classes (the reason will be further elaborated later). During the interview, Mr. Zhang expressed his personal unfamiliarity with Janet, the American Director, and his lack of close involvement and concrete knowledge in the programs that Confucius Institute at University A offers. However, when asked about China related matters, he seemed to be more knowledgeable, comfortable and eager to talk. Therefore, my interview with Mr. Zhang mainly focused on his opinion of why American Universities would like to host CI. Specifically, he offered a Chinese perspective. In the following quote, J refers to me, and Zhang refers to Chinese Director Mr. Zhang.

J: Did Hanban ever say anything about why it would like to collaborate with University A?

Zhang: With all the institutions who offer to host the Confucius Institute, their Chancellors have to consent. University A submitted a proposal to host a Confucius Institute, which means its chancellor agreed to this endeavor, and then Hanban approved it. University A is a very reputable large public institution, and has a great impact in the west coast. Collaborating with University A would no doubt be beneficial and helpful to Confucius Institute's development. In return, the Confucius Institute is a culturally diplomatic organization, and China provides monetary support. Plus, it is China. China has such a strong economy, and so much money, so of course University A would say yes. Now you heard the first

Lady Michelle is going to China by herself. There was no such thing as “First Lady Diplomacy” before Michelle Obama visits China. This is the evidence of China becoming stronger and stronger, particularly in economics. President Obama definitely knows what President Xi is thinking, President Xi in return, I’m sure, understands what President Obama wants. But to avoid conflict and find the common ground is the key to this. In this regard, why not do something that is mutually beneficial for both countries?

Mr. Zhang asserts that the reason why University A wants to have a “China office” is two-fold. First, China has become a large economic entity, in which its potential and strength are universally admitted. Secondly, money served as a “trigger” that attracted decision makers’ attention. Moreover, Mr. Zhang defined the nature of the Confucius Institute as “a cultural diplomatic organization.” He used Michelle Obama’s visit to China as an example of a diplomatic action. These evidences strengthen the diplomatic nature of the Confucius Institute. One phrase that Mr. Zhang repeated from this part of our interview was, “It’s China.” I sensed his implication behind the word “China,” believing that everyone recognizes China’s economic achievements and its dramatic rise in international status. He inferred that when China reaches out to you, you want to maintain a good diplomatic relationship. In the case of the Confucius Institute, China provides money and resources to America. Mr. Zhang was emphatic in saying that it is an offer that America should and will accept.

Assertion two: Because the Chinese Director is not involved in office management and programming, Janet, as the head of the Confucius Institute at University A, has the autonomy to use her creativity and expertise in programming.

Currently, four full-time employees in the Confucius Institute office represent University A: Executive Director Janet, Chinese Director Mr. Zhang, from their partner university in China, and two program managers, Hailey and Jing. The Confucius Institute is half-funded by Hanban (its headquarters) in China. The input ratio between the host institute and Hanban is 1:1. China offers direct cash for University A, and University A is responsible for providing office space and three full-time employees' salaries. This was confirmed by both Mr. Zhang and Jing, one of the program managers. Mr. Zhang's role at the host institution is to monitor how the funding is being used and to oversee the overall programming.

Interestingly, one major controversy with Confucius Institute is how the Chinese Directors, as representatives of Hanban, are steering the direction of Confucius Institute, and are in control of Confucius Institute. However, in this case, Chinese Director Mr. Zhang is not involved in any of the programming and administrative decisions; rather his office is located in the Asian Language and Culture Department building, away from the International Institute building. In this case, his main duties are to teach two Mandarin classes and participate in language-related research. The fact that Mr. Zhang is not involved in any administrative duties was also confirmed by Janet, Hailey, and Jing, as well as Mr. Zhang.

Janet and Jing gave different explanations of why Mr. Zhang is not involved in daily administration. Janet offered that, "He is on a J-1 visa, which does not allow him to actually do administrative work on campus, but only to do research and academic related stuff." Jing, one of the program managers, gave a more detailed reason and led me to confirm my assumption that Janet is the one in charge of the office. Janet's answer was more official; whereas, Jing's answer is more observant and personal, especially because Jing is a Chinese employee representing the host institution. Jing has been working at the Confucius Institute since its inception in 2007. My

conversation with Jing was spoken in Mandarin and it seemed that she is more comfortable in talking in her native language. The essence of her observation is that Mr. Zhang's English is not very good, so he is limited in interacting with the people of the Institute. When Hanban Headquarters sent him here, they wanted him to get involved. However, Mr. Zhang does not have a car, nor does he drive. He does not visit the off-campus sites because there are no Mandarin-speaking administrators at those sites. In Jing's opinion, it is because of Mr. Zhang's inability to fully function in an American working environment that rendered him limited in what he can offer. Jing revealed that it is not necessary for Hanban-sponsored Chinese Directors to be leaders within the Confucius Institute, because they represent Hanban and Hanban represents money. Mr. Zhang also indirectly confirmed his non-participation in administration and Janet's sole leadership in the office; yet, with a different explanation. Director Zhang stated that Hanban encourages each office to develop its own characteristics. His focus is on cultural exchange. Since Janet has a background in Chinese theater, she enjoys planning and executing such programs and cultural exhibitions. He was clear that other Institutes tend to organize a lot of academic symposia.

Mr. Zhang confirmed that Janet had complete autonomy in the office; he also recognized Janet's art background and creativity in programming. Hailey (the other program manager) corroborated that a lot of the programs are because of Janet's connections and background in art. This, together with Mr. Zhang's words, indicated that Janet's leadership position in the office provides her with space and flexibility to execute her ideas and preferences. This finding is very important evidence in response to the claim that the Chinese Director is the one running the office. In the case of University A, Janet's leadership position implies that Hanban is not

manipulating what the Confucius Institute at University A is doing, even though they are providing the money to sustain the program.

Assertion three: The diverse programs in the Confucius Institute at University A not only emphasize language and culture promotion, but also stresses empowering the under-represented local population in inner-city areas. This also makes the Confucius Institute at University A different from other traditional Confucius Institutes, as it has a strong social justice focus.

By browsing the Confucius Institute at University A's website, one could see that the center offers a great variety of programs, both on campus and in the communities. The major components of the programs include language, culture, and academics. At first they looked quite similar to the language and culture programs that other Confucius Institutes offer, yet upon a closer look, all the programs are social-justice oriented. This characteristic of the Confucius Institute at University A makes it China's propaganda tool, as a foreign center that helps with local social issues. In this regard, under-represented local populations, particularly programs with students from inner-city schools, benefit from the Confucius Institute.

One of the programs that American Director Janet feels proudest of is the after-school program in R High School. R High School is located in a low socio-economic status community near downtown City A. The majority of the student body is Latino and Black. The reasons why R School was selected as one of the Confucius classrooms are that it is an inner-city high school without the capacity to provide foreign language learning opportunities, and Singer Will's charity foundation focuses on the education equality issues in that area (because Will is originally from City A), and they have reached out to the Confucius Institute and agreed to financially support the after-school Mandarin learning program. Students learn Mandarin and

Chinese culture for a semester, and during the summer break they go to China on scholarships for two weeks to experience inclusion into the Chinese culture.

R School suffers from its poor financial situation. The infrastructure of the school looked old, and the Mandarin class was held in one of the “bungalows.” The classroom has no projector, or any other kind of electronic device, except a TV. However, all the students in that class showed interest in learning, and were fully engaged in class from beginning to end. The after-school program serves as an empowerment, both mentally and economically, to the students. Citing Janet’s words, “If we could use the Chinese money to take care of the students who we Americans could not take care of, why not?” Janet did exactly what she said. This after-school program, from a micro perspective, showed that Confucius Institute is creating a win-win situation for both China and the U.S.

Other than the R School program, there are other social justice-oriented programs as well. For example, the Kyle All-Star program serves inner-city kids; B elementary used to be a Title One school, and after the successful launch of the Chinese immersion program, it has now become a popular and competitive school with a waiting list for the immersion program. In this coming academic year, the Confucius Institute will partner with continuation high schools and A County Office of Education to give more under-represented students a chance to learn a new language and its culture and arts.

There are two reasons why the Confucius Institute at University A has a social justice focus. First, as discussed, Janet has the autonomy and power in program design; therefore, the programs at the Confucius Institute represent her ideas and preferences, not the ideas of the Chinese Director. This is critical because it proves that even though China is the money provider, it is not dictating the Americans to do things that only China would benefit from. Moreover,

Janet thinks she is a social justice person and this is reflected in her experiences and values. Janet's husband was born and raised in India and Janet's sister-in-law is Chinese. Janet has a passion for intercultural communication and a strong motivation to let Americans realize how America-centric they are, and to make a change through her cultural exchange programs. In addition, she is very self-conscious about being a Caucasian, and how to use the privileges she has to help minorities.

The second reason why the Confucius Institute at University A has a social justice focus is the geographic and demographic characteristics of City A. According to one of the managers, City A has extreme poverty issues and a very different population from other "traditional" cities and states. Therefore, Janet's background and her training in art is a good fit for the characteristics of City A. This match has shaped the Confucius Institute at University A to its present structure and programs.

Assertion four: Hanban Headquarters has always been explicit about its political intention and position; yet, they are also open-minded about what they can offer, not just what they can get out of the project.

The controversy surrounding the Confucius Institute has mainly focused on China's soft power agenda. Particularly, Hanban is seen as the representation of China's aggression and censorship. Nevertheless, the staff members' attitude toward Hanban is surprisingly positive. Janet feels it is unfair to say that the Confucius Institute is just China's soft power tool. She believes that what she is doing has nothing to do with politics. She has a positive attitude toward Hanban, and regardless of whether the Confucius Institute is part of China's political agenda or not, each time when she attends the annual world Confucius Institute conference in Beijing, she

feels as if she is engaging in a United Nations forum. She shared that she loves connecting and communicating with people from around the world who share the same “cultural bridge” mission as she does.

Jing commented that Hanban is “actually supportive, and has become more and more flexible with stuff.” She referred to the issue of Mandarin teachers as an example. According to Jing, there are still a few teachers who are trained by Hanban to come here to teach, but the Confucius Institute at University A discovered that it is better to train teachers here. Presently, the majority of their teachers are local (students majoring in a teaching credential program here in City A). The Confucius Institute also arranges student teaching internship opportunities in A County. Jing also emphasized that it took some time to negotiate with Hanban about whether it is better to use local teachers or those from China. It took a few years for Hanban to agree. In Jing’s opinion, lately Hanban has been modifying, adapting and learning; they are not as mysterious or arbitrary according to some of the controversial claims.

Jing’s comment on Hanban was also corroborated by Mr. Zhang. In Mr. Zhang’s opinion, Hanban, has been very open about potential claims on China’s political agenda, and has also been open and flexible on how to run programs at Confucius Institutes abroad. According to Zhang,

The Confucius Institute is a partnership between China and the United States; therefore, America will compromise its academic freedom, for instance, to not talk about Tibet and Falun Gong. This is inevitable. I think both parties have to eventually come to a compromise and agreement. For example, if Tibet is a sensitive topic, then let us try not to talk about it. When they once organized a symposium on Nixon, a lot of famous people came, like the ambassador, the York

General and so on. During the discussion, there were some anti-Chinese government voices and the Chinese Ambassador was there as well. But this is not a problem, because here we are in the United States. If you do stuff here like you do it in China, following every single instruction from the highest hierarchy, it is not possible. So we are a lot more flexible when doing things in America. And Hanban is fully aware of these issues. (Zhang, 2016)

In Mr. Zhang's opinion, China expects that there will be different voices and obstacles, and has been very open about their political intentions. More importantly, Hanban has come to realize that by imposing China's ideology and values onto Americans is not going to make the Confucius Institute a successful and effective way of promoting its soft power. Throughout my interview with Mr. Zhang, the words, "win-win" and "mutually beneficial" were spoken often. He elaborated by carefully explaining that the cultural exchange is definitely not a one-way street. Indeed, China has been exporting their values, but when Chinese teachers come to America and live in America, Americans are sharing their values as well. The purpose of education on culture and values is to enhance mutual understanding and cultural tolerance. Values and ideologies are the core of culture. In recent years, China's economic development has changed dramatically, both economically and ideologically. Mr. Zhang believes that one cannot simply view China as the old communist country.

The Confucius Institute project creates a win-win situation by providing a window and a bridge for two cultures to communicate. Mr. Zhang, Janet, Jing and Hailey believe that Hanban is trying hard to promote Chinese language, culture and China's national image through the Confucius Institutes; however, they acknowledge that Hanban

is also looking for what they can offer to cater to the needs of the local population, and is willing to do things “in your way” instead of “do it in my way because money comes from me.” Hanban’s agreement to use local teachers and allowing Janet to lead the office are proof of Hanban’s flexibility and open-mindedness.

Janet also mentioned the phrase “win-win” a couple of times in my interview with her. Her understanding of a “win-win” situation is that there is nothing wrong with the Confucius Institute promoting China’s soft power, while at the same time using available resources to do something beneficial for both countries. Janet defended her comment by saying that the Confucius Institute “uses Chinese money to help those kids who even Americans would not be willing to take care of.” This statement is aligned with her after-school program in R high school and other Institutes that offer social justice-orientated programs. Overall, in the case of University A, it is fair to conclude that those working at the Confucius Institute believe that they have created a win-win situation for both China and the United States.

4.2 Case B Report

University B is an East Coast university. It is a respected research university that has great political and geographical influence. The Confucius Institute at University B shares many similarities with University A. First, it is located on a large campus; it is also located in its International building at the corner of campus where other departments like Foreign Language, Culture Research and the International Services Center are located. A small difference is that the Confucius Institute at University B decorated its hallway and office doors with traditional and distinctively red Chinese artifacts such as lanterns, paper cutouts, and spring festival couplets. It was an obvious sign for guests or visitors that they were at the Chinese Cultural Center.

Since University B's campus was large, it took me quite some time to find the location of the Confucius Institute. I was warmly greeted by Judy, the office coordinator, who serves as the receptionist at the front desk. Like University A, the Confucius Institute at University B also has a small team. There are three full-time employees at the Confucius Institute: Chinese Director Xun, who came from China; Office coordinator Judy, who was appointed by University B; and a Chinese teacher named Huang, who is from China. She also serves as an administrative assistant to the Chinese Director. The American Director of the Confucius Institute who was appointed by University B is Karen. She is the Dean of College XYZ. Both American Director Karen and Office Coordinator Judy are Caucasian Americans. Unlike Xun, Judy, and Huang, Karen works part-time at Confucius Institute. Karen has her own office in the building of College XYZ and communicates primarily through emails with Chinese Director Xun and Office Coordinator Judy. Although Karen is only a part-time director at Confucius Institute, she is a powerful leader at Confucius Institute at University B. This will be made clear within this report. University B also resides in a small office. The Confucius Institute owns two offices: one is a small independent office for Chinese Director Xun; the other is a bigger space for Judy, Huang, visitors, and guests.

They also share a conference room with the Spanish Center next door. Almost all the events are held in other larger spaces both on and off campus.

Main assertions from this case study

1. Schools in America would like to host a Confucius Institute on their campuses because there is the demand for learning Mandarin, and an interest in understanding China and its culture.
2. The variety of the programs offered by the Confucius Institute is largely dependent on the local needs and educational background of the directors.
3. To some extent, the Confucius Institute at University B serves as China's soft power diplomacy. However, it is a friendly international collaboration project that is under a mutual and legal agreement. Both parties understood all necessary legal conditions as well as political implications, then gave their consent.
4. The short-term future of this particular Confucius Institute is promising, yet long-term sustainability seems to be a concern for China and the United States.

Assertion one: Schools in America would like to host a Confucius Institute on their campuses because there is the demand for learning Mandarin, and an interest in understanding China and its culture.

When Chinese Director Xun was asked about Confucius Institute's core attraction to US schools, he answered, "It all lies in the need: the need to learn Chinese, the need to build connections and communicate with China, the need to understand China's development and its society. There needs to be a window through which Americans can see China".

University B's interest in China.

As mentioned, the Confucius Institute at University B is geographically located in the building of the International Institute. However, administratively, the Confucius Institute at University B is operated directly under the President's office. The Confucius Institute at University B was originally a part of the International Institute, then separated from the International Institute and relocated to the president's office per the president's request. Before University B opened the Confucius Institute, there was a China center that specialized in Chinese outreach and research. With the opening of the Confucius Institute at University B, there were now two parallel offices that focused on China.

The president's personal support and attention to the Confucius Institute is confirmed by every employee in the Confucius Institute's office. According to Office Administrator Judy, who has been working at the Confucius Institute since its inception, the president's attention for the Confucius Institute is both personal and strategic, saying, "He has a genuine interest in China, as he is, in part, of Chinese heritage. He feels a bigger appreciation of China. He feels that the university has so much to gain from the partnership, especially in the areas of the advancement of technology in education. He wants to step up our commitment to China, so he wanted the Confucius Institute under his office to have direct access" (2016).

University B's interest in China and the Chinese language dates back more than ten years. The president at the time wanted to establish educational ties on campus with China. He met with Madam Liu Chuan Sheng about the partnership between Hanban and University B. Madam Sheng was one of the key persons at the Chinese Ministry of Education. According to Judy, by that time State B (State B is the state where University B is located) already had a great relationship with China. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that there was already an established

interest in China before the Confucius Institute was opened, and the support from the current president offered the Confucius Institute an opportunity to experience fast and steady growth.

The local communities' interest in China and the Chinese language

Similar to most Confucius Institutes, the Confucius Institute at University B offers programs on and off campus. Integrating with the local populations is one of the most important goals for the Confucius Institute. When the American Director, Karen, talked about the perceived benefits of having a Confucius Institute on campus, she emphasized particularly the word “connection”—a connection not only between China and the United States, but also among the communities in the surrounding suburban areas. Karen elaborated on why she thinks that the connections built by the Confucius Institute is a perceived benefit for America. Karen believes that they have an opportunity to make connections with China, and specifically with their partnership with Kunlun (pseudonym for Confucius Institute’s partner university in China), and a lot of other people who come in to their university. All of these opportunities helped them to grow their knowledge and understanding about China, the Chinese language, and culture. Karen knew that President R (current President) wanted to have a Confucius Institute because of this, especially since there is a large Chinese community nearby who are interested in sending their children to the Confucius Institute.

Indeed, the interest from local communities mentioned by Karen is proven through data provided by the Confucius Institute at University B. First, the Confucius Institute at University B is recognized as one of the top Chinese testing centers in the nation, and perhaps the world. The number of students taking HSK (*Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi*, a standardized test developed by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the most authoritative test on Mandarin Chinese) is the largest,

compared to other testing sites in the nation. There are about 1,000 students taking the HSK test and the YCT (Youth Chinese Test, which is also developed by Hanban). This is a great achievement to Hanban, considering the small percentage of people taking the HSK among all Chinese language learners. Because so many students signed up to take the HSK, Hanban awarded the Confucius Institute at University B the title of “Distinguished Confucius Institute.”

As introduced in Chapter One, other than Confucius Institutes in Universities, there are Confucius Classrooms that are sponsored by the Confucius Institute in the same state. Most Confucius Classrooms are located in K-12 schools that offer Mandarin as a foreign language or part of an immersion program. It is called the Confucius Classroom simply because the local Confucius Institute provides teacher support, training opportunities, teaching materials, and other monetary support if needed. The Confucius Institute at University B has thirteen Confucius classrooms in the local schools, which is a lot when compared to other Institutes. For example, The Confucius Institute at University A has five Confucius Classrooms. According to teacher Huang, the Confucius classrooms frequently asked the Confucius Institute for help in recruiting more Chinese teachers, as there was always a need.

Office Coordinator Judy also commented on the receptivity and increasing demand for Chinese learning in the area, “In an early stage of the Confucius classroom, it was significant to have one Chinese teacher in one school; ten years later, some schools have four Chinese teachers, and then suddenly everyone is taking Chinese language classes, and they are going to hire another teacher next year” (2016). She further explained the importance and demand of learning Chinese due to the unique characteristic of where University B is located: “I am not sure if you can call it exponential growth, but this mushrooming phenomenon is good, especially in this area where Chinese is going to be very useful. State B has international connections, we

have government organizations, the State Department. We have a Foreign Embassy Institute, think tanks, and NGOs (non-governmental organizations); all places where we need people who can speak Chinese. The potential for growth is excellent” (2016).

The Confucius Institute at University B receives support from Hanban and the university, and is sponsored by multiple organizations from the local communities. In their conference room, there are many pictures hanging on the walls of past events. Chinese Director Xun shared that almost every event they hosted received great popularity. Particularly, the cultural performances and exhibitions were always the first to sell out. The locals were receptive about the Confucius Institute as well. American Director Karen is aiming to make this Confucius Institute the flagship Confucius Institute in the nation. In the future, the Confucius Institute at University B will continue to expand its capacity to be able to host more events and offer more classes both on campus and in the community.

Assertion two: The variety of the programs offered by the Confucius Institute is largely dependent on the local needs and educational background of the directors.

Most Confucius Institutes offer both programs on campus and in the surrounding communities. In University A, due to the American Director’s background in Asian art and drama, the Confucius Institute focuses more on developing charity programs while showcasing and learning Chinese culture in communities rather than on campus. In the case of University B, things are quite different. Most of their main programs are in teaching, learning, and testing Chinese. Showcasing the Chinese culture seems to be a complementary part of the learning process.

With the Confucius Institute at University B, standardized testing is an important component. Staff members spend their efforts in promoting and implementing the HSK test. The Confucius Institute promotes recruiting teachers and creating a healthy and sustainable Chinese learning program. They took advantage of partnering with the College of Education and established a Mandarin teaching credential program, and made themselves self-sustainable if ever Hanban cuts its teacher supply.

The backgrounds of Chinese Director Xun, and American Director Karen, along with their aligned vision toward the development of the Confucius Institute, are the main reasons why this Confucius Institute is language-learning focused. Chinese Director Xun specifically talks about how he brought his own background and vision into the programming of the Confucius Institute. Director Xun believes that the different programming throughout the Confucius Institutes is due to the specific states where they are located, to include the culture and environment. Based on the distinct background of each director, new ideas and development plans are offered. As a teacher, Director Xun brings his background in teaching Mandarin to foreigners. Accordingly, he focuses more on language acquisition. He believes that the ultimate purpose of the Confucius Institute is to teach Mandarin, which will naturally include information on the Chinese culture. He does admit, however, that only doing cultural activities is not healthy for the center, “Relying on an exhibition or a show does not sustain the center; these activities cost money, they do not save any money” (Xun, 2016). Xun revealed that their assessments show excellent results. Confucius Institute uses the international standardized test called the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) test. It rates Chinese language proficiency while evaluating Chinese language abilities for non-native Chinese speakers in terms of using the Chinese language in their daily, academic and professional lives (<http://www.chinaeducenter.com>). The Confucius

Institute encourages all the people in the network to take the test to earn a certificate. Students, teachers, and the assessment tool constitute a full circle of a language academy program. Xun's opinion is that overall, their method of execution and their direction is suitable for their current situation. He qualifies his belief by adding, "The reasons behind having a clear focus on language instruction is two-fold: one is my background in linguistics and language instruction; the other is that having language instruction is and should be the primary offering of a Confucius Institute from a managerial perspective" (Xun, 2106).

In addition to Director Xun's vision toward the Confucius Institute, American Director Karen also shares the same vision that the main focus of the Confucius Institute should be Chinese language learning. Teacher preparation, language classes of different levels, standardized tests, and competition are all ways to promote the Chinese language. The promotion of traditional and modern Chinese culture is of great importance in terms of serving as an aid for language learning. Therefore, the variety of programming and the direction of the Confucius Institute's development are dependent on both American and Chinese Director's personal interest, experiences, and also the need and receptivity of its students.

Assertion three: To some extent, the Confucius Institute at University B serves as China's soft power diplomacy. However, it is a friendly international collaboration project that is under a mutual and legal agreement. Both parties understood all necessary legal conditions as well as political implications, then gave their consent.

The Confucius Institute at University B is an open resource for all people who are interested in understanding and learning about the Chinese language and culture. However, the

fact that it is operating under the Ministry of Education has made it into a political propaganda tool under heated debate, particularly in Western society. To further understand the nature of the Confucius Institute, it is important to know how the American staff defines the Confucius Institute and whether it is operating under the strict bylaws, from a financial perspective. Coordinator Judy has been with the Confucius Institute since the very beginning, and reiterated that University B reached out to China for the partnership, and it was of “mutual interest.” Judy agrees that the Confucius Institute is a soft-power propaganda tool; however, she also thinks that there is mutual understanding and practicality. Judy states, “You can stretch that word, ‘soft power’ as far as you like. It is all part of mutual understanding. And if you want to take it, it is part of diplomacy and practicality. Parents and children have to go through soft-power diplomacy” (2016). American Director Karen shares a similar attitude. She compared Confucius Institute to the soft propaganda of the Peace Corps. “I think the American Peace Corp is soft propaganda, and in part, we want to show people what we do, we want them to learn about our culture and become interested in our country” (Karen, 2016). As employees representing University B, Karen and Judy acknowledged that the Confucius Institute is a tool for China’s soft-power propaganda. They also hold an opinion that the mutual benefits that the Confucius Institute offers is a lot more than the challenges it brings. “Through the Confucius Institute, a lot of people can be touched; and it helps the University and the state in general, to have others learn about Chinese language and cultures” (Judy, 2016).

While the Confucius Institute brings more good than harm, the risks are not to be ignored. The major risks for American host institutions are financial matters, legal matters pertaining to visa eligibility for Chinese teachers, and self-censorship. For the Confucius Institute at University B, the most effective way to minimize the risks is to strictly follow the bylaws and

university regulations. The financial piece was simple. According to Judy, the Confucius Institute started very small. University B pledged a certain amount of money and the Hanban Headquarters pledged a similar amount, and both parties signed an agreement. From the beginning, every funding-related decision has been approved by the University Legal Office. Since the Confucius Institute at University B is under the supervision of the President's office, all financing is handled "at the top," even though the American Director decides when, where, and how much money to use. According to Xun and Judy, American Director Karen is the primary investigator who has the sole authority to determine which programs to run and how much money to spend. Every proposal goes through Karen for her approval signature. Karen reports only to the President; she does not report to Hanban, nor the Chinese Ministry of Education.

Legal issues relate to the visa status of the Chinese teachers. A few years ago, there was a debate on whether the "J visa" (visiting scholar visa) should be granted to the Chinese language teachers sent from China by Hanban. The controversy was that J visas are only granted to visiting scholars who are required to work only in sponsoring host institutes. In the Chinese teachers' case, while most of their sponsoring host institutes are universities with Confucius Institutes, most teachers with J visas work in local schools, not in universities. By the letter of the law, the Chinese teachers who work in schools are not technically eligible to work legally in the United States. The notion that universities were sponsoring Chinese teachers was accordingly attacked by the media.

Since that incident, University B no longer sponsors J visas for all Chinese teachers. Instead, they are sponsored by other entities—mostly from the public school where they work. University B serves as a resource and teacher training center. The risk of creating self-censorship

is real, and the only way to deal with it is to “be careful.” When Karen was asked about her thinking toward the current controversies related to the Confucius Institute, she said that there are subjects what those at the Confucius Institute are discouraged to talk about. She wants to avoid controversy, but she believes in free speech and academic freedom. They have controlled agreements with Hanban, and they abide by them. She was clear in articulating that at this Confucius Institute they are careful to control their topics and discussions. She hesitated, then said, “It’s not that we control them, we are trying to maintain appropriate focus. We do not want to be told that we cannot talk about something” (2016). In truth, self-censorship is occurring at the Confucius Institute, and the agreement that both parties signed off on is not one-sided; it is a mutual legal agreement between Hanban and University B. Karen and Judy agree that, “the limitations exist, and we are careful. Inevitable compromises on certain issues will always exist” (Karen & Judy, 2016).

Judy was quick to explain how self-censorship is formed in some particular matters, “China did not say you cannot do this and that explicitly, it is subtler. I can talk about anything I want to, I just don’t make it a big political deal” (2016). Judy continued, “For public lectures, we would have to be careful with what types of titles we use. The whole Fa Lun Gong is very sensitive and I would probably not deliberately invite a practitioner and give a public talk because I would be criticized and then we might not receive any support for it. I know University B was criticized by China when they had the Dalai Lama come. China was not happy” (2016). Judy has learned that when doing international collaboration projects, especially between two countries with vastly different political systems and ideologies, there will be much compromise. Through the years, however, China has become more open and flexible in their “censorship

guidelines”. Without compromises from both sides, the Confucius Institute as an international collaborative project would not be thriving (Judy, 2016).

Assertion four: The short-term future of this particular Confucius Institute is promising, yet long-term sustainability seems to be a concern for China and the United States.

The year 2015 was the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of the Confucius Institute at University B. While there may be controversies pertaining to the Confucius Institutes, sustainability is happening. At the Confucius Institute at University B, they have signed another five-year plan with Hanban Headquarters. Confucius Institute at University B is continually expanding. A series of new programs will be offered, and the Confucius Institute office will move to another newly-built building in order to host large cultural events and exhibitions. American Director Karen has visualized this Confucius Institute to be a model, a flagship of all the Confucius Institutes in the world. Office Coordinator Judy is optimistic about the long-term development of the Institute. Confucius Institute at University B has established its own pipeline of funding and teacher support. Judy relayed a fundraising incident that happened several years ago. The visiting group who oversees and advises the Confucius Institute decided that in order to create a large amount of money that could generate interest enough to support the Confucius Institute, they would participate in a fundraising challenge. Of course, Hanban Headquarters had to agree to it because they were asking China to agree to a million-dollar match. If the representatives of the United States could raise a million dollars, China would match the money. It took a couple of years, as there is an office on campus that does outreach and fundraising, and they approached a few different people who agreed to give money over a five-year period. The million dollars was raised and they now have the endowment, with the money still growing.

Karen was certain that this was unique and that no other university had done that. The fundraising event is significant proof that the Confucius Institute is sustainable, and if one day Hanban pulls out their financial support, Confucius Institute will have the possibility of being self-sustainable in the future.

Another important sign of sustainability at the Confucius Institute at University B is its teacher pipeline. Shortage of Chinese teacher training is a common problem in the U.S. In fact, some of the Confucius classrooms closed their Chinese program because of no available qualified teachers. Since teaching Chinese is a relatively new foreign language class, it has been growing steadily. A Chinese language teacher pipeline didn't exist until universities began offering Chinese teaching credentialing programs. While the demand for learning Chinese is huge, the shortage of qualified teachers is a problem that hinders the development of Chinese language studies.

According to University B's website, the Center for Chinese Language Teacher Certification and Development was founded by the College of Education and the Confucius Institute in September, 2009, through a grant funded by Hanban. At that time, the Confucius Institute at University B created a teacher pipeline, and has been able to recruit teachers to fulfill the demands from local communities. Chinese Director Xun shared that the Chinese teacher certification program has a high employment rate due to the high demand of Chinese language learning.

The Chinese Director Xun, believes that the Confucius Institute would remain at University B and keep growing.

So far, I don't see anything to damage our partnership. Therefore, following every legal procedure, to continue is not a problem. And we obey all the rules and regulations here, I don't see that we do anything wrong. (Xun, 2016)

Director Xun said that “the Confucius Institute is an infant, not even a toddler.” In Xun's opinion, there are a lot of things Hanban can do better, such as in general management, program design, and teacher training. He believed that the most important issue is to develop a systematic growth plan for the Confucius Institute. After all these years, Hanban is still exploring possibilities, without answers on how to build a self-sustainable Confucius Institute. While the Confucius Institute continues to develop and expand after each term, it is imperative for Hanban and all the people at Confucius Institute to create long-term plans.

4.3 Case C Report

University C is a comprehensive research university, located in a college town in State C in the northwestern part of the United States. The population of College Town C is no more than 30,000 people. Accordingly, University C is the largest organization in town. When school is not in session, there are less than 20,000 people in the city. In terms of square footage, according to American Confucius Institute Director Mike, “the town is two by two, everybody knows everybody”, Mike asserts that State C is a very conservative state and lacks diversity. Most people in town are working in farming-related jobs. If they are not in farming, they are probably working for the University. University C is the one and only resource in town that brings in diversity and international events.

The Confucius Institute at University C is located in their main administration building. The Confucius Institute has two offices--a small office where two Chinese teachers work, and a larger office where the following people reside: Office Coordinator Justin, American Director Mike, and Chinese Director Hong. There are not much cultural or ethnic decorations in the hallway; however, there are some Chinese paintings and calligraphy art pieces in the larger office.

Unlike Case B, where American Director Karen works part-time for the Center, American Director Mike is a full-time employee of the Center. He just transitioned from working as a part-time director to full-time. The Confucius Institute at University C is at its early development stage. Even though it was founded in 2013, it did not start running effectively until late 2014, because of managerial issues in the hierarchy. All the staff members have only been working with the center for a year. Even though the Confucius Institute at University C has only been opened for one year, the variety of programs they offer are quite diverse: “for-credit”

Mandarin Chinese classes; Chinese food club on campus; free Chinese cultural events in local communities, especially at the farmers' market, free weekly movie night, and Tai Chi classes are all offered to faculty, college and high school students.

Because of the small population in College Town C, the number of students enrolled in Confucius Institute's programs are significantly lower, compared to other Confucius Institutes. Last year, there were about twenty to thirty students enrolled in Mandarin classes; two students graduated and are now in China involved in their graduate studies. When school is in session, there would normally be a 150 students joining the weekly movie night; and 20-30 students in every Tai Chi class offered in the summer. The scale of impact from Confucius Institute's programs is small; however, given the ratio of population numbers, this Confucius Institute is doing well.

Main assertions from this case study:

1. The programs of Confucius Institute at University C do not provide a cultural getaway for Town C; rather, it provides more educational opportunities for University C. University C benefits from a variety of locally adapted programs and study opportunities offered by the Confucius Institute and from the diversity cultivated through connections and potential business opportunities.
2. The US and Chinese Directors share equal duties and power; there is a mutual respect between the two parties and little politics are involved.
3. The Confucius Institute exists because there is a great need and interest in China and diversity.
4. The Confucius Institute is a win-win project for both countries. Yet it still uncertain whether the Confucius Institute project will be sustainable.

Assertion 1: The programs of Confucius Institute at University C do not provide a cultural getaway for Town C; rather, it provides more educational opportunities for University C. University C benefits from a variety of locally adapted programs and study opportunities offered by the Confucius Institute and from the diversity cultivated through connections and potential business opportunities.

The American staff at the Confucius Institute appreciate having the Confucius Institute on campus. American Director Mike summarized how important Confucius Institute is to the university. “We are a very small, rural town, isolated from the nearest big city. The ability to attract people here and experience diversity is very limited” (2016). The Confucius Institute is one mechanism to bring students from China, while providing opportunities for American students to go to China. It also provides more exposure to a global world. Office Coordinator Justin used the following words to describe the Confucius Institute, “I think the Confucius Institute on campus helps us bring in that diversity with activities as gateways to explore another culture. And they do it in a way that is not overwhelming” (2016). The lack of diversity is one of the most important things that University C has been trying to improve. There is a need to expand outside the small town where University resides; however, not everyone feels that way Using Coordinator Justin’s words, “when people in Town C go abroad, they go to Canada” (2016). Just believes that the opening of the Confucius Institute gave the town and university a chance to get to know a new culture without traveling to another country. In addition, the university only has to partially manage and finance the center. Some see the Confucius Institute contract as University C getting language teaching expertise from China at a discounted cost.

All the programs at the Confucius Institute at University C are tailored toward the local culture and its needs. The programs create opportunities for cultural interactions, which attract a wide array of varying cultures of the people in Town C. While the faculty is learning about Tai Chi, they learn about China; and instructors build friendships with the local people. Teachers from China have become personal and cultural ambassadors for the universities, for China, and for the Chinese culture. The weekly movie night has become a free event for students and families in town to congregate. According to American Director Mike, people enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to watch Chinese movies. After the movie, American Director Mike or one of the Chinese teachers leads a small discussion with the audience. There is a lot of sharing and co-mingling at all levels.

From a university administrative perspective, the Confucius Institute has brought an entirely new Mandarin program to its campus. Together with the Confucius Institute, the university provides Elementary Chinese and is adding more advanced level classes, including Business Mandarin. It has opened its first Chinese major in Asian Studies program. In collaboration with the Confucius Institute, the university is able to expand their majors and academic programs, which benefits both the university and students. Additionally, the Confucius Institute provides a healthy environment of authentic intercultural interactions among people. For Chinese instructors from Hanban who come to teach Mandarin, they turn to the Confucius Institute for help in transitioning into American life. Students come to the Confucius Institute to learn about study-abroad opportunities in China. State C does a lot of business with China, and the establishment of the Confucius Institute serves as a bridge between the East and West. Office Coordinator Justin commented, “Moving beyond the benefit for students, we are building the

future for our children. The Confucius Institute gives us a lot of opportunities to do a lot of things, even I haven't started to dream up yet!" (2016).

Assertion 2: The US and Chinese Director's share equal duties and power; there is a mutual respect between the two parties and little politics are involved.

The relationship between the US and Chinese Director of the Confucius Institute at University C is, by far, the most friendly and cooperative among all the others in this case study. When both directors were interviewed separately, their straightforwardness about their work collaboration, as well as mutual respect for each other was evident in their answers. American Director Mike, when asked about the job duty differences between him and the Chinese Director, he responded with the following,

I know the other Confucius Institutes have a specific contract between Chinese and American Directors. I was encouraged (by University C) to write that policy but I did not because I feel Dr. Hong and I are involved in many decisions together and most of the daily activities. If there is a need, Dr. Hong takes care of the communications with partner schools and I take care of the communication here on campus. I do the US side and she does the China side. We all do things together. It feels more egalitarian and equal. I like to treat people the way I like to be treated. We might need to write it down because the next director may not be as kind as she is. It is on my list, but I do not want to offend her. (Mike, 2016)

Mike made two key points in answering the question on job duty differences. First, Dr. Hong is mainly in charge of the communication with China, and Mike is responsible for managing matters related to University C. When it comes to making decisions, however, it is

always the two of them making the call together. Secondly, Mike has a great respect for Dr. Hong, not only because he wants to treat her as an equal part and with kindness, but also because Dr. Hong is a respectful and kind person, as well. Dr. Hong also agreed that both she and Mike are equal parts in the center. In addition, Dr. Hong elaborated on how she is appreciative of how University C treats her as an equal part.

The mutual understanding between the Chinese and American Directors is really important. We (Mike and I) are here working together in the same office, we have to be ourselves.... In University C, our college treats us (the Confucius Institute) like a department. We are in the College of Letter and Sciences, there are 18 departments in this college. I was invited to all their departmental administrative meetings. In the past, the Chinese Director was not invited. I represent China, Chinese culture and Hanban, and they have accepted my presence at Confucius Institute and at the university. I feel respected by University C because they treat me like any other department head. I can share my opinions and I report to the Dean. On one hand, University C is respecting me, as well as Hanban; on the other hand, it shows that they accept and like my way of working. So I am completely honest and professional when it comes to work. They signed the agreement with us and they accept us as one part of them. No one feels superior or inferior, we are all equal parts. (Dr. Hong, 2016)

Dr. Hong shared what makes the Confucius Institute at University C slightly different from Case A and B. The Confucius Institute at University C is both physically and administratively located in the College of Letters and Sciences, not the center of International Institutes/Affairs. This is because the university administration sees the Center as a pure

language and culture-learning department, and therefore it is best to position it with other language and culture departments. Before the Confucius Institute started, there was no Chinese language and learning courses at University C. Once the Confucius Institute was founded, it became the Chinese language and culture department at University C; the difference is its registered name as the Confucius Institute. The departmental administrative meetings Dr. Hong mentioned are monthly meetings, exclusively between the Dean of Letters and Sciences and the department heads. The fact that Dr. Hong is invited to this meeting makes her feel welcomed and respected by her American counterpart. An equal and inviting working environment that University C has created, as well as the Dr. Hong's appreciation toward this equality has laid a firm foundation to this Confucius Institute's success. Dr. Hong is not only being treated as an equal part, but is also acting like one. She comments,

In this case, Chinese Directors need to have good English, to be able to work with their American counterparts. Chinese Directors need to have a deep understanding of Chinese culture as well, because we represent China and its culture. Therefore, working at Confucius Institute is a lot harder than I expected. I have to be proactively integrating into this work setting, and work to have other colleagues accept me. No one is an outsider. So I participate in other departments' activities and sit in the front row to show my support. (Dr. Hong, 2016)

Dr. Hong confirmed that Mike and she make major decisions together, and she is responsible for most communication with Hanban and Mike takes care of the University C side of work. She emphasized a couple of times during the interview that being a Chinese Director is of great importance, as it is a way of representing China and Chinese culture. She emphasized that reciprocity and respect are the key factors in having intercultural cooperation.

Assertion 3: The Confucius Institute exists because there is a great need and interest in China and diversity.

Because of the geographic and demographic characteristics of University C, adding diversity to the campus has always been an interest of the school administration. Having a Confucius Institute on campus was originally brought up by the previous president and a provost of the university. Both the president and provost reached out to Hanban in 2010 with a bid to be a host university. It was not until 2013 that the Confucius Institute at University C was established. However, the Confucius Institute project was rushed, and both the founding president and the provost left the university shortly after the center was established. Initially, the Confucius Institute was not in good shape because no one on campus realized Confucius Institute's existence except the former president and the provost.

Both Office Coordinator Justin and American Director Mike confirmed that University C showed a good intent in the beginning when it first reached out to Hanban. The new president, which has only been with the university for a year, strongly supports the Institutes. He is very interested in building connections with China, and has listed the partnership with Hanban as part of the growth strategy of the university. He was also the person who made Mike the full-time Director of the Confucius Institute; prior to this appointment, Mike was only a part-time staff member at the Confucius Institute. Chinese Director Dr. Hong believes that the core incentive to have a Confucius Institute on campus is the charm of China as a big country itself. Dr. Hong's opinion resonates with Mr. Zhang, the Chinese Director from Case A and Xun, the Chinese Director from Case B. There is an intent by America to collaborate with China, and China has an interest in teaching their language and learning English. Dr. Hong believes that "despite how

capable both directors are, without the charm of China itself, its economic power, and international political status, the Confucius Institute would never exist” (Dr. Hong, 2016).

Assertion 4: The Confucius Institute is a win-win project for both countries. Yet it still uncertain whether the Confucius Institute project will be sustainable.

It is important to note that not all the interviewees see the Confucius Institute as a soft power propaganda tool. However, American Director Mike recognizes the Confucius Institute as a soft power propaganda tool, and believes that it is working in the United States. Mike comments, “It is absolutely a form of soft power; it is a way of changing current perceptions of China in a positive way. I know Americans don’t like it because they invented soft power. They don’t like it because China is using it against Americans.” Mike knows that the Confucius Institute provides a constructive mechanism to expose Chinese language and culture. He sees it as a function of power. Demographically, the small town does not have much diversity. He learned that once Confucius Institute got out to the community, the community wanted to learn about China. Mike adds, “We are slowly seeing people enjoying coming to our events, and they genuinely want to learn and understand. If that is the point of the Confucius Institute then it is doing its job” (Mike, 2016)

While Mike sees the Confucius Institute as a propaganda tool and acknowledges that he works at a controversial organization, he does not necessarily agree to the controversial statements like the Confucius Institute is threatening national security. He asserts that the Confucius Institute should be used as a practical way to learn about China and strengthen US-Sino relations. Mike says,

If there is going to be any danger in the next ten years, it would be between China and the US. They are two super powers that have clear political agendas. We have seen them appear in the South China Sea, but the more we have our people learn and understand Chinese language and history and culture, the less likely we will get into conflict with them. If we can get one military guy to learn Chinese, then we have done our job. We work with our military here on campus, and we teach Chinese just for the military. They love it. They have incentives; if they take an Asian language class, their salaries are bumped. It also allows us to reach out to people who might be involved in the conflict. And these people are officers someday in the future, and we want them to think more critically and thoughtfully about China that it is not our enemy. (Mike, 2016)

Mike, Dr. Hong, and Justin all share the same view that the Confucius Institute project is beneficial to America. They all used the word, “win-win” to describe what they think of the Confucius Institute. Interestingly, Dr. Hong does not think that the Confucius Institute is a form of soft power. She states, “We are not using a soft power to invade America. I don’t see that soft power climate.” Office Coordinator Justin keeps an open mind about the Confucius Institute. He implied that the Confucius Institute is somewhat of an exercise of soft power, but America, Germany and Russia exercise soft power all the time. It is not a big monster that the US media tend to make of it. Justin also referred to the accusation of “censorship” as “an extent of courtesy” to a foreign country, He said, “If any person has concerns about it, I am willing to talk and listen to them.”

The Confucius Institute at University C has renewed its second five-year contract with Hanban. Therefore, for the time being the Confucius Institute will remain open. However, when

asked about long-term plans, their answers were not as certain, despite Justin and Mike expressing their strong hope for it. American Director Mike has been communicating with the development officer at University C to secure funding for the Confucius Institute. Whether funding from China can stay consistent or not is the unknown. Mike asserted, “The big fear is that the money from China goes away, then the Confucius Institute will disappear.” Dr. Hong shared a slightly differently opinion, saying that “...some big ones would stay, but small ones like us will go away.” She does not think that the Confucius Institute would be completely gone if Hanban pulls out their financial support. She continued, “There might be a few Chinese classes, but since the economy of this state is not too good, it might just stay small. Even if Hanban completely pulls out funding support, I think there is still going to be a Chinese teacher teaching Chinese as a foreign language, but unfortunately there won’t be too many cultural events and the influence of Chinese culture will be very limited.”

4.4 Case D Report

University D is located in the mid-western part of the United States. Most people would not expect there would be a large population of Chinese language learners in the mid-west. However, the Confucius Institute at University D is actually one of the flagship Confucius Institutes in the world, mainly for its significant amount of Chinese learners and its impact in the local communities.

The Confucius Institute at University D shares some similarities with Cases A and B. Like the others, University D is a large research university. The Confucius Institute is located in its International building at the corner of campus, along with other International Affairs centers. Administratively, University D is very centralized. All international-related units, such as the Study Abroad Center, and the International Student and Scholar Service Center are working under the same academic umbrella: The International Center. The units under The International Center all work closely with one another. They share and utilize their resources efficiently. This cohesiveness adds global competitiveness to University D and strengthens their international plan.

State D, where University D is located, has a long history with China. In 1914, the university first hosted three Chinese students. In 1979, University D was one of the first universities to resume academic exchanges with China. Currently, the university hosts more than 2,200 students and scholars from China each year. The school is very proud of this achievement. When you walk into the building of the International Center, the first thing you see is a Terra Cotta statue; farther down the hallway, there are picture presentations recapitulating the connections with China in the last 100 years. The office of the Confucius Institute itself was not decorated with a lot of festive artifacts such as lanterns and couplets, but it did have a moderate amount of calligraphy and Chinese-style paintings. One thing that makes this Confucius Institute

stand out from other Confucius Institute's, is they have their own Library/Resource Center. The library is not a big space, but large enough for students to read to conduct research.

In total, there are four full-time staff members working at this Confucius Institute. The Director from the United States is Jennifer; the Assistant Director from the United States is Lynn, who is an immigrated Chinese American; the Chinese Director representing Hanban and their sister university is Kang; and a Community Specialist named Sarah, from the United States, oversees events and coordinates with various stakeholders.

Main assertions from this case study:

1. The establishment of the Confucius Institute was a careful decision and choice made by University D, and all programs are designed and tailored to local needs.
2. The Confucius Institute serves as a mutually beneficial entity to both America and China. On one hand, it is a government-backed organization with a political agenda; on the other hand, the Confucius Institute provides many educational resources to local communities, the programs and activities are done at a very low-level, which does not incorporate any political motives.
3. The Chinese Director is not involved in key decision-making processes; the American Director carries the power. The funding to operate programs comes mainly from China, yet this does not mean it would create self-censorship.
4. Although Hanban/China has spent so much money on the Confucius Institute, and Confucius Institute at University D is a flagship Confucius Institute, its impact is still limited. How to systematically assess and manage the Confucius Institute is the key to their success.

Assertion 1: The establishment of the Confucius Institute was a careful decision and choice made by University D, and all programs are designed and tailored to local needs.

University D has always had an interest in China. As mentioned, State D and China have had a long-term relationship for over 100 years. Before the Confucius Institute at University D opened, there had been an office that especially dealt with all China-related matters, such as business, education, and diplomacy. American Director Jennifer was one of the people who initially worked at this China office. The Confucius Institute project was started in 2004 in China and was introduced to Jennifer in 2006 as one of the important bridge projects under the China Office in University D. American Director Jennifer has been with the Confucius Institute from its inception. She has witnessed the process of Confucius Institute's opening and its growth. According to Jennifer, the opening of Confucius Institute at University D was a careful and mutual decision made primarily by senior administrators from both China and the United States.

University D did a lot of due diligence and background work on why the China office would want a Confucius Institute. Since University D already had a strong Asian Languages and Literatures and History department, it seemed like a good fit. The university wanted to ensure China that if the Confucius Institute was on campus, it would not have a competing mission. The due diligence process took from 2006 to 2008. During this time, University D spent a great deal of time talking to the faculty and staff in the College of Education and Asian Languages and Literatures departments about the possibility of the Confucius Institute coming to University D and what that would bring to the campus. They realized that the increased interest in Mandarin language in public schools could become the mission of the Confucius Institute: to serve the K-12 public schools in State D for Chinese Language and Culture. After the mission and goals were

determined, the China office drafted a proposal to the Board of Regents at University D and Hanban.

Next, it was determined before the opening of the Confucius Institute that there would be an increased demand for learning Chinese and its culture in State D. This is also why the Confucius Institute opened—to serve the public interest. Presently, there are fourteen Confucius Classrooms under the Confucius Institute office. Among these Confucius classrooms, seven of them are in Chinese-immersion schools. There are more than nine thousand students learning Chinese in State D. The numbers of YCT and HSK test takers are the second largest in the nation (CI at university B has the largest population of HSK and YCT test takers). According to American Director Jennifer and Community Specialist Sarah, the Confucius Institute has never done any particular marketing for their Chinese classes, yet classes are always full. Accordingly, there is a constant demand for quality Chinese teachers in K-12 schools.

In order to meet the demand for Chinese teachers, the Confucius Institute at University D designed a series of teacher training programs in order to create a pipeline of local teacher recruits. They collaborated with local universities to design a series of professional development workshops for teachers. For schools or other community organizations who want to start a Chinese program but do not know how, the Confucius Institute will make introductions for them in China and help them understand what to look for in hiring a Chinese teacher. Besides professional development and training programs for existing teachers, the Confucius Institute is now working with University D and other local universities to create their own Chinese teaching credential program.

Although University D has its own Asian Language and Culture department, the Confucius Institute decided to offer their Resource Center for students who study at the college

of Asian Language and Cultures. Those students have their tutoring sessions at the Resource Center because their department does not have a conducive space for students. The Confucius Institute also offers non-credit Chinese language classes of different levels to the public. In general, the Confucius Institute has a strong K-12 and local community service network. University D made sure before and after the Confucius Institute was opened that all educational resources and opportunities are used to serve the local need, rather than compete against what the state already has to offer.

Assertion 2: The Confucius Institute serves as a mutually beneficial entity to both America and China. On one hand, it is a government-backed organization with a political agenda; on the other hand, the Confucius Institute provides many educational resources to local communities, the programs and activities are done at a very low-level, which does not incorporate any political motives.

All the interviewees saw the Confucius Institute as a beneficial organization to State D. Community Specialist Sarah believes that State D and the university both benefit from having a Confucius Institute on campus. First, having a program on campus that is encouraging the study of Chinese and learning Chinese language is a benefit to global education, campus diversity, and understanding international politics. Community Specialist Sarah shared, “With so many Chinese international students on our campus having a resource where China and promoting Chinese culture is the mission, a lot of times Chinese students will come in and say, ‘You have a Confucius Institute. That's so exciting.’ It's a place that mirrors some of the values that they carry to the United States from China. They feel comfortable here” (Sarah, 2016).

The Confucius Institute in State D also encourages more people to visit campus and discover China's culture. According to Sarah, "in terms of learning about another culture, there's really no downside." The opening of the Confucius Institute on campus has brought a lot of resources to the community. These resources include free educational materials, scholarship information, study abroad opportunities, and teacher support. When Sarah was asked to comment on the Confucius Institute's political influence in State D, she provided the following answer.

I know the controversy is about the funding coming from China being tainted by other outside entities or ulterior motives or a political agenda. If you go into our Resource Center, there is very little material in there that has any political motive. We are teaching a language and students are learning how to be friends with people from China, and how to be a tourist who knows something about the culture and the different cities that they might visit. The learning is really so low level; it's not like these students are going to become brainwashed or something. (Sarah, 2016)

Sarah pointed out that one of the misconceptions about Confucius Institute is that there is high-level intellectual work happening, which might possibly bring political and ideological influence to the United States and jeopardize American education. However, what the Confucius Institute really does on a day-to-day basis is very low-level language teaching, and most of their work is nothing beyond that. American Director Jennifer agreed with Sarah that the Confucius Institute provides additional access to a foreign culture and resources, as well as support for local Chinese learning communities, especially for students in the K-12 schools. Jennifer asserted, "I think it works because it gives the additional access to Chinese cultural and language programs, which results in better understanding, and fostering more opportunities for Americans to interact

with China.” American Director Jennifer also believes that Confucius Institute’s programming, which promotes intercultural human interactions, has minimal political influence.

I just think relationships exist at all levels. We are trying to generate that student relationship and make it a holistic, healthy, and positive interchange. If students are having an educational opportunity in China that benefits them, impacts them, and expands their horizon in some way, I think that’s a good thing. (Jennifer, 2016)

To some degree, the Confucius Institute serves as China’s political propaganda tool, but it is not a negative thing. Jennifer believes that the Confucius Institute creates a more positive cultural image for China. Assistant Director Lynn commented that in Chinese culture, anything related to government, especially the governmental funding has something to do with politics. She shared, “China has spent so much money on the Confucius Institute project, they definitely would want something in return. They want people to know China better, to like China more, and by doing this seems to be very natural to me.” Lynn thinks that China is hoping that more people will have a better understanding of China. She believes that it is mutually beneficial for both the US and China. Assistant Director Lynn stated, “If we are teaching American kids how to better understand China, they are not going to become Chinese spies. That doesn't seem like an immediate jump for that. More likely, they would probably become US spies.”

Assertion 3: The Chinese Director is not involved in key decision-making processes, the American Director carries the power. The funding to operate programs comes mainly from China, yet this does not mean it would create self-censorship.

Similar to the other Chinese directors, Chinese Director Kang is primarily in charge of all communications with Hanban and China (however Assistant Director Lynn took quite amount of her coordination work with Hanban, this will be elaborated later); American Director Jennifer is responsible for all the communications with host University D. However, Jennifer has absolutely more power and responsibilities than Chinese Director Kang. In fact, Chinese Director does not involve too much in making important decisions. Jennifer confirmed that she has complete administrative and financial responsibility for the Confucius Institute. Jennifer reports the budget to both University D and Hanban. The Chinese Director participates in the budget reporting and certainly in budget creation, "...but ultimately it's going to be my head that gets cut off if things are managed or mismanaged for some reason," Jennifer stated. Jennifer felt that her biggest responsibility was to manage the operations, personnel, budgeting, and planning of the Confucius Institute.

The work the Chinese Director is able to do at the Confucius Institute office is limited. According to Sarah, all Chinese Directors are on a J-1 visa, which means their visa status does not allow them to participate in any administrative work; doing research is their primary function of work. In addition, every Chinese is on rotation—they can only come to the US for three years. After that, they have to go back to China and a new Chinese Director will be sent from Hanban. There is always a period of time when there is no Chinese Director in the office, which results in inconsistencies in projects that each Chinese Director worked on. In order to solve this problem, The Confucius Institute at University D hired Lynn, who is a native Chinese but has fully acculturated to America and has U.S. residency, as the Assistant Director for the United States. Lynn's duties have some "competing nature" elements against the Chinese Directors. Therefore, in all practicality, the Chinese Director in this Confucius Institute has very limited impact. One

interesting thing worth noting is that, in this Confucius Institute the American side of staff members gave the same reason as from Confucius Institute A, to the question why the Chinese Director is not involved closely in programming. Moreover, in all four cases, the intensity of Chinese Director's engagement in projects correlates with their power status in the center. I wonder if "J-1 visa" is an official excuse that the host institution adopts to use to safeguard their power in the Confucius Institute.

As is the case with other Confucius Institute's, most funding for programming comes from Hanban, and the U.S. host institution provides office space and employee salaries. When asked about controversies brought by using Chinese governmental funding, and whether there is self-censorship along with the "free" money, Jennifer responded with the following:

The Confucius Institute doesn't restrict funding on projects. We are very concerned and mindful that we have a funder. Like every grantor and every funder, they have a mission. I think that you have to understand what your funder is willing to fund and then you have to look for projects that can fill that investment. (Jennifer, 2016)

To summarize, Confucius Institute at University D established their Confucius Institute on their own will, and has been careful and mindful in terms of programming and public influence. The American Director has more responsibility and power in the office than the Chinese Director.

Assertion 4: Although Hanban/China has spent so much money on the Confucius Institute, and the Confucius Institute at University D is a flagship Confucius Institute, its impact is still limited. How to systematically assess and manage the Confucius Institute is the key to their success.

Although the Confucius Institute at University D is one of the flagship Confucius Institutes, Chinese Director Kang held the opinion that the influence of the Confucius Institute is very small. She also defines the Confucius Institute as an important research center for American universities:

There are many different research centers in universities as you can see. The Confucius Institute is just one of the research centers focusing on Chinese language and culture. Not every school would be willing to allocate some funding for the Confucius Institute. Therefore, in our university, which is big, we only have one office and four of us working for this research center, how big of an influence can it have? It does not have impact on schools, academics, and instructions. But among all of the China related centers, it is still one of the most important ones.

(Kang, 2106)

Assistant Director Lynn agreed with Chinese Director Kang, that in terms of Confucius Institute's limited impact in the university. In fact, there are not many people who are aware of its existence. In addition to Confucius Institute's limited influence, Lynn further expressed her concern about the finance situation of the Confucius Institute. She thought that the amount of money Hanban has spent on the Confucius Institute is quite large, and it is not making any sense for the Chinese government to spend so much money funding another country's language program. The Confucius Institute project should be locally grown and locally sustained, with Hanban providing support. If Hanban stops funding the Confucius Institute, however, the Confucius Institute might no longer exist in many states. Lynn was certain that Hanban had not done any auditing on how the money was spent on the Confucius Institute's abroad, and very few times had they done due diligence before they invested a large amount of money on the

Confucius Institutes. There are corruptions, and China should learn how to spend their money more wisely.

There are still many challenges at this flagship Confucius Institute. For example, both Jennifer and Sarah complained that the Chinese government wanted to give out orders on short notices, while Americans prefer to plan ahead. Hanban does not have a systematic evaluation method on Confucius Institutes, so when it comes for an annual assessment, they tend to only focus on numbers and ignore the narratives on quality and influence of programs. Also, Hanban does not have a consistent way of budgeting, which makes the American staff member very uneasy when budgeting; and the rotation system of a Chinese Director does not encourage the consistency and efficiency of their work.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTER-CASE ANALYSIS

5.1 Convergence and Divergence between Cases

Analytical comparisons from four cases yield convergent and divergent conclusions.

1. The variety of programs offered by the Confucius Institute (CI) is greatly determined by the geographic and demographic characteristics of local communities, as well as the background of both the US Director and the Chinese Director.
2. The attraction of China is one of the main reasons why US universities would like to host a Confucius Institute in the first place. Hanban's provision of funding and resources are huge incentives to the US host universities. This incentive is seen to be particularly attractive to public universities, due to their struggling financial situations. Both Hanban and host universities contribute financially to the Confucius Institute, and this financial situation is the same in all the Confucius Institutes.
3. The American and Chinese Directors have equal power and status in managing the center. The American directors have complete autonomy in leadership. In some cases, the American Directors have more power than the Chinese Directors.
4. Hanban does not intend to make any political influences through expatriate teachers. Teachers sent from China are not politically influenced; there is no special training to promote Communism ideology. Further, not every teacher at the host institutions are from Hanban. In some longer-running Confucius Institutes, many Chinese instructors are local teachers who live in the community. Mature Confucius Institutes have developed their own teacher supply pipelines. This does not only solve issues in teacher quality, but

also enhances its independence from Hanban. Hanban is very open and supportive about this action.

5. The Confucius Institute project in general is a mutually-beneficial entity to both China and the United States. On one hand, it helps to promote Chinese language and culture; on the other hand, it provides free educational resources to the American host universities, who have solid control of their own Confucius Institute.
 6. While most American Directors acknowledged that the Confucius Institute project helps promote China's national image and soft power, the Chinese Directors do not agree with this statement.
 7. The Confucius Institute project has limited political influence in America. To become the real "soft power" in western standards seems very hard for the Confucius Institute at this point.
 8. The Confucius Institute is facing serious sustainability issues. If Hanban stops its financial support, it is possible that the Confucius Institute project will fade out in five to ten years.
 9. The Confucius Institute project suffers from lack of a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation system, a problem that Hanban must fully address.
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1. *The variety of programs offered by the Confucius Institute is greatly determined by the geographic and demographic characteristics of local communities, as well as the background of both the US Director and the Chinese Director.*

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the four cases are chosen based on purposive sampling. The rationale for doing a purposive sampling is under the assumption that Confucius

Institutes in different locations offer various programs because of their geographic and demographic difference. Case A, B, C, and D together do not only prove that geographic and demographic differences strongly influence Confucius Institute's programming, but the background and interests of the directors of the Confucius Institutes significantly shape the programming and developments.

The four cases, A, B, C, and D, are located in vastly different geographic and demographic areas of the United States. Confucius Institute A is located on the West Coast, Confucius Institute B is located on the East Coast, Confucius Institute C is located in the northwest areas of the country, and Confucius Institute D is located in the mid-west. The four cities where the four Institutes are located have distinct local culture and characteristics. City A is a mega city and is famous for its vibrant, diverse cultures and population. American Director Janet's background in arts and her interest in social justice is compatible for doing after-schools programs in inner-city schools, collaborations between China and American schools in drama productions, film festivals, and charity programs by pulling her resources in from the entertainment industry in City A.

Compared to City A, City B is smaller in size but of the same importance in political influence. Both Chinese Director Xun and American Director Karen have backgrounds in education, especially Xun, who is an expert in language acquisition. Accordingly, the programs in Confucius Institute B are mostly focused on language learning, testing and teacher training. City C is significantly smaller in size than Cities A and B, and Confucius Institute C is also a lot younger than A, B, and D. The culture of City C is very conservative and people are predominantly Caucasians; it is not as well-equipped as Universities A, B, and D because it does not have a Chinese language and culture department. Therefore, Confucius Institute C's major

goal is to start a basic Chinese language program, and educate local people on China and Chinese culture at a very low level. The number of program participants is also the smallest among the four cases because of its limitation in location.

City D is a big city in the mid-west, yet compared to Cases A and B it is still a lot smaller both in size and population. Most citizens of City D are Caucasians with a small percentage of other races, yet its culture is liberal rather than conservative. Confucius Institute D's programs are strongly focused on language learning, standardized testing, and teacher training. This is because City D has a strong influence in Chinese language learning in the neighboring K-12 schools; it helped that American Director Jennifer had an interest in language acquisition to help get public interest.

2. The attraction of China is one of the main reasons why US universities would like to host a Confucius Institute in the first place. Hanban's provision of funding and resources are huge incentives to the US host universities. This incentive is seen to be particularly attractive to public universities, due to their struggling financial situations. Both Hanban and host universities contribute financially to the Confucius Institute, and this financial situation is the same in all the Confucius Institutes.

Instead of being lured by the attraction of cash support from Hanban, the four host American universities documented here must submit their bids to Hanban, based on goodwill. In the case of A, B, C, and D, the decision to start a Confucius Institute came from senior university administration; all of them had the approval and signature from either a provost or the chancellor, who then submitted their proposal to Hanban. Particularly, University B and University C initiated the conversation on the partnership with Hanban before Hanban reached

out to them. University D did a careful due diligence, which lasted two years before they started putting the proposal together. In interviewing Confucius Institute employees, all agreed that the charm of China as the new rising super power, along with growing curiosity are the main reasons why Universities A, B, C, and D were considered to host the Confucius Institute in the first place.

Along with the attraction and curiosity toward China, there is a growing need to learn Chinese and Chinese culture for the purpose of national development and individual growth. Universities who have intentions in providing more resources to students in learning Chinese and Chinese culture are the first ones who became interested in opening a Confucius Institute on campus with the help from Hanban. These universities are mostly public universities in America because they suffer from insufficient state funding to provide students with more educational resources and opportunities. In this study, Case A, B, C and D are all public universities. I compiled the data on how many universities with Confucius Institute are public, and how many are private. My result is as follows (table 1).

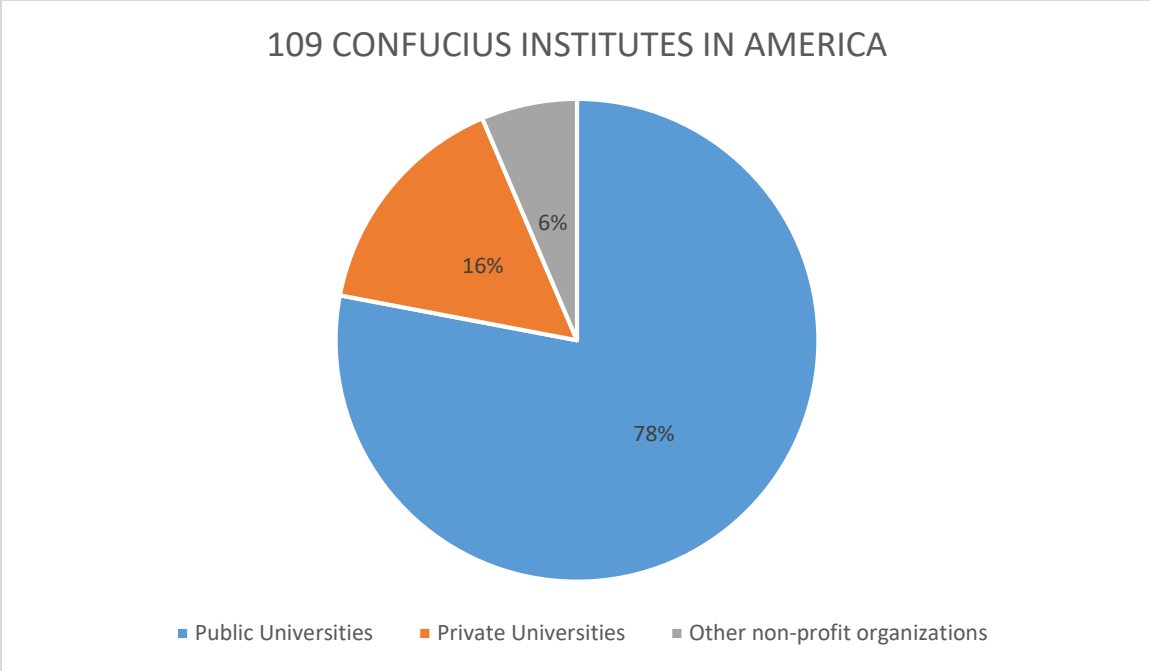


Table 1. Percentage of Public, Private and other Partners of the Confucius Institute in America

Note: Among all 109 Confucius Institutes in America, there are 85 Confucius Institutes located and partnered with public universities; 17 Confucius Institutes are located and partnered with private universities. Only 7 Confucius Institutes are neither located nor partnered with universities. A few are located and partnered with local public school districts; others are partnered with local China-related non-profit organizations. Source: Hanban official website.

Based on the four cases of this study, all Confucius Institutes are funded in the same way; however, with University D, they shared the initial cost evenly with Hanban, and providing other resources as necessary. Undoubtedly, Hanban’s financial offer did make things progress more quickly. US host universities only had to provide office space and appoint a director and several staff to start up. Hanban agreed to provide support with teachers and education materials, based on the host universities’ requests. Hanban offers support to all Confucius Institutes abroad; however, it is important to note that the universities receive no direct monetary benefit for hosting the Confucius Institutes on their campus. They rely on funding that is not yet being used

to rotate automatically to next year's pool. Generally, funding requests for programming are approved by both the host university and Hanban.

3. *The American and Chinese Directors have equal power and status in managing the center.*

The American Directors have complete autonomy in leadership. In some cases, the American Directors have more power than the Chinese Directors.

The American Directors in each case study are the primary decision makers in their respective roles at the Confucius Institute. Their signatures are required on every grant proposal. Some American Directors are not full-time, such as Karen in Case B. Yet this does not hinder her status in the office. According to Chinese Director Xun and Office Coordinator Judy from Case B, while Xun is involved in a lot of daily administrative tasks, he is also involved in most of the event planning. Yet ultimately, Karen makes the final call and is the one who decides what will happen and what will not.

In all four cases, all of the Chinese Directors are full-time employees (representing Hanban and their partner schools in China) in the host universities. There are two important assignments for all Chinese Directors: one is to monitor budgeting, the other is to communicate updates to Hanban on what is going on in the Confucius Institutes and host universities. However, the extent to how much they are involved in daily administration varies case by case. In Case A, Chinese Director Mr. Zhang is not involved in any of the daily management; in Case B, Chinese Director Xun is very involved since American Director Karen is not a full-time employee at the Confucius Institute; in Case C, both the Chinese Director and American Director share equal amounts of work, and fully engage in all center programs; in Case D, the Confucius Institute later hired Assistant Director Lynn whose job duties first overlapped with Chinese

Director Kang's, then later replaced quite a portion of Kang's work. An important commonality across all cases is that the intensity of the Chinese Directors' engagement in projects correlates with their power status in the center.

4. Hanban does not intend to make any political influences through expatriate teachers. Teachers sent from China are not politically influenced; there is no special training to promote Communism ideology. Further, not every teacher at the host institutions are from Hanban. In some longer-running Confucius Institutes, many Chinese instructors are local teachers who live in the community. Mature Confucius Institutes have developed their own teacher supply pipelines. This does not only solve issues in teacher quality, but also enhances its independence from Hanban. Hanban is very open and supportive about this action.

According to all expatriate teachers interviewed, every year Hanban sends teachers abroad to teach Chinese language and culture. The exact number of teachers assigned to each school is decided by the need of each Confucius Institute and classroom. Generally, the majority of the Chinese teachers are sent to Confucius Classrooms, which are located in K-12 schools. Yet, not all the teachers teach in K-12 schools; there are a few at the universities, teaching university students, and assisting with administrative work. Teacher Huang in Case B is a good example; she teaches non-credit classes at University B and is in charge of local HSK test administrations. Most teachers are language teachers, but there are a few who are Cultural Arts teachers. For instance, in Case, C, between two Chinese teachers from Hanban, one of them is a language teacher, the other is a Martial Arts teacher.

All teachers chosen from Hanban and sent to America are required to complete a series of exams and participate in a rigorous selection process designed by Hanban headquarters. The

selection process includes a first round paper application held in the teacher's home university, usually a partner university in China; then after a number of potential candidates are selected, the Chinese partner university will submit the candidate list to Hanban, who will administer a second round of written exams among all the candidates nationwide. According to the teachers and Chinese Directors interviewed from Cases A, B, C and D, the exams consist of a thirty-page written assignment, a psychological test, an English/foreign language exam, and an academic/teaching skills test. A number of qualified candidates are then selected based on their overall scores, and move on to pre-departure training in Beijing.

The trainings in Beijing last between two to four weeks. The first week is an intensive focus on American pedagogy, Chinese language and literature, and intercultural training. For language teachers, the second week is still language teaching training; for non-language teachers, such as the Martial Arts teacher Liu in Case C, the second week is heavily focused on non-language teaching topics. Workshops on pedagogy are taught by teachers who had been with a Confucius classroom or Confucius Institute. All the teachers interviewed confirmed that rarely did the trainers teach any politics, nor did leaders in Hanban give out direct orders on what is forbidden to talk about or teach. However, there is a part of the training that focuses on how to avoid sensitive topics in the classroom. Some teachers being interviewed in the case studies shared that they would not shy away from sensitive topics just because Hanban instructed them to do so. Instead, they would answer and discuss the topics truthfully from their own personal and political perspective.

Each year Hanban sends a number of teachers abroad in response to the teacher shortage in Confucius Institutes (see table 2). According to Hanban's 2015 yearly report, the number of expatriate teachers and volunteers has increased about 34% compared to 2014. However, the

quality of teachers being sent abroad remains a critical issue for all Confucius Institutes. Most teachers from China, though trained intensively by former Confucius Institute teachers before teaching abroad, do not have solid knowledge backgrounds in non-Chinese pedagogy and the host country culture. Once they begin teaching foreign students, they tend to stick with traditional Chinese teacher-centered strategies instead of more engaging student-centered methods. This has resulted in unengaged students and low retention rates. Only those students who are disciplined and motivated to continue Chinese studies will move on to higher levels.

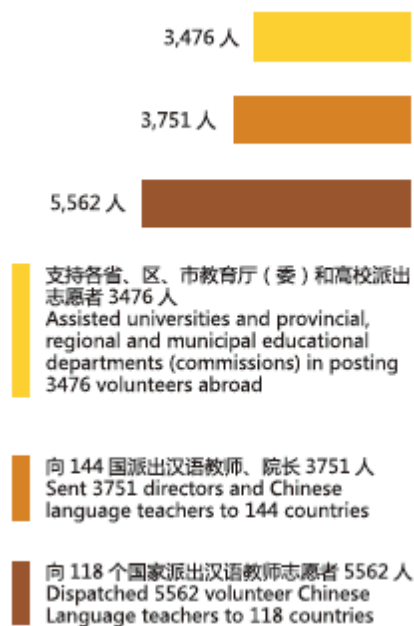


Table 2. Number of Expatriate Teachers and Volunteers in 2015

Source: 2015 Confucius Report. Accessed 1/15/2017. <http://www.hanban.org/report/2015.pdf>

In knowing such problems exist, some mature and well-established Confucius Institutes began solving teacher quality issues by using locally trained teachers. In Cases B and D, both are

given the accreditation of “Flagship Confucius Institute” because they have been working with their host universities or other partner universities in Mandarin-teaching credential programs. Instead of relying on teachers from China, they have developed Mandarin teaching credential programs by integrating teaching and education resources from both host universities and Hanban. This not only solves issues in teacher quality, but also enhances its independence from Hanban. Yet, not all Confucius Institutes are able to develop such credentialed programs because some host universities do not have a Chinese Language and Culture department and they can only get the teachers and resources for them from Hanban. To that end, Hanban has supported all efforts in helping these universities to establish such teaching credentials, as well as language department programs.

5. The Confucius Institute project in general is a mutually-beneficial entity to both China and the United States. On one hand, it helps to promote Chinese language and culture; on the other hand, it provides free educational resources to the American host universities, who have solid control of their own Confucius Institute.

Is the Confucius Institute China’s soft power propaganda tool? To answer this question, it is important to look at the perspectives of the American Directors and employees who work for a partially Chinese government-funded office. American Director Janet from Case A was asked, “Is Confucius Institute a China’s soft power propaganda tool?” She said, “If we could use the Chinese money to take care of the students who Americans could not take care of, why not?” Janet acknowledged that universities should always be careful of whose funding is being used and she agreed that the Confucius Institute is aligned with several United States educational initiatives in foreign language and culture. In Case B, American Director Karen acknowledged

that the Confucius Institute is a soft power tool, but there is not necessarily anything wrong with that because America has their soft power agenda as well. As long as there is no illegal breach, having a Confucius Institute on campus is beneficial to the university.

In Case C, American Director Mike provided a similar answer to what Karen said, and that is, “It is absolutely a form of soft power, it is a way of changing perceptions of China in a positive way.” In Case D, American Director Jennifer, expressed that she is not fond of the phrase “soft power,” yet qualifies her thoughts by adding, “I would have to agree with the fact that it creates a more positive cultural image. The additional access to the Chinese cultural and language programs, better understanding, and fostering more opportunities for Americans to interact with China, that is what is important.” According to Jennifer, the Confucius Institute does help China in creating a more positive image. However, providing K-12 students with more access to foreign languages and cultures and offering them more educational opportunities becomes of greater importance.

The Confucius Institute is a mutually-beneficial project for both China and the US. The Confucius Institute serves as part of China’s soft power agenda, in that it enables more people to have access in learning Chinese and China; and it also promotes mutual understanding and strengthens Sino-US relations. Further, American universities as public service providers to local communities will benefit from offering more educational resources and opportunities to the general public. As long as host universities ensure that the partnership is legally binding, the Confucius Institute project is a win-win for China and the partner universities. Even so, the operation and development of the Confucius Institutes in this study are solidly under the control of the American host universities.

6. *While most American Directors acknowledged that the Confucius Institute project helps promote China's national image and soft power, the Chinese Directors do not agree with this statement.*

Not all Chinese Directors agree that the Confucius Institute is a soft power propaganda tool. Chinese Director Zhang, from Case A holds an open mind toward China's intention of establishing the Confucius Institute, which is to promote its national image, language, and culture. However, not all Chinese Directors would agree with Zhang. Chinese Director Xun from Case B holds a different point of view: the Confucius Institute is an educational collaboration, and it cannot be called the invasion of soft power. Chinese Director Dr. Hong in Case C, also does not necessarily agree with the term, "soft power." She did not deny it, but defined the Confucius Institute as a win-win project. She further explained that the Confucius Institute is promoting Chinese while finding a way to make the Chinese culture co-exist with other cultures in America. "We are not using a soft power to invade them," Dr. Hong said.

Chinese Director Xun from Confucius Institute B and Dr. Hong both used the word "invade" when referring to soft power. Chinese Director Kang from Case D offered the Chinese interpretation of soft power, which further delineates the nuances between the definition of soft power in English and Chinese. According to Kang, a direct translation of "power" to Chinese is "shi li" (实力). The definition of power is the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events; meanwhile "实力" in Chinese means the capability to compete, but not necessarily to make an impact or force something to happen. If we explain the word "实力" in the context of Chinese history and culture, we would find that Chinese people refer "实力" as the ability of China as an independent country to defend, protect and

revitalize; therefore the word “soft power” is known in Chinese as “软实力” does not contain any implication to attack, to rein, or to take over.

Hence, Chinese Director Kang claimed that all the controversies on the Confucius Institute started from a linguistic and cultural misunderstanding, a translation error, and it is quite a funny one. “When Chinese leaders said ‘ruan shi li (软实力)’, the western society interpreted it as ‘soft power’, but they are actually not even the same words, and no one stood up to resolve this misunderstanding, so it has always been there,” claimed Kang. Although three of the four Chinese Directors disagree with the nature of the Confucius Institute being a soft power propaganda, it would appear that China’s political agenda might be behind the Confucius Institute, but only to promote Chinese language and culture and to market and improve China’s national image. It was clear that no one believed that China wanted anything political in return for their investment.

7. The Confucius Institute project has limited political influence in America. To become the real “soft power” in western standards seems very hard for the Confucius Institute at this point.

Whenever another country is contributing money to an American university, there is a conclusion that a political agenda exists. In a sense, there is an agenda behind the Confucius Institute project, but the Confucius Institute’s political influences are very limited. From the American Directors and employees’ perspective, the Confucius Institute does very low-level work. They teach Mandarin and are highly language-instruction focused. With reference to the Confucius Institutes in Case B, C and D, the core of their programs are Confucius Classrooms: language instruction classes in K-12 schools. The other important component of their programs is that they are culturally-themed, rather than politically-themed events. The popular events are

China's culture showcases like the Chinese New Year celebration gala, the Dragon Boat competition, the Historical Photography exhibition, the movie festival, and other special interest events such as social justice-oriented programs in Confucius Institute A. Nothing taught or displayed is controversial.

The Chinese Directors and teachers believe that the Confucius Institute does not have any political impact, and its cultural impact is also limited, particularly in a culturally-diverse country like America. The Confucius Institute is competing against other languages, such as Spanish, French, German, and Japanese, to name a few. Chinese culture in America is competing against other popular foreign cultures, which have great influences in America as well. The Confucius Institute can only reach one portion of the population among all the foreign language and culture lovers, and it is now still a very small portion. It is possible that some teachers may be sharing their personal political views and beliefs, but overall that is not the focus or belief of any of the Confucius Institutes in this study.

8. The Confucius Institute is facing serious sustainability issues. If Hanban stops its financial supports, it is possible that the Confucius Institute project will fade out in five to ten years.

When all interviewees were asked the question, "What is in the future for your Confucius Institute?" most of them believed that the partnership between their host universities and the Confucius Institute will sustain for at least another five to ten years. However, when asked about the possibility for long-term sustainability, only one of twenty-one interviewees responded that the Confucius Institute will be existing for many years into the future. The rest all responded that the sustainability of Confucius Institutes depends on Hanban's desire to keep them going. If China stops financing the Confucius Institutes, it would be difficult for them to be self-

sustaining. The reason why there was only one interviewee who predicted Confucius Institutes' longevity is because he believes that China will keep supporting the Confucius Institute financially, since they have invested in this global project ten years ago. They keep it going because they have invested so much already, and are interested in seeing significant achievements.

The issue of each Confucius Institute's sustainability has been a concern to all who work at the Confucius Institutes. In fact, many Institutes have been devoting efforts in localizing their draw for some time, tailoring their services to the local needs; building connections between the university and K-12 schools; and they are also in the process establishing a self-sustainable teacher pipeline. However, none of the Confucius Institutes have reached the point where they are financially able to do so. The only Confucius Institute that made a breakthrough is Case B. That is because a few years ago the Confucius Institute at University B started a fundraising campaign and was able to raise and match a million dollar endowment from Hanban.

To make the Confucius Institute sustainable, localized, and contextual they must get more local stakeholders involved instead of relying completely on Hanban, and some Confucius Institute employees realize the importance of being localized. This result is aligned with Li and Tucker (2013), who assert that localization would be an advisable strategy to sustain the Confucius Institute network and its development. According to Li and Tucker, localization as a guiding principle would mean to involve the local community in a series of operational procedures, including identifying local service areas, implementing projects, and evaluating achievements. The ideal scenario would be for each Confucius Institute to serve as a regional pivot, connecting and utilizing regional resources to meet local needs.

On the other hand, how likely would China stop funding the Confucius Institutes? To answer this question is to know Hanban's current situation. Since 2004, the year the Confucius Institutes were first formed, there were less than ten staff members; now in 2016 there are more than one hundred staff members. Along with rapid growth, Hanban has gradually developed into a sophisticated organization (see table 3). In addition to its size, there are 20 sub-divisions. Its function has been widely broadened and its operation has been dramatically improved and become much more detail-oriented. After ten fast-growing and exploratory years, Hanban now has the capacity and experience to better serve and support all the Confucius Institutes worldwide. Hanban is supervised under the Ministry of Education, which indicates its formality and consistency according to Chinese protocol. As long as Hanban exists, the Confucius Institute project will continue to grow and develop; since Hanban is one of the central governmental units, is unlikely to be dismissed anytime soon. Nonetheless, what will happen in twenty years is hard to predict.



Table 3. Hanban’s organizational structure

Source: Hanban official website. Accessed: 1/15/2017 http://english.hanban.org/node_7716.htm

9. *The Confucius Institute project suffers from lack of a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation system, a problem that Hanban must fully address.*

In 2011, Hanban made an ambitious plan: to establish 500 Confucius Institutes and 1,000 Confucius Classrooms by 2015. In 2015 Hanban had over-achieved this goal. If the number of

Confucius Institutes opened was the main focus of Hanban before 2015, after 2015 this goal shifted to improving the quality and services of each Confucius Institute. In 2015, Hanban's Confucius Institute Headquarters sponsored a Director Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii. One of the major topics discussed was innovative ways to integrate with local communities, and become part of the community.

Although Hanban has grown into a sophisticated entity, its evaluation system suffers from integrity, diversity and comprehensiveness. As discussed, in 2013 Li and Tucker pointed out that localization is key to Confucius Institutes' success; however, this has yet to be fully recognized in Hanban's current top-down evaluation system, as they have not made any changes in its top-down evaluation method. According to interviews with several American and Chinese Directors, there are two types of reports: an annual report and a five-year performance review. Both reports are led by a group of performance review officers from the Hanban office.

From the Confucius Institutes' employees' perspective, Hanban has never set any particular target or goal; no Confucius Institute is required to achieve any certain level of success. However, according to Chinese Director Xun in Case B, Hanban does have certain "measurable and visible" criteria in terms of evaluation. Hanban mainly looks at the content of programs, management, program results and any influence it may have brought to the communities. By "measurable and visible" he was referring to quantifiable numbers. The metrics Hanban looks at are number of classrooms, number of students, numbers of tests taken, and number of participants in events. In fact, "Hanban is always looking at numbers," said American Director Jennifer from Case D. The two flagship Confucius Institutes, Case B and D, are the leading Confucius Institutes in the states with the largest number of HSK takers, Confucius Classrooms, and students in K-12 schools learning Mandarin.

This “numbers only” top-down method has slowed Hanban down from fairly and thoroughly assessing each Confucius Institute’s influences and achievements. For a more accurate evaluation, Hanban must adopt more qualitative and narrative-focused evaluation methods in addition to quantitative assessments. Li and Tucker (2013) propose that there should be a more comprehensive evaluation system involving various stakeholders, Confucius Institute collaborators, and recipients of Confucius Institute services. Influence does not equal numbers. For example, in Case C where City C is a tiny college town of 20,000 residents, it would be difficult to reach the same number of students as a flagship CI. Town C is rural and conservative, yet Confucius Institute C has a great local influence. Its weekly movie night has become one of the most popular events in town, with parents and students attending; and there is a consistent demand for martial arts classes, always reaching capacity. Without narratives, it would be difficult to thoroughly measure the influence of the Confucius Institutes. Without precise and comprehensive assessments in understanding the Confucius Institute’s development in various contexts like cultural, political and geographical, Hanban’s judgments and strategic plans can only be made based on one-sided information. As such, the evaluation becomes whatever the workers at the Confucius Institutes choose to report.

By integrating narratives as data as part of the assessment report, Hanban would see a wider view. Diverse opinions would also be added to the report. Confucius Institutes’ program participants, community stakeholders, and other collaborators could offer a diverse and third-party perspective in understanding Confucius Institutes’ current management and achievements, especially when it comes to finance. According to several Chinese Directors interviewed, corruption and accounting frauds are not uncommon phenomena in the circle of Confucius Institutes’ employees. This information is unfounded or addressed by Hanban, even though they

conduct yearly internal auditing. Every year Hanban receives a huge amount of investment from central government and has been very generous in supporting all Confucius Institutes abroad. Hanban's investment in the Confucius institute has been increasing significantly every year since 2006. According the Confucius Institute Annual Development Report in 2015, the total expenditure in 2015 has reached 300 million US dollars (see table 4 and table 5). Most recently, as I am writing this chapter, Deborah Pierce, who ran the Confucius Institute at Webster University, has been indicted. The 61-year-old former American Director of Confucius Institute allegedly embezzled \$380,000 by writing checks from the Institute to cash and to herself, as well as paying her own personal bills and those of her family members from those accounts. In September 2013, Pierce allegedly set up a separate, unauthorized bank account and allegedly diverted money for nearly three years, from setting up the account until June 2016 (River Front Time, 2016 accessed <http://www.riverfronttimes.com/newsblog/2016/11/16/webster-university-administrator-allegedly-stole-380k-feds-say>). This is the very first case of embezzlement being reported, yet according to my research, this is not the first case. Hanban must establish a stringent and objective evaluation system, including narratives, in order to obtain more precise and insightful information to make quality future decisions.

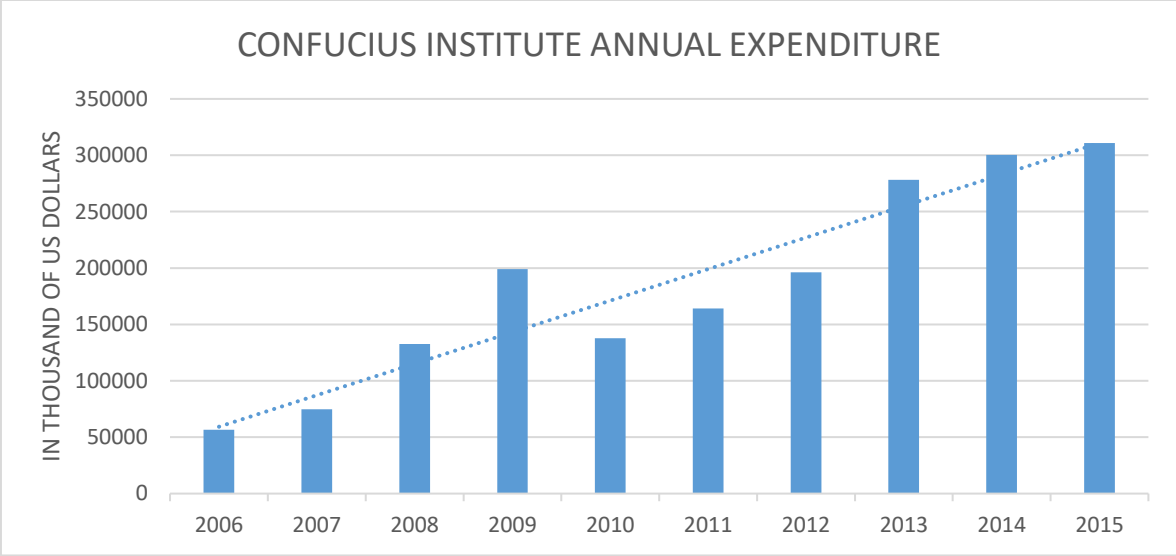


Table 4. Hanban’s annual expenditure on the Confucius Institute

序号 Numbe	项目名称 Project Names	2015 年金额 (千美元) Total 2015 (thousand US dollar)
1	孔子学院（课堂）启动 Start-up funds for Confucius Institutes (Classrooms)	\$6,727
2	孔子学院（课堂）运营 Operational funds of Confucius Institutes (Classrooms)	\$228,979
3	孔子新汉学计划 Confucius China Studies Program	\$4,620
4	示范孔子学院 Model Confucius Institutes	\$12,328
5	孔子学院院长、教师、志愿者培训 Trainings for directors, teachers and volunteers	\$5,837
6	孔子学院奖学金 Confucius Institute scholarships	\$34,680
7	网络孔子学院运营 Operational funds for Confucius Institute Online	\$6,131
8	中外专家巡讲、教材巡展、学生巡演 Chinese and foreign expert lecture tours, teaching materials exhibition tours and student performance tours	\$4,620
9	教材开发与配送 Development and distribution of teaching materials	\$3,080
10	中外专家现场督导 On-site supervision by Chinese and foreign experts	\$909
11	多语种《孔子学院》院刊 Bilingual versions of <i>Confucius Institute</i>	\$2,943
	合计 Total	\$310,854

Table 5. Hanban's expenditure on Confucius Institute in 2015

Source: 2015 Confucius Institute Annual Development report. Accessed: 1/17/2015.
<http://www.hanban.org/report/2015.pdf>

5.2 Observations of Private University Partners

As mentioned, 16% of the Confucius Institutes are located at and partnering with private universities. I started my investigation based on the assumption that all the Confucius Institutes can be characterized by their geographic locations. Although my four case studies have proved the validity of my assumption, during my investigation, I also recognized that the private universities who host the Confucius Institutes share some different characteristics than the ones located in public schools. This was particularly apparent in the areas of administration. To gain an understanding of how different the Confucius Institutes are at private universities than those at public universities, I first studied all their websites, then randomly selected three Confucius Institutes and called their directors. My findings are as follows.

To begin with, all the Confucius Institutes at private universities offer similar programs to those in public schools, which are language education, cultural events, and scholarship programs. However, it seems that none of the Confucius Institutes in private universities have comparable impact and scale compared to the “flagship Confucius Institute,” such as Case B and Case D in Chapter Four. Secondly, private schools offer more flexibility and less bureaucracy in programming. Directors confirmed that unlike public schools where the school normally takes a percentage of external income funding, the private schools rarely take that funding. It is possible that the Confucius Institutes at private schools are better funded; however, more investigation is needed. In private schools, an idea or program can be efficiently executed in a timely manner, as the Confucius Institute does not need to get multiple approvals from different people in the administrative hierarchy. Also, private schools are able to provide more human resource support because they employ accountants. This adds to efficiency. One of the directors mentioned that their Confucius Institute has their own accounting team and their financial account is being well-

managed. Members of this particular Institute are seldom concerned about a lack of enough administrative support.

There are also some disadvantages in partnering with private universities. Among all the partners, Columbia University and Stanford University are the most famous in reputation. Interesting to note, there is very limited information available regarding these two institutes. Columbia has no official webpage and Stanford's webpage contains no concrete information. One of the directors from Case B, Chinese Director Xun, confirmed that the Confucius Institute at Stanford does not offer any concrete service or programming opportunities. "It is just a formality (Xun)."

Separate from Columbia and Stanford, the other Confucius Institutes at private schools are mostly in medium and small-sized local colleges. The size and reputation of the school in local communities is not advantageous for the Confucius Institutes. According to directors interviewed, small private colleges tend to operate more independently and have less governmental connections as compared to big public or state schools. This has created difficulty in reaching out to a broader population in local communities. Moreover, there is a limited number of students enrolled in private colleges. These disadvantages make it harder for these Confucius Institutes to have a bigger impact on the students and community.

Some of the Confucius Institutes at private schools are physically not far from the ones in the larger public schools. In fact, some are in the same city and state. In this case, there is a rivalry between the Confucius Institutes in terms of attracting new enrollees in their language programs or HSK tests. Being generally small makes Confucius Institutes in private schools less competitive with such rivalry.

5.2 Implication for American Host Institutions and America

Based on research results, the Confucius Institutes have limited influence in spreading and promoting the Communism ideology. Most of the programs offered by the Confucius Institutes are heavily focused on language instruction, and complementary cultural events. America should take advantage of the free educational resources provided by China, which would create a win-win situation for both countries. The money sent by Hanban to the Confucius Institutes is very small in comparison to the overall university spending; and funding allocated from Hanban to the Confucius Institute must be used strictly on Confucius Institute projects.

Sino-US relationships will continue to be one of the most important international relations in global politics. China has been diligently learning about the West for many years, especially America and its language and culture. However, America knows very little about new China. Although more Americans than ever before are learning Mandarin, and the number of tourists to China grows each year, America's knowledge about China is much less compared to how much China knows about America. Americans must understand that today's China is no longer a typical communist country; it is something new and is changing every day. Even the Chinese government and Chinese people do not have a clear idea of where it is heading and what it will become ten years from now. However, for now, taking advantage of the Confucius Institute platform as an additional access to information on China is beneficial to America educationally, politically and strategically. In this sense, cultural exchange is a two-way street. While the Confucius Institutes, Chinese international students, and Chinese "damas" are flooding in to America, they are being influenced by its culture as well. It is entirely possible that the impact of American soft power on the Chinese is much more significant than any impact China has on America.

America should take advantage of educational resources provided by the Confucius Institutes. Interested universities should apply for a partnership with Hanban headquarters to host a Confucius Institute on their campus. While the grant process is extensive, it is worth the benefit for the universities and the two countries. Since Hanban is part of the Ministry of Education, the partnership will follow Chinese government's guidelines. While it is inevitable that the differences between the two countries' ideologies, value orientations, political systems, and cultures will surface and challenge daily work collaboration, with cooperation and understanding from both sides, it could work. The American host institutions must understand what the partnership with Hanban entails, and then proceed appropriately.

5.3 Recommendations for the Confucius Institute Management and Hanban

Based on in-depth research and onsite investigation in multiple Confucius Institutes, here are the recommendations to the Confucius Institute Management and Hanban.

1. Modify current top-down, number-oriented evaluation system to a more robust evaluation method that includes qualitative data collections from multiple stakeholders in China and the United States. Consider outsourcing Confucius Institutes' program/site evaluation to a third-party professional evaluation service. It has been ten years since China established the office of Hanban, and began exploring this new way of promoting its language and culture. Now it is time to slow down to reflect on its effectiveness. This is significant to Hanban and China, considering the tremendous amount of financial and human resources that is invested in each Confucius Institute. To correctly do this evaluation, it must come from objective, non-biased, two-sided perspectives.

2. Other than conducting internal auditing, Hanban must allow external auditing assistance to engage in Confucius Institutes' finances.
3. To enhance sustainability, the Confucius Institutes must continue strengthening their influence in local communities, both administratively and financially, as well as create more access to a wider range of local connections.
4. Reconsider the Chinese Director's role and impact in the CI. Currently, some of the Chinese Directors have limited participation in daily administration. Additionally, the two-year rotation program slows down progress as each new Chinese Director arrives, and this has led to a lack of synergy and consistency in the projects they participate in. In some other Confucius Institutes, the Chinese Directors and American Directors do not always agree and have become adversarial at times. Hanban must consider either 1) decreasing the number of expatriate Chinese Directors; sending delegates on a semi/quarter-annual basis to offer consulting and conduct evaluation simultaneously would be helpful; or 2) establishing a consistent structure that outlines Hanban's realistic expectation on Chinese Directors' roles, specific duties, and expected results.
5. Hire more intercultural-competent employees to mediate cultural differences. Currently, within Confucius Institutes, the collaborations are in different layers: collaborations between Chinese teachers and American students; collaborations between Chinese employees and American employees; collaborations between Hanban and the U.S. universities; and collaborations between Chinese government and the U.S. government. Differences will occur, and it is important for stakeholders involved with the Confucius Institute to be inter-culturally competent in dealing with cultural, political and ideological divergence. Confucius Institute staff must consist of more employees who are bi-cultural and flexible in both

cultures and languages. Confucius Institute A and Confucius Institute D have already realized the importance of having culturally competent employees. Assistant Director Jing from Confucius Institute A and Assistant Director Lynn from Confucius Institute D are both Chinese who have lived in America for a long time, and are fully acculturated. Because the Confucius Institute is a cross-national project, the two nations have different working styles and values. On the other hand, American employees must adjust to short notices given quite often by the Chinese. This was mentioned by several American employees during their individual interviews. Problems like these are not going to be easily solved by having bi-culturalists like Jing from Case A and Lynn from Case D on a single level; it must be expanded to an organizational level in training and experience. All stakeholders must be culturally and professionally prepared so that this multi-layered international project will be able to move forward. According to one of the Chinese Directors interviewed, Hanban has already taken action to replace a few Chinese Directors at a few Confucius Institutes with both culturally and linguistically competent local employees who are willing to sign a five-year contract. The host university will be in charge of recruiting the candidate they would like to work with, and Hanban will sign the contract with the candidate. This is a good move to reduce the inconsistencies of new Chinese Directors every two years. It will also build better communications and work channels. Hopefully, positive results will occur by this change.

6. The Confucius Institute will gain more credibility by getting accredited through more certification and credentialing programs. This is a branding strategy to assist the Confucius Institute in becoming an authority and go-to organization in Chinese testing and credentials. With reference to cultural education, Confucius Institute must develop more diverse and

engaging program content and formats to reach, entertain and attract a broader population. So far, Hanban has a couple of so called “brand projects:” Confucius Institute Day, Cultural Performance Troupes, and Chinese Bridge. However, these projects are not in big scale. The most popular project is the “Chinese Bridge”—an international Chinese language proficiency competition. According to Hanban’s most updated annual report, more than 100,000 students from 115 countries have participated in this global competition.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of this Research

This is a multiple case study on four of the Confucius Institutes in different geographic locations in America (one from Southwest, one from the Northwest, one from the East Coast, and the other from the Midwest), although some data were also collected on other Confucius Institutes in the United States. My inquiry is guided by the following research questions: 1) What is the nature of the Confucius Institute? 2) Why would a U.S. host institution want to house a Confucius Institute? 3) What appears to be the trends toward this Confucius Institute in its host institution in the future? The study aims to find out what the Confucius Institutes at American universities do, to what extent they serve as a political tool for China, what benefits are there for host institutions in America, and what the future trends of the Confucius Institutes are in America.

Through document analysis, informal interviews, participant-observation, and semi-structured interviews, I primarily focused on the opinions and perceptions from key personnel based in America, who set up and/or work or for the Confucius Institutes America. I was fortunate to have access to interview American staff members. However, when I first approached the staff members and asked about permission to interview, they were very guarded—primarily because the interview questions and topic of this research are politically-sensitive and could be viewed as judgmental or negative. I then explained that I was at one time a Confucius classroom teacher, and unlike other scholars who made critiques on the Confucius Institute without even trying to experience and understand what the Institutes are offering and doing, I understand what is going on within the Institutes and I am eager to give the Confucius Institutes, and the people who are passionate about building this cultural bridge, a voice.

The research questions and research design were not changed during the entire data collection stage. This is because the more interviews I conducted, the more I became sure that the questions were the right ones to ask. My interviewees resonated with the questions I asked, and were very open to having a real conversation with me. They encouraged me to dig further into the questions that they were not able to answer. One of the directors encouraged me by saying, “What you are doing is very beneficial for both Hanban and the Confucius Institutes, you should keep doing it.”

Studying four sites, I was able to answer my research questions with evidence. First, the Confucius Institute project is an international collaboration project between the Chinese government-backed education office called Hanban and American educational partners, particularly universities. The establishment of the Confucius Institute is based on a mutual interest between two partners, and under an agreed upon legal contract. Both parties understood all necessary legal and political implications, then gave their consent. Secondly, America’s interest and demand in getting to know more about China and the Chinese language has pushed the desire to host a Confucius Institute; whereas, China’s intention in spreading its language and culture (in order to promote its soft power) are the two main reasons why the Confucius Institute project has developed at a rapid rate in America. The Confucius Institute created a mutually beneficial situation: Hanban is willing to provide monetary support for programming costs, while American Directors carry the power and orchestrate directives. Thirdly, the long-term sustainability of the Confucius Institute seems to be a huge concern for all staff members. Not simply because of the controversial claims made by western scholars and recent closures of several centers, but the inability to be financially self-sustainable. Looking forward, efforts to keep the momentum going and the Institutes thriving will be challenging. This is because China

funds almost all the programming. If this financial support stops, many Confucius Institutes will likely close.

In hindsight, one thing that I wish I could change in this study, would be to build more personal connections with Hanban, to gain more access to their qualitative data. Unfortunately, having access to more data may be difficult, as there is a reason why the Chinese government made the data inaccessible. This does not mean that it is not possible. Certainly, it could be done through subterfuge, but that would have detrimental consequences.

6.2 Implication for China and Its Soft-power Agenda

6.2.1 China's Economic Boom and Change in Ideologies

Chairman Mao Zedong had a famous quote: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." From the Mao era to the Xi era, the dramatic changes in China are not just economic; they are also political and ideological. First, China's economic boom has impressed the rest of the world, leading to closer ties between China and America, the two giant economic entities. In 2016, the direct investment by China in the U.S. was on track to hit a record \$30 billion; this doubles the record in 2015 (Yan, 2016). In 2015, more than 2.5 million Chinese citizens traveled to the U.S., and among those, 780,000 Chinese tourists visited Los Angeles, spending more than \$1.1 billion. Chinese people's strong purchasing power and keen interest in buying luxury goods and making foreign investments has developed a new stereotype, a new image of the Chinese people. Instead of communism and a developing country, a dollar sign is now a new tag of the Chinese.

In 2013, Wikipedia officially defined Chinese Dama (literally "Chinese Aunties") as a group of Chinese middle-aged women who rushed to purchase gold as an investment in that year,

when the gold price plummeted, especially in April and October. Because there is an unpredictability in the rise and fall of the global gold market, Chinese Damas' blind investments in gold may be at risk. The Wall Street Journal coined the term "dama," referring to this specific group of people who would often frenetically purchase gold or other items. Chinese students abroad used to live on scholarships and stipends, and had two to three jobs in order to pay off tuition in foreign currency. Today, Chinese international students are those who can pay off expensive out-of-state tuition easily and drive high-end sports cars on campus. Universities, in knowing this, have begun to target their recruiting efforts toward international Chinese students because of their country's financial reputation.

With reference to foreign affairs, before the Xi era, China adopted a modest and cautious approach to the world that colloquially became known in the West as "hide and bide," after Deng's famous advice to his colleagues to "hide your capacities, and bide your time." However, under Mr. Xi, the Chinese people have moved away from hide and bide, and toward a foreign policy that challenges US dominance in the Asia-Pacific region (Rackman, 2016). The new China has replaced the worn and timid old China and is stronger and more aggressive than what it was twenty years ago. It has recognized its economic strength, and begun to expand its impact in other areas. To do this, China started to raise the awareness of soft power, and it has been actively devoting efforts in improving its national image and popularity throughout the world. China has realized that for countries with differences in political, economic, and cultural systems, the best way to influence public opinion is to increase mutual understanding and respect of differences through positive media messages and to encourage more cultural, educational, and business exchanges among countries (Servaes, 2016). The concept of soft power legitimized

China's branding efforts. Regardless of whether soft power is a translation error or not, it is evident that China's actions are of great deliberation.

6.2.2 China's Soft-power Strategy is Not Effective

The question remains: How is China's soft power agenda coming along? From a cost-effective perspective, it is probably not doing so well. Referencing the Confucius Institutes in America, after ten years of development and exploration, there are more than 480 CIs in the world, and more than 100 are located in the United States. Both countries agree that these are impressive numbers, so it seems that the Confucius Institute project is a great success. However, there is no specific evidence to prove that Americans know what the Confucius Institute is, or the political and cultural implications of such a partnership with China. Is the Confucius Institute project worth millions of dollars in investment from the Chinese government? That is unclear, as Hanban does not have such data to give an informed answer.

Many scholars also agree that the investment is a lot, and the result is somewhat disappointing. Shambaugh (2015) stated that Beijing is using its strongest instrument in soft power: money. China is no different than any other major power trying to leverage their financial assets to buy influence and shape the actions of others. However, China's investment is yielding low returns, with no demonstrable improvement of their national image as recorded from public opinion surveys. The disconnection lies in China's censorship of information. Shambaugh (2015) asserted that soft power cannot be bought; it must be earned. China must ease their restraints at home and reduce efforts in controlling opinions abroad, so that authentic human development and interactions can happen. In a special issue of *The Economist* (2014), the future of China was summed up this way: Economically and militarily, China has come a long way toward regaining

the centrality in Asia it enjoyed through much of history. China's President Xi may know how to assert himself and how to be feared at home and abroad, but without the ability to also exert a greater power of attraction, such strength will always tend to destabilize. China still has some way to go before its dream comes true to have its soft power appreciated and endorsed by people around the world (including its own people) as ethically sound and strategically solid.

Jacques (2012) concludes that for the time being, China has very little soft power in the West. One reason for this is China could not enjoy the 'appeal' that Western nations, especially the United States, had with the rest of the world: cultural capital and 'national brands' such as Hollywood, Silicon Valley, Broadway, NBA, and Pop Stars (pp. 609–610). Although more appearances of Chinese stars in Hollywood movies seem to have changed the perception, it is undeniable that China's cultural capital and national brands cannot compete with America. The key component that is lacking in Chinese cultural capital is appealing and widespread entertainment that spans all generations and is appreciated by all human beings, regardless of any differences in ethnicities, languages, nationalities, and ideologies.

From the staging of the Beijing Olympics in China, the large expansion of the Confucius Institutes, and the tremendous amount of Chinese money invested and spent abroad, the world saw a strong, rich, and impressive China, yet what they did not see is a China with unique, entertaining, and appealing characteristics. That is because China failed to show the world its cultural side. China no longer needs to impress the world—it has already done that in a dramatic way with the increase in economic growth. What it needs most is to enhance its soft power by using a simple and common language; not only a literal language that can be understood broadly, but a cultural language that can be transformed into multiple cultural products through various formats, especially through the media.

Many of China's cultural products that are understood and adored by the world are symbols of ancient Chinese history, such as Confucianism, Taoism, martial arts, Tai Chi, and the four great inventions (the compass, gunpowder, papermaking, and printing). In contrast, Korea offers drama, K-pop, American pop culture, European high fashion brands, and other cultural products that best represent their contemporary values and cultural symbols. They are trendy, but also timeless. Nothing from contemporary China is seen as the new cultural symbol to represent them; they do not recognize their own comparable offerings.

International relations and foreign policy are influenced by public opinion, and public opinion may be influenced by information in the media (Altinay, 2011; Hayden, 2012; Pamment, 2013; Servaes, 2013). If China wants to promote its soft power and attractiveness, it should develop more entertaining cultural products through new media, such as movies, drama, and music that can be appreciated and enjoyed by the general population. China must look for diverse venues to properly present its cultural products in appealing and receptive ways. They must be mindful of their efforts and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions.

China demonstrates its hard power through the way the Confucius Institute is run. While China is a hard power with a strong economy and global status, it pushes an outdated agenda, disguised as a language and culture project. To that end, the Confucius Institute project falls into the contemporary Chinese expectation of doing projects and events in a very grand, expensive and impressive style, similar to the Chinese Dama. One of the Chinese directors mentioned in our interview stated, "People know Hanban is generous so many of them come to Confucius Institute just to ask for funding. Hanban rarely keeps track of how the funding is used and how the program quality is." This statement is troublesome. It was clear that Hanban and the Chinese government behave this way because they are proud of themselves, having what is called "faces"

(面子). China is over-compensating its mental insecurity by spending, investing, and making a “noisy” presence.

Years ago, Chinese students were taught to always remember that we had a long and glorious history; however, the invasions and colonization in the past century were shameful to all Chinese people. Ever since, China has been tagged as a weak and developing country. Now, through years of development, China has attained a strong position in its economy and international politics. The Chinese feel the outside world finally began to recognize their country. They are thrilled and eager to show the world how great they are. However, along with the economic development, Chinese cultural capital has not progressed. There is a disconnect between the rich ancient Chinese culture and the fast-developing, modern Chinese culture. Values, orientations, and ideologies have changed with the economic development; and the new Chinese generations have yet to develop their own culture and identities. That is why China’s soft power agenda did not include much content about promoting the country, other than the ancient Chinese cultural products. China has finally made it to the game of soft power, but is not one of the top contenders.

6.2.3 A Consideration for Next Steps

Although I do not agree with Zhou and Luk (2016) that the Confucius Institute (CI) project does not help to enhance China’s soft power, I strongly agree that China needs to reconsider the delegation of soft power and update its practical model with an international appeal. If China cannot figure out what kind of core values CIs aim to offer, foreigners will continue to formulate their own perceptions of China, regardless of the Confucius Institute’s efforts. In fact, Qin (2016) points out that the main issue with China fitting into the world is its

identity dilemma. China should be concerned about its “value crisis” and its new “money-worship society.”

China spends approximately \$10 billion on soft power activities annually and by contrast, the U.S. State Department spent under \$700 million on public diplomacy in fiscal year 2014 (Shambaugh, 2015). The difference in yield is significant. China’s global influence is nowhere near the caliber of influence to that of America. America’s system and culture provide an inviting opportunity for originality and creativity. China needs to do the same—to provide its people with a healthy, free, and open environment. This is also the key to a full-fledged development in creativity, originality, cultural capital, and national identity.

The Chinese government must turn the enhancement of China’s soft power into a commercialized industry. In doing so, the free market would serve as healthy soil to encourage positive competition. The government does not need to spend a lot of money on operating national projects; instead, it can collect fruitful results produced by individuals in the industry.

In planning collaborative projects, teams must consist of inter-culturalists and inter-linguists: people who are fluent in understanding and communicating counterparts’ language and culture. The basic foundation of mutual understanding is sending and receiving the correct information and meaning. Language and culture are interconnected and moving forward, these two must meld as one in order to relay effective intentions of displaying a modern China. When American Director Jennifer first received documents translated from Chinese to English (from Hanban), she was surprised to find out that all “宣传 (Xuan Chuan), which is publicity, were translated into the word, propaganda. “And it takes someone who knows good Chinese, Chinese culture, and good English to understand it’s about publicity, not propaganda,” she said.

Secondly, having a tolerant, understanding, and respectful attitude is important in making a successful international collaboration. In Case C, the cooperation between Chinese Director Dr. Hong and American Director Mike is a good example to prove this point. Lastly, to make others appreciate and be attracted to a foreign cultural product, the product itself has to be easy-to-understand. It must be successful in entertaining people, regardless of their cultural and ethnic divergence. Once people become interested and find it entertaining, then more complicated products that contain deeper meaning and more value can gradually be introduced.

6.3 Limitation of This Study

This is a multi-case study. As Yin (2009) mentioned, the case study approach is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, and related phenomena. The case study method also allowed me to contextualize my assumptions and questions, so that I was able to examine different nuances in various Confucius Institutes in different states, witness the power dynamics between Chinese and American Directors, and uncover the hidden agendas behind China and America's political intentions. This multi-case study method offered me an opportunity to look into the individual work of each of the specific Confucius Institutes in the United States where I collected information, which helped me from over-generalizing qualitative data.

However, because of my research design I came to realize that this study suffers from a lack of generalizability. In America, as of 2017, there are 109 Confucius Institutes, and visiting every one of them is not feasible. I began my research with the assumption that Confucius Institutes in different locations share diverse, local characters. From there, I selected four cases representing different geographic areas in the United States. However, after visiting just a

handful, I realized that simply categorizing the Confucius Institutes by their locations is not enough.

As mentioned in the last chapter, although 78% of the Confucius Institutes are located and partnered with public universities, 16% are partnered with private universities, while the other 6% are located and partnered with local China-related educational non-profit organizations. Additionally, there is much variety within private schools hosting a Confucius Institute. For example, there are traditional Black colleges, liberal arts colleges, and comprehensive universities. CIs are also located in public school districts, local Chinese cultural centers, and Chinese business associations. Particularly with my four cases, each Confucius Institute was housed at a public university. Although I called several Confucius Institutes at private universities, due to lack of financial resources in research, I was not able to physically visit and conduct in-depth case studies on them. Therefore, it is important to note that there are more Confucius Institutes with varying diverse characteristics, which I was unable to categorize and generalize.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of access to quantitative data such as the number of overall enrollment, number of event participants, expenses on projects and other costs from each case. I had no intention of doing program evaluations on each sample case, nor any evaluation of Hanban's management. Yet during my in-depth investigation of each site, I recognized that actual quantitative data from host institutions would be complementary to qualitative data. All of the American host institutions must submit a year-end report to Hanban summarizing what programs they offered, the impact and scale of the programs and events, and the expenses and budget for the next year. The annual report from each Confucius Institute is not public; the only published data is the annual report on all Confucius Institutes, globally written

by Hanban. Therefore, without more concrete quantitative data from each host institution in America, it would be hard to measure and visualize the impact of each site, to better understand the function and nature of each Confucius Institute, and to answer the question of whether both China and America's investments have reached their goal.

Lastly, this research would provide more validity if more qualitative data from interviewing management teams or individuals from Hanban was obtainable. Most interviewees are staff members representing American host institutions; therefore, the data generated from these interviews provide a general picture of how American host institutions see themselves, the Confucius Institute, and Hanban. If more direct data was obtained from the other side—Hanban (since only Chinese Directors represent the Chinese side, and there is only one Chinese Director from each case), I would be able to collect more insightful and objective evidence that demonstrates how each particular Confucius Institute became what it is today, and what it will become in the future. Moreover, with more data from Hanban, I would also be able to understand how this international collaboration project is executed from top to bottom and east to west. I would then be able to study the implications and make more concrete recommendations.

6.4. Areas for Future Research

This study intends to find out the nature of the Confucius Institutes, their impacts to both China and the U.S., and some guidance on how to effectively collaborate on international education projects for both countries. There are still considerable amounts of effort to be made in order to fully understand the nature and impact of the Confucius Institutes, as they are still constantly changing and growing.

As mentioned, one of the limitations of this study is the lack of sample sizes to generalize a typology of the Confucius Institutes in America. More in-depth research should be conducted on developing a more defined typology of the Confucius Institutes in America and worldwide. For example, using a case study from the Confucius Institutes in private traditional Black Colleges would offer a comparative perspective to most Confucius Institutes in public universities.

Secondly, as noted in Chapter Three, almost no serious journalistic or ethnographic investigation on how the Chinese teachers are trained or how the content of courses and textbooks are chosen were conducted. It would be interesting to find out what kind of cultural and educational influence the expat Chinese teachers brought to their foreign students, and during their time abroad, in what aspects were they being influenced or changed?

Thirdly, this study focused heavily on the American staff's perspective. More in-depth interviews should be conducted with staff from Hanban or related people from the higher hierarchy in the Chinese Ministry of Education. This way, we are able to find out not only how America perceives China, Hanban and the Confucius Institute, but also how China views America, China itself, and the Confucius Institute.

In addition, polls and attitude surveys would be useful in terms of measuring the impact of the Confucius Institute abroad; tracer studies or other types of longitudinal studies would be helpful in tracking the long-term influence of the Confucius Institute on their students and local community, and the effectiveness of China's soft power agenda. There is no comprehensive research of the Confucius Institutes on a global scale. So far, most research is conducted through the lens of geographic and cultural proximity. A bigger and more exhaustive study of Confucius

Institutes worldwide would provide us with a better understanding of this international education project.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, I was told by one of the directors I interviewed that more evaluative research on the Confucius Institutes abroad should be conducted so that Hanban has an idea of what is going on. I personally would like to keep replicating more case studies on other Confucius Institutes throughout the world. This study would be more meaningful and comprehensive if I could have more support from Hanban, to gain accessibility to concrete data, other staff members, and other resources, including funding.

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Number of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classroom across the globe by the end of 2016

Region	Confucius Institute	Confucius Classroom
Asia	110	90
Africa	46	23
America	157	544
Europe	169	257
Oceania	18	86

Source: Hanban. http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm

Appendix B: List of Confucius Institutes in the U.S., by the end of 2016 (Source: Hanban)

- Confucius Institute at the University of Maryland
- Confucius Institute at San Francisco State University
- Confucius Institute at the College of William & Mary
- Confucius Institute at China Institute
- Confucius Institute at the University of Kansas
- Confucius Institute at the University of Hawaii at Manoa
- University of Massachusetts Confucius Institute at Boston
- Confucius Institute at the University of Iowa
- Confucius Institute at Michigan State University
- Confucius Institute at Pace University
- Confucius Institute at the University of Oklahoma
- Confucius Institute at Purdue University
- Confucius Institute at the University of Missouri
- Confucius Institute at North Carolina State University
- Confucius Institute at Bryant University
- Confucius Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles
- Confucius Institute at University of California, Davis
- Confucius Institute at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Confucius Institute at Tulane University
- Confucius Institute at Portland State University
- Confucius Institute at the University of Rhode Island
- Confucius Institute at Community College of Denver
- Confucius Institute at New Mexico State University
- Confucius Institute at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Confucius Institute at the University of Pittsburgh
- Confucius Institute at Arizona State University

- Confucius Institute at the University of Oregon
- Confucius Institute at the University of Memphis
- Confucius Institute at Wayne State University
- Confucius Institute at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
- Confucius Institute at the University of Central Arkansas
- Confucius Institute at Valparaiso University
- Confucius Institute at Miami University
- Confucius Institute in Indianapolis
- Confucius Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville
- Confucius Institute at Texas A&M University
- Confucius Institute at Troy University
- Confucius Institute at the University of Utah
- Confucius Institute at the University of Arizona
- Confucius Institute at Xavier University of Louisiana
- Confucius Institute at Houston Independent School District
- Confucius Institute at Broward County Public Schools
- Confucius Institute at East Central Ohio Educational Service Center
- Confucius Institute at Colorado State University
- Confucius Institute at Auburn University at Montgomery
- Confucius Institute at Old Dominion University
- Confucius Institute at Central Connecticut State University
- Confucius Institute at Texas Southern University
- Confucius Institute at the University of Texas at Dallas
- Confucius Institute at Webster University
- Confucius Institute at the University of South Florida
- Confucius Institute at the University of Minnesota
- Confucius Institute in Atlanta
- Confucius Institute at the University of Akron

- Confucius Institute at the University of Montana
- Confucius Institute at the University of South Carolina
- Confucius Institute at Cleveland State University
- Confucius Institute at Kennesaw State University
- Confucius Institute at Pfeiffer University
- Confucius Institute at San Diego State University
- Confucius Institute at the University of Toledo
- Confucius Institute at Alfred University
- Confucius Institute at Stony Brook University
- Confucius Institute at George Mason University
- Confucius Institute at Presbyterian College
- Confucius Institute at University of Michigan
- Confucius Institute at Western Michigan University
- Confucius Institute of the State of Washington
- Confucius Institute at the George Washington University
- Confucius Institute at the University of Idaho
- Confucius Institute at the University of Southern Maine
- Confucius Institute at University of West Florida
- Confucius Institute at Prairie View A&M University
- Confucius Institute at the University at Albany, State University of New York
- Confucius Institute at Dickinson State University
- Confucius Institute at St. Cloud State University
- Confucius Institute at Augusta University
- Confucius Institute at Miami Dade College
- Confucius Institute at Middle Tennessee University
- Confucius Institute at University of Tennessee
- Confucius Institute at Wesleyan College
- Confucius Institute at State College of Optometry, State University of New York

- Confucius Institute in Chicago
- Confucius Institute for Business at State University of New York
- Confucius Institute at Columbia University
- Confucius Institute at State University of New York at Buffalo
- Confucius Institute at the University of Texas at San Antonio
- Confucius Institute of Chinese Opera at Binghamton University
- Confucius Institute at Stanford University
- Confucius Institute at West Kentucky University
- Confucius Institute at the University of Kentucky
- Confucius Institute at the University of Delaware
- Confucius Institute at the University of New Hampshire
- Confucius Institute at Georgia State University
- Confucius Institute at University of Alaska Anchorage
- Confucius Institute at the Northern State University
- Confucius Institute at Tufts University
- Confucius Institute at Kansas State University
- Confucius Institute at University of North Florida
- Confucius Institute at Alabama A&M University
- Confucius Institute at California State University, Long Beach
- Confucius Institute at Temple University
- Confucius Institute at West Virginia University
- Confucius Institute at Southern Utah University
- Confucius Institute at New Jersey City University
- Confucius Institute at Clark County School District
- Confucius Institute at Davis School District
- Confucius Institute at Savannah State University
- Confucius Institute at the University of California, Santa Barbara
- Confucius Institute at Northwest Nazarene University

Appendix C: List of Interviews

University A

Pseudonym	Title	Ethnicity
Janet	Director	Caucasian
Mr. Zhang	Assistant Director (China side)	Chinese
Hailey	Program Manager	Caucasian
Jing	Program Manager	Chinese

University B

Pseudonym	Title	Ethnicity
Karen	Director/ Dean of College XYZ	Caucasian
Xun	Assistant Director (China side)	Chinese
Judy	Office Coordinator	Caucasian
Huang	Chinese teacher	Chinese

University C

Pseudonym	Title	Ethnicity
Mike	Director	Caucasian
Dr. Hong	Assistant Director (China side)	Chinese
Justin	Office Coordinator	Caucasian
Liu	Chinese teacher	Chinese
Tang	Chinese teacher	Chinese

University D

Pseudonym	Title	Ethnicity
Jennifer	Director	Caucasian
Kang	Assistant Director (China side)	Chinese
Lynn	Assistant Director	Chinese
Sarah	Community Specialist	Caucasian
Jun	Assistant Director (China side) at University D's satellite office	Chinese

Others:

Pseudonym	Title	Ethnicity
Tina	Director	Chinese
Li	Director	Chinese
Nan	Chairman of APECF	Chinese
Leo	Student Coordinator	Chinese
Alexa	Student Coordinator	Chinese
David	Student	Caucasian

Appendix D: IRB Approval



University of California Los Angeles
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211 Los Angeles, CA
90095-1694

<http://ohrpp.research.ucla.edu>

GC-IRB:
(310)
825-712
2
M-IRB:
(310)
825-534
4

APPROVAL NOTICE

DATE:	5/20/2015
TO:	JIAYING SONG EDUCATION
FROM:	TODD FRANKE, PhD Chair, NGIRB
RE:	IRB#14-000130-AM-00001 Adding study sites The Manifestation of China's Soft Power Agenda in American Higher Education- The Case of the Confucius Institutes

The UCLA Institutional Review Board (UCLA IRB) has approved the above-referenced study. UCLA's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) with Department of Health and Human Services is FWA00004642. Submission and Review Information

Type of Submission	Amendment
Type of Review	IRB Review: Expedited
Approval Date	5/20/2015
Expiration Date of the Study	4/6/2017

Specific Conditions for Approval

-- The IRB has determined that this study meets the criteria for a 3 year extended approval. (For reference, please see the OHRPP guidance document "Extended Approval for Minimal Risk Research Not Subject to Federal Oversight" at http://ora.research.ucla.edu/OHRPP/Documents/Policy/4/Extended_Approval.pdf)

Regulatory Determinations

-- The UCLA IRB waived the requirement for informed consent under 45 CFR 46.116(d) for the observation procedures.

-- The UCLA IRB waived the requirement for signed informed consent for the interviews with participants under 45 CFR 46.117(c)(2).

-- The UCLA IRB determined that the research meets the requirements for expedited review per 45 CFR 46.110 categories 6 and 7.

Currently approved recruitment and/or consent documents:

Document Name	Document Version #
14-000130_Consent form-ucla.PDF.pdf	0.01
14-000130_participant recruitment email.PDF.pdf	0.01
14-000130_Study information sheet-Mandarin.PDF.pdf	0.01
14-000130_Consent form in Mandarin.PDF.pdf	0.01
14-000130_Study information sheet.PDF.pdf	0.01

Important Note: Approval by the Institutional Review Board does not, in and of itself, constitute approval for the implementation of this research. Other UCLA clearances and approvals or other external agency or collaborating institutional approvals may be required before study activities are initiated. Research undertaken in conjunction with outside entities, such as drug or device companies, are typically contractual in nature and require an agreement between the University and the entity.

General Conditions of Approval

As indicated in the PI Assurances as part of the IRB requirements for approval, the PI has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the study, the ethical performance of the project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the IRB.

The PI and study team will comply with all UCLA policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in research, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Ensuring that the personnel performing the project are qualified, appropriately trained, and will adhere to the provisions of the approved protocol, Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent process or documents without prior IRB approval (except in an emergency, if necessary to safeguard the well-being of human subjects and then notifying the IRB as soon as possible afterwards),
- Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from human subjects of their legally responsible representative, and using only the currently approved consent process and stamped consent documents, as appropriate, with human subjects,
- Reporting serious or unexpected adverse events as well as protocol violations or other incidents related to the protocol to the IRB according to the OHRPP reporting requirements.
- Assuring that adequate resources to protect research participants (i.e., personnel, funding, time, equipment and space) are in place before implementing the research project, and that the research will stop if adequate resources become unavailable.
- Arranging for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility of the study if the PI will be unavailable to direct this research personally, for example, when on sabbatical leave or vacation or other absences. Either this person is named as co-investigator in this application, or advising IRB via webIRB in advance of such arrangements.

Appendix E: Consent Form

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

THE MANIFESTATION OF CHINA'S SOFT POWER AGENDA IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Case Study of the Confucius Institute

Jiaying Song, from the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) are conducting a research study. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have worked or are working at the Confucius Institute. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

The increasing number of Confucius Institutes has received world-wide attention. This phenomenon has also raised a huge debate on Chinese's soft-power agenda. . The majority of the research focuses on its influence, and how it is being used as a tool of China's national soft power strategy in general; yet little research has been done on the receptivity of Confucius Institutes by its host institutions, their role on campus and to what extent do they serve as China's political propaganda on an U.S campus and how. This study aims to find out the role of the Confucius Institute and American's attitude towards it.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Participation involves being interviewed by Jiaying Song. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made. If participants refuse to be recorded or taped, the researcher will not tape or record the interview.

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about 30—45 minutes.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

- There might be some questions regarding personal politics. If participants are asked a question that they do not feel comfortable answering, they could refuse to answer the question.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

You will not benefit directly from your participation in this research.

Multiple stakeholders will benefit from this project. The Confucius Institute will gain a better sense of what kind of role they are playing on campus, the influence of their programming, as well as the receptivity of its existence on campus. Secondly, the Hanban (the Confucius Institute headquarter) will gain some knowledge of the quality of the partnership between two universities. Thirdly, the host institution will benefit from this study in that, they will gain a better understanding of what exactly the impact is to have a Confucius Institute on campus, and they can use the study result to juxtapose their benefits and risks of hosting the Confucius Institute.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Any identifying information will be stored separately in a hard drive which will be locked in the PI's (Jiaying Song) drawer, and Jiaying is the only who has the key.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The primary investigator:**
If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can contact Jiaying Song at jiaying@ucla.edu. Val Rust: Rust@gseis.ucla.edu
- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Contact Number

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix F: Consent Form Mandarin version

加州大学洛杉矶分校

参与研究同意书

中国软实力在美国高校的表现

孔子学院案例研究

宋佳颖是一名来自加州大学洛杉矶分校，教育学院的博士生。您之所以被邀请来参与这项研究，是因为您曾经在孔子学院或者正在孔子学院工作。您的参与完全是自愿的。

孔子学院在美国乃至全球的数量越来越多，这也是中国软实力提高的表现。那么孔子学院到底在美国有多受欢迎，他具体是做什么的，在高校中担当了身那么样的较色呢？这项研究的目的，就是想找出美国人对孔子学院的态度。

如果我参与之后会让我做什么？

如果您自愿参加的话，您会被邀请做以下事情：

- 宋佳颖将会采访您。参访大约有 30-45 分钟。在采访的过程中，宋佳颖会做笔记，同时您的访谈将会被录音。如果您不希望访谈被录音，请告知，宋佳颖不会录音访谈。

参与这项研究有什么潜在威胁吗？

- 访谈里会有一些敏感的政治问题，如果您不愿作答，您可以拒绝回答该问题。

我参与之后有什么好处吗？

- 您不会直接从这项研究里获得益处。但是，这项研究的结果将有利于孔子学院，汉办以及美国高校。孔子学院可以更好地了解他们在校园和社区的影响力。汉办也能了解到两合作院校的关系质量到底如何。美国高校也能更好地平衡孔子学院所带来的利与弊。

研究人员将如何保护我的隐私？

任何与研究相关的信息将会作为保密信息。只有在您同意或者法律支持的必要时刻才会被公开。所有与您身份认证相关的信息将会被储存在单独的一个硬盘里，而这个硬盘将会被锁在主要研究人员宋佳颖的抽屉，只有她才有抽屉的钥匙。

我在这项研究里的权利是什么？

- 您可以选择参与或者不参与研究。如果您决定参与之后，可以随时推出研究并要回同意书。
- 无论您做什么决定都不会有任何惩罚，或者影响您现在应有的优惠。
- 您可以在参与研究中拒绝回答任何问题。

如果我有问题，我应该联系谁？

- **主要研究人员**
如果您对这项研究有任何的问题，请邮件宋佳颖 jiaying@ucla.edu，或者 Val Rust：
Rust@gseis.ucla.edu
- **加州洛杉矶大学人类研究保护组织 (OHRPP)：**
如果您对您的权益或者权利有问题，或者有意见或者建议，并且您想和非研究人员讨论，请致电 OHRPP，号码是：(310) 825-7122 或写信至

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program

11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

您将会得到这份文件的拷贝存根

参与者签名

姓名

签名

日期

同意书获得者签名

姓名

联系电话

签名

日期

Appendix G: Interview Protocol

My name is Jiaying Song and I am a researcher from the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies at UCLA.

Before we begin, I want to share with you this consent form on the research study and give you a few minutes to read it and confirm you are interested in participating. If you are, I'll ask you to sign two copies so that we can have a copy and you can take a copy with you.

I'm also going to reiterate a couple of key points from the consent form.

1. You can share what you wish to share. If you would rather not respond to a particular question, that is fine. You can simply indicate so.
2. You are free to choose not to participate in all or any part of this study. At any time, you can excuse yourself without any consequences.
3. I am asking your permission to tape record the interview. When I transcribe the dialogue, I will insert pseudonyms for each of you. You also have the right to listen to these audiotapes before I have erased them and request that specific information be edited or deleted from the study.

Questions:

1. Background information (Job, relationships with the Confucius institute).
2. How was the partnership established? Who were the decision makers?
3. In your opinion, what is the role of the Confucius Institute at this University? What is its main function?
4. Where does the funding come from? How is the funding being used?
5. What is the role of Chinese director at the Confucius Institute? What are the differences between the American director and the Chinese director in terms of job duties?
6. From the perspective of university administrator, is this university satisfied with the achievements made by the Confucius Institute so far? Why?
7. What do you think of the controversy about the Confucius Institute?
8. Do you think the partnership between the university and Hanban is going to sustain for the long run?

In the end, thank the interviewee for participation.

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