

Private-sector partnerships include an exchange program of the new Singapore Management University, established in 2000 as the first publicly funded private university, with a focus on business and management. A one- or two-semester exchange is offered with three Chinese partners: Nankai University, Sun Yat Sen University, and Xiamen University. Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry offers Asian Business Fellowships to such exchange students.

CONCLUSION

These collaborations illustrate several key points about internationalization. First, Singapore's misplaced optimism that led to its failed science park venture in Suzhou underlines the fact that presumed cultural and linguistic affinity does not serve as an adequate basis for international partnerships (especially beyond the first-generation diaspora). Second, the fact that most of the partnerships indicated above are in the area of business and administration underlines a more widespread bias in such agreements. Thus, the prospects for developing effective partnerships in areas such as the social sciences and humanities do not appear strong. Third, the strength of regional partnerships and agreements is a refreshing reminder that not all internationalization occurs between "the West and the rest," or between elite institutions in the West. Internationalization is a broad river, with many fascinating if still largely unexplored tributaries. ■

China's Soft Power Projection in Higher Education

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Commensurate with China's rise as an economic and political power has been a concurrent rise in Chinese soft power. China's emerging status as a world leader has become an issue that urgently needs to be examined. The realm of higher education has been the focus of China's most systematically planned soft power policy. Despite the significance of the subject, little attention is being directed to this rise of China's power. There has been no research on the role of higher education in China's projection and on the strategies and policy tools Beijing has used to boost its soft power through higher education.

THE CONCEPT OF SOFT POWER

Coined by Harvard University political scientist Joseph Nye to mean the ability to change what others do or shape what they want, the term soft power is usually defined as culture, education, and diplomacy and providing the capacity to persuade other nations to adopt the same goals. This approach has been a fundamental part of military thinking in China for over 2000 years. Generations of Chinese leaders have adopted the stratagems and long-term planning stated in Sunzi's *Art of War* of the 4th century BCE—a part of statecraft that looked to an integrated strategy to "win victories without striking a blow." Another component of the concept, moral leadership by exemplar, also resonates in Chinese tradition. A main paradigm of Chinese governance is Confucianism, which operates on a reciprocal and ethical basis. A ruler is supposed to demonstrate moral excellence, taking wise decisions on behalf of his (very rarely her) subjects, to keep the state secure and prosperous.

SOFT POWER THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

Today, "winning hearts and minds" still composes an important part of the international higher education equation. Educational exchange falls under the rubric of soft power. Connections between institutions of higher education are a stabilizing and civilizing influence. China has been consciously promoting international exchange and collaboration in education. Indeed, China has been skillfully employing soft power to expand its global influence. One effective policy strategy has been the combination of higher education with the appeal of Confucianism—to offer Beijing a comparative advantage in its approach.

China's soft power gambit is most evident in Africa. China has committed to contributing to the development of human resources in Africa. As of 2003, over 6,000 Africans had been trained as part of the program. Scholarships for over 1,500 African students are annually awarded by China, and many Chinese universities have established relationships with African institutions. China sent 10 teams of experts and launched 14 workshops in African countries over the past 5 years covering library science, dossier management, archaeology, biology, dance, and acrobatics. Chinese technical aid to Africa is becoming increasingly important in building China's influence in the region. Medical, agricultural, and engineering teams have provided technical aid to African countries for decades to support everything from building projects to treating AIDS patients. This support for education improves China's image, builds grassroots support in local communities, and creates a better understanding of China among the educated elite.

Soft power can be "high," targeted at elites, or "low," targeted at the broader public. Though soft power stems from both governments and nongovernmental actors, one can identify strategies and policy tools Beijing has consciously used to

boost its soft power and thus increase its legitimacy as an emerging superpower. Their desires for national revival include returning to the position China had before a rising Europe began to eclipse it in the 18th century. Beijing's innovative and most systematically planned soft power policy involves a two-way strategy: hosting international students and building up the Confucius Institutes worldwide.

HOSTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Training future generations of intellectuals, technicians, and political elites from other nations is a subtle yet important form of soft power. This was the role of Great Britain at its imperial zenith and of the United States ever since the 1950s, and now China increasingly fills this role. China is recruiting students from all parts of the world, with particular focus on developing countries. These future generations of elites will certainly be sensitized to Chinese viewpoints and interests, with knowledge of the Chinese language, society, culture, history, and politics.

Increasing numbers of foreign students are attracted to undergraduate or postgraduate study in China. The enrollment of foreign students from 178 countries studying for advanced degrees at China's universities has tripled in 2004 to 110,800 from 36,000 over the past decades, surpassing the flow of Chinese students to foreign universities, marking a 10-year high—an increase of over 40 percent from 2003. The belief that to get ahead, it behooves you to go to China, represents what 10 years ago people said about the United States. China's Ministry of Education plans to host 120,000 foreign students annually by 2007, most of them in programs of Chinese language and culture. China is investing in promotion of Mandarin as one of the global languages.

THE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES

The National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (Hanban) is establishing Confucius Institutes to spread the teaching of Mandarin and Chinese culture around the world. The goal is to quadruple the number of foreigners studying Chinese to 100 million by 2010. The first Confucius Institute was inaugurated in Seoul in November 2004. Since then, the institutes have opened in cities such as Stockholm, Perth, and Nairobi. More than 85 of these institutes have been established worldwide, and Beijing aims eventually to open some 100 of them. In many ways the institutes are patterned after the British Council, Goethe Institute, or Alliance Française. The Chinese government recently committed nearly US\$25 million a year for the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

However, the Confucius Institutes differ in significant ways from the long-established agents of French and German culture. Those European organizations are government agencies and fully dependent on state funds for their operations, but they locate their offices in normal commercial locations, wherever their governments can rent appropriate space. There is no

attempt to integrate them into their host societies via institutional linkups. In contrast, the Confucius Institutes are being incorporated into leading universities around the world as well as being linked to China not only through their Hanban connections but also by supportive twinning arrangements with key Chinese universities. The London School of Economics, for example, is setting up an institute using arrangements under which it will cooperate with Tsinghua University. Not only will the Confucius Institutes immediately benefit from the prestige and convenience of becoming parts of existing campuses, the latter will also have a vested interest in supply-

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ing the institutes with staff and funds. The more successful the institutes, the greater potential for them to be used as agents of Beijing's foreign policy in the future. The institutes are a small but significant part of what seems to be the equivalent of a soft-power offensive via the promotion of Chinese language and culture as well as preparing the way to raise Mandarin toward the status currently enjoyed by English.

CONCLUSION

China's projection of soft power in higher education has challenged both the traditional and more recent explanations of the political economy of international higher education—characterized, respectively, by North-South imbalances and asymmetries and a strong orientation for international market share. Moreover, this is happening as China aspires to become the new focal point of educational and research excellence, but many Western countries are reducing investment in their flagship universities, and Japan is disinclined to increase the scientific capacity of its greatest institutions of higher education. China's use of international exchange and cooperation in higher education as an exercise of soft power is unprecedented and has gone far beyond the comfort zone of the traditional theories. It is thus both theoretically and practically significant to observe how Beijing endeavors to create a paradigm of globalization that favors China, portrays itself as a world leader, and attempts to better position itself in a multipolar, post-Cold War environment. ■