
CHANGING FOREIGN PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS THROUGH CULTURE

Comparative study of the Cultural Diplomacy of France and China
in the Mekong sub-region

by

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ABSTRACT

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As the 21st century world continues to evolve, globalisation continues to alter the nature of the relations between states and the balance of power amongst them. Both globalization and the dominance of liberal thought have created a global appeal for values, culture, inclusive policies and regional and international cooperation through institutions. Within this context, the dynamic of power has transformed. The legitimacy of hard power and coercion has been questioned and in its place, the importance of international relations built on soft power (especially through cultural cooperation) has emerged. The model of soft power that is centred on cultural diplomacy is now a priority for many states because it forges stringer bonds between them, thus softening the potential threat that is inherently present in hard power. Through cultural diplomacy, states can improve upon relationships that were once oppressive and hard-power based. Cultural diplomacy has provided states with a less-threatening way of exerting influence on each other.

This study examines aspects of the cultural diplomacy of France and China in order to investigate how and if cultural diplomacy constitutes a better national image as perceived by the publics and governments of the Mekong sub-region. By using Waltz's levels of analysis and empirical examples from the Mekong sub-region, the effects of France and China's cultural

diplomacy are examined. Specific attention is paid to Viet Nam because of its distinctively temperamental relationships with France and China in the past.

The study concludes that although cultural diplomacy proves favourable for France's influence in the Viet Nam and the Mekong sub-region, China is not enjoying the same benefits, specifically in reference to Viet Nam. Cultural diplomacy is only a valuable tool when it is coupled with several mitigating factors like the legitimacy of France and China, the coherence of their foreign policy actions, and the willingness of Viet Nam to receive outside influence. Unfortunately for China, the tenacity and inflexibility that it has displayed towards regional states in territorial disputes has negated the potential benefits of its cultural diplomacy in Viet Nam.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Literature Review	6
	A. Soft Power.....	7
	B. Public Diplomacy	12
	C. Cultural Diplomacy.....	14
III.	Methodology.....	21
	A. Thesis statement.....	21
	B. Empirical Theory	21
	C. Significance of this study.....	24
IV.	CHINA.....	28
	A. Introduction to Chinese Cultural Diplomacy	28
	B. China’s history with the Mekong sub-region.....	35
	C. Examples of Chinese Cultural Diplomacy in the MSR	41
V.	FRANCE	47
	A. Introduction to France’s Cultural Diplomacy	47
	B. France’s History with states in the MSR	53
	C. Examples of France’s Cultural Diplomacy in the MSR.....	54
VI.	The Special Case of VIET NAM.....	58
	A. Shifting Power in Viet Nam.....	58
	B. Systemic Level analysis.....	59
	C. Elite actor/Individual Level analysis.....	62
	D. State Level analysis.....	64
	E. Effectiveness of China’s Cultural Diplomacy in Viet Nam.....	69
VII.	Conclusion.....	76
VIII.	References	79

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia Europe Meeting
IDecaf	Institute of Cultural Exchange with France in Ho Chi Minh City
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
MSR	Mekong sub-region
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
VOV	Voice of Vietnam News agency

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Cultural Diplomacy as a vehicle for soft power	6
Figure 2: Waltz's Three Levels-of-Analysis.....	22

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Lencowski's Cultural Tools vs. Cull's 4 Types of Cultural Diplomacy.....	17
Table 2 - Lencowski's Cultural Tools vs. Cull's 4 Types of Cultural Diplomacy	18
Table 3: Territory of the Chinese empires (221 BC - 1911 AD).....	37
Table 4: France's cultural organisation/institutions in Viet nam	51
Table 5: China's Sources of Cultural Diplomacy in Viet nam	66
Table 6: France's cultural organisations/ Institutions	72

I. Introduction

You see I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world, and procure them its praise (Jefferson, 1975).

Thomas Jefferson expressed his understanding of the importance of an internationally admired national image¹ and how, in order to establish and maintain this, a state's arts, culture and values have a large role to play (Jefferson, 1975). In the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines Culture as "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group. In addition to art and literature, it encompasses lifestyles, basic human rights, value systems, traditions, and beliefs..." (UNESCO, 2001). In this paper, values are moral, principles or standards that guide the behaviour of a society that shares a culture.

Jefferson (1975) understood that through culture, a state's reputation, respect and esteem in the international community could be improved. In international relations, this tendency towards using the 'pull' of an attractive culture as a foreign policy² tool for gaining influence and favour, is called 'soft power'³ (Nye, 2004a; Gallarotti, 2010). Soft Power⁴ is used by states and the leaders of states (like Jefferson) to influence the preferences or behaviours of other states.

¹ National image is the general impression that a state makes on the foreign public.

² Foreign policy is the term given to "statements, behaviours and actions of states" relative to their relationships and interactions with other states (Neack, 2008) It is how states define their goals and how this can result in certain behaviours.

³ Power is "the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants" (Nye, 2004a, p. 2).

⁴ Soft power is an attraction approach to international relations that is usually displayed in the ability of a political body "to influence the behaviour or interests of other political bodies through cultural or ideological means" (Neack, 2008)

Cull defines Cultural diplomacy as “an actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad” (Cull, 2009a, p. 19). In this study, cultural diplomacy is the term used for the act of facilitating cultural education, exchange and interaction between states in order to strengthen relationships and increase mutual cultural understanding.

Scholars of cultural diplomacy (Lenczowski, 2008; Cull, 2009a) do not see soft power through cultural diplomacy as an alternative to hard power⁵, but instead as a much needed supplement to hard power, which in many cases balances it and diminishes its threat. Cultural diplomacy still assumes that a state’s policy-makers and international actors are rational and will act to pursue their own national interests at all times. However, whereas hard power is about military or financial coercion, the soft power through cultural diplomacy approach is concerned with persuading and attracting other states into gaining an understanding and admiration of your state’s culture and values even to the point of sharing the same preferences as your state. In cases where hard power might fail to forge closer bilateral ties between states, a bilateral relationship can be established and sustained via cultural diplomacy.

The tragic events of World War II (WWII) that were grounded in racial and cultural centrism, created a mass reaction which manifested in the form of the emergence of liberalism and a post-WWII global community eager to cooperate with each other, and especially eager to discredit racial theories and instead, take cultural differences into consideration. As the United Nations’ cultural organisation, UNESCO released Four Statements on race in 1950, 1951, 1964 and 1967 (UNESCO, 1969) “as part of its programme to make known the scientific facts about race and to combat racial prejudice” (UNESCO, 1969, p. 7) The new culturally-sensitive global community emphasized cultural relativism in international institutions in order to show an effort

⁵ Hard power is a coercive approach to international relations that is usually exerted in the form of financial or military power

to move away from neo-imperialism and cultural domination of the 'West'. Soft power is associated with the rise of globalization and how globalization increases interconnectedness of states not only in the economic, military, political sectors, but more specifically in the cultural sector.

The emergence of liberalism in this globalized world gave precedence to what Nye (2004), the originator of the term 'soft power', calls 'primary currencies'. These 'primary currencies' of soft power are values, culture, policies and institutions (Nye, 2004a, p. 31) Through liberalism, there transpired a global appeal for values, cultural pluralism inclusive policies and regional and international cooperation through institutions which broadened the areas of international cooperation that continues on today. It is, however important to note that shortly after WWII, came the Cold War. The bipolar nature of the Cold War era stunted the growth of the many liberal democracies that had emerged. The Cold War era also inhibited the wave of globalization for most of its duration, limiting its reach. It was the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall that brought liberalism back to the forefront of both domestic and foreign policies.

The new model of soft power is centred on Nye's (2004) 'primary currencies' which collectively make up cultural diplomacy. The case-study states France and China use these currencies in their contemporary cultural diplomacy in order to attain a better national image and enhance their international cooperation. Cultural diplomacy responds to the pre-existing appeal of culture and values brought by liberalism into this globalized world. States like France and China now use their cultural sectors to forge cooperative relationships at bilateral, regional and international levels.

The intent of this study is to investigate the changing nature of power relationships between states and how bilateral relations are now impacted by the inclusion of soft power through

cultural diplomacy (Nye, 2004). It seeks to demonstrate that the relationships between states have been forced to adapt to the changing dynamic of power caused by both the emergence of liberalism and globalisation. This study aims to find a common point of association between cultural diplomacy, increasing attractiveness of national image and increasing interconnectedness with states abroad. Linkages will be ascertained by using the works of neoliberal scholars of soft power (Nye, 2004; Lee, 2011; Gallarotti, 2011; Melissen, *Wielding Soft Power: The New Public Diplomacy*, 2005a).

France and China have been selected for this study due to their hard power-based histories⁶ with the states in Mekong sub-region⁷ (MSR) (i.e. Cambodia, Lao PDR⁸, Thailand, and Viet Nam). France has been heavily involved in the region since the seventeenth century, even colonizing Viet Nam for over 60 years. Under China, the MSR states suffered centuries of occupation at different periods throughout history.

Due to these unstable and uneasy historical relationships, France and China are the ideal cases with which to demonstrate the shift from solely hard power influences to the inclusion of soft power through cultural diplomacy. In both of these cases, this shift has resulted in reconciliation and growing amicable relations with these states and the MSR states.

Cultural diplomacy in the foreign policies of France and China has the potential to increase their regional influence in the MSR as well as improve of each of their national images as perceived by the publics and governments of states in the MSR. The usefulness of cultural diplomacy is also reflected in the improved individual bilateral relationships between France, China and each MSR state.

⁶ See next section on History

⁷ Mekong sub-region (MSR) includes Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. It is not to mistaken with the Greater Mekong sub-region which also includes Myanmar and Yunnan, China

⁸ Lao People's Democratic Republic

The foreign policies of France and China will be explored to depict how the two states have used cultural diplomacy as a soft power foreign policy tool as an attempt to increase the attractiveness of the national image they present abroad, and bring reconciliation and improved relations with MSR states.

In order to explore the cultural diplomacy of France and China, the study will examine changes in foreign policies and power preferences at different levels in international policy making. Kenneth Waltz's levels-of-analysis (Waltz, 1959) will be used as a heuristic device for this qualitative study of France and China's changing relationships with states in the MSR.

Focusing in on Viet Nam (a prominent MSR state selected for its unique relationships with both France and China), at the systemic level, it will discuss how the relationships with states in the MSR (mainly Viet Nam) affect the status and role of the MSR states in the international system. At state level, it will discuss how French and Chinese influence through cultural diplomacy affects the nature of individual societies and the government of Viet Nam and their view of China and France. At the elite actor level, it will discuss briefly how the various leaders in France and China have prioritized cultural diplomacy in their policy-making.

The following section will examine the literature of scholars that have written on soft power, [public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, the major foreign policy tools that are used in this study. This section will assist in assessing the emergence of these new tools for international influence and also give examples for how they are used.

II. Literature Review

“Our arsenal of persuasion must be as ready as our nuclear arsenal and used as never before.”

Edward R. Murrow

Director, U.S. Information Agency, 1963

(Waller, 2008, p. 8)

There has been a great volume of literature written about soft power (Gallarotti, 2011; Kurlantzick, 2007; Nye, 2004a; Lord, 2008; Melissen, *Wielding Soft Power: The New Public Diplomacy*, 2005a). For the purpose of clarifying terms to be used in this study, this section will discuss in some detail, theories and conceptualizations that will be used. Figure 1 below illustrates the relationship between cultural diplomacy and soft power how cultural diplomacy will be examined in this study. Many scholars have mapped out this association and the connections between soft power, public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy will be discussed in detail in this section. To explain the illustration in the figure below - cultural diplomacy is one of many types of public diplomacy which is one of the ways to wield soft power.

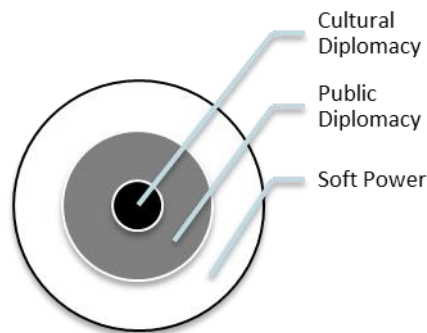


FIGURE 1: CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AS A VEHICLE FOR SOFT POWER

Civic action, Economic development, environmental assistance and strategic communications are some of many methods for employing soft power in one’s foreign policy. Another method of wielding soft power which will be discussed in this study is public diplomacy of which cultural

diplomacy is a sub-category as illustrated below. Since there are many ways to wield soft power and many types of public diplomacy, this figure displays only the terms that will be used in this study to investigate the changing relationships between states.

This will be followed by a detailed review of literature explaining how public diplomacy has been used as a soft power tool. Cultural diplomacy will be explained in the subsequent chapters, including a historical view of the emergence and evolution of cultural diplomacy in this study's two case study states, France and China.

A. Soft Power

Joseph Nye, the 'father' of soft power argues that "Winning hearts and minds", is at the cornerstone of foreign policy making for political leaders in today's global information age (Nye, 2004a, p. 1). What has transpired is that the nature of power has shifted and in order to thrive, political leaders must include softer elements of persuasion and attraction in order to truly have power. Nye defines power as "the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants" (Nye, 2004a, p. 2).

Nye was one of the first scholars to propose that the days of only exerting power via incentives, force or intimidation alone are over. Coercion and other expressions of hard power are not as effective today as they were in the past, and they are definitely not effective when used alone. Hard power is now often complemented by and even to a certain extent, replaced by soft power expressions that co-opt cooperation (Nye, 2004a; Gallarotti, 2010).

States now have the tendency to use soft power instruments such as their values, culture and foreign policy decisions and actions to attract other states to want to emulate and follow them. This foreign policy method of attracting others to shared values is what Nye calls 'soft power'. Shin Wha Lee defines soft power as "ideational and cultural attractiveness" which is utilized to achieve strategic imperatives (Lee, 2011, p. 11).

The concept of soft power has gained influence amongst scholars and public foreign policy debates and so has the quantity of literature on the topic. Gallarotti states that “the world is continuing to evolve into a “softer world” here the importance of soft power has been elevated relative to hard power (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 5). He argues that the global community has become “more amenable to actors that are sensitized to the soft opportunities” (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 5).

Soft power is now so widely discussed that Jan Melissen, a renowned scholar on soft power and public diplomacy argues that it has now become cliché to even state that soft power is increasingly important in this global information age (Melissen, *Wielding Soft Power: The New Public Diplomacy*, 2005a). This is now an obvious and inescapable fact in international relations literature.

Nye gives many examples demonstrating that throughout history, the importance of soft power has gained more attention. “History is not always on the side of the biggest battalions or the deepest pocket” (Nye, 2005). Gallarotti also writes that history has proven that soft power is an important source of “national influence” (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 4). He asserts that unlike realist scholars Mearsheimer and Waltz, neoliberals like Nye do not stress power according to the measure of a state’s population, territory, military capacity, resources and economy. Where realists would see a state achieving its foreign policy goals by using the above to threaten and force, Gallarotti and Nye see soft power as a way of endearing other nations.

In order to clarify the complicated concepts of hard and soft power, Gallarotti simplifies the concepts by saying that “hard power [compels] states to do what they would ordinarily not do” whereas soft power endears states to “voluntarily” do what the soft power nations want (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 11). Back in 1974, Lukes’ wrote that “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests.” (Lukes, 1974, p. 37). As Nye puts it, soft power is about attraction to desirable values (Nye, 2004a). With shared values, states can be sure that they

are pursuing the same interests. This was made evident in the United States of America (USA) after 9/11. Although not many states believed in the validity of the resultant War on Terror, the USA did not have to act alone. However, on seeing images from the Iraq War and the Guantanamo Bay prisons, the world lost its attraction to American culture and values (Nye, 2004a). The seemingly ideal national image that the USA had established gradually crumbled. Other states no longer believed that they shared the same values as the USA. The American government's new approach to foreign policy caused the country's national image to cease to be legitimate, thus decreasing attractiveness.

Gallarotti and Nye both see soft power as a form of agenda control. Nye says soft power is a type of form of control over the political agenda (Nye, 2004a). The desire to grow soft power influence defines what each state prioritizes in their foreign policy. Lukes, a social theorist on power, conveys the same idea of power and agenda control in his 'three dimensions of power' (Lukes, 1974). Where, the first is one-dimensional power (Actor A has more power than actor B,, therefore he will get what he wants over actor B), the second dimension of power is about using one's power to indirectly (or directly) shape political agenda (Lukes, 1974). The concept of soft power is congruent with Lukes' second and third (hegemonic) dimension of power. Soft power actions and activities may not be directly involved in the decision-making process, but they are a force in shaping the perceptions, behaviours and values that influence the ultimate decision.

i) Sources and Outcomes of Soft Power

Gallarotti writes that globalization and interdependence as a result of today's information age have been the overruling transformative forces that have promoted the use of soft power over hard power. He also argues that modernization has led to "social and economic interpenetration in the international system" (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 34). For a state to be considered part of a globalized, interdependent world, it would have to let go of hard expressions of power and build

on its soft power. In today's world, "the decline of violent behaviour has been paralleled by a decline in attitudes that tolerate or glorify violence" (Goldstein, 2011, p. 1). Hard power through violence is admonished and soft power, cooperation, institutionalism is encouraged.

Each scholar has their own way of categorizing the sources of soft power. Nye breaks up the sources soft power into three categories – culture, political values and foreign policy (Nye, 2004b) and Gallarotti takes a different approach, categorizing the derivatives of power into two general categories: : “international sources (foreign policies and actions) and domestic sources (domestic policies and actions)” (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 20).

Lee says that soft power consists of “cultural power, political values and ideas, educational and socio-economic systems and [legitimate] national policies” (Lee, 2011, p. 11). The sources of these, he says, can be divided into three categories; cognitive, affective and normative sources.

The cognitive dimension refers to how other nations evaluate a state's image and standing in international affairs. The affective dimension relates to whether other nations like or dislike a state despite its political, economic, and military strengths or weaknesses. The normative dimension reveals whether or not other countries regard a state's policy and international role as legitimate and justifiable (Lee, 2011, p. 15).

For Gallarotti, international sources of soft power are grounded in multilateralism and institutionalism which are both impossible without respect for international norms and “disposition against violence” (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 20). He argues that these as well as transparency are the predominant sources of international soft power. Multilateralism implies cooperation, ability to compromise, and commitment to treaties. Belief in the ‘common good’ is also an important element in working with other states in harmony and addressing multilateral issues.

In recent years, democracy has become one of the most important domestic sources of soft power. Liberal democracies have been increasing since the end of WWII when liberalism emerged⁹. The increasing number of democracies demonstrates the interpenetration and interdependence of states and the mutual desire to never have another World War. Democracies want to partner with other democracies. Among other desirable aspects of multilateralism, democracy implies transparency and provides “political impediments to the use of hard power” (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 34). The above explains how the democratic peace theory is a major contributor to the shift in power preferences among democracies. If democracies do not go to war with each other, then a state is a more desirable and reliable ally if it is a democracy.

Gallarotti sees that the preferences of power in global politics are in a state on constant change. He argues that “theories of power must be continually questioned and power audits continually undertaken” (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 37). For the concept of soft power to develop over time, the effectiveness of a state’s policies in improving national image and attractiveness needs to be reassessed and re-examined frequently. Gallarotti specified that “sources that perform well should be enhanced” (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 37).

Soft power is desirable because of its outcomes. Unfortunately, most of the benefits of soft power are indirect, implicit and long term. Lee, in particular, remarks that there are still many questions relating to how to measure increasing influence or increasing persuasiveness of one state (Lee, 2011). Lee and Gallarotti both see that soft power, unlike hard power, is less direct and less noticeable, meaning that the immediate outcomes are difficult to distinguish and even more difficult to measure. Soft power produces long term results. As Lee writes, the positive results of soft power are “an accumulative effect of political, economic, social and cultural developments over many generations and [require] long- term investment of human and material resources” (Lee, 2011, p. 16). Cultural diplomacy is effective but it is a long-term investment that, even

⁹ As described in more detail above on Page 5

after years and years could prove difficult to measure or evaluate. This is why in this study, instead of showing only statistics of the change in influence, a qualitative study which includes empirical examples and case studies is the method of choice.

Gallarotti and Nye both believe that once national influence is optimized, national security will also be optimized. Lee sees compatibility with the values and interests of other nations to be most desirable outcome of elevated soft power in today's interdependent world.

B. Public Diplomacy

Joseph Nye argues that soft power can be garnered by many different methods. One of these methods of acquiring soft power that he lists is public diplomacy. In a chapter titled, "Wielding Soft Power", Nye uses the terms 'soft power' and 'public diplomacy' interchangeably demonstrating that public diplomacy is just a means of wielding soft power (Nye, 2004a). Melissen, who writes extensively on public diplomacy, says "Public diplomacy is one of soft power's key instruments" (Melissen, 2005a, p. 3). In this study, Soft power is the all-encompassing foreign policy tool aimed at another state. Both cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy differ slightly from the all-inclusive soft power because they are aimed mainly at foreign publics, not only the elites in control of the decision-making.

For public diplomacy, the national image is created by targeting the public in another state. However, targeting a foreign public might be more effective in cases where although a foreign leader may be a friendly ally, their power may be limited by the influence of negative public opinion (Lord, 2008).

Public diplomacy has become necessary especially because of the advancement of the global information age. In addition to foreign governments, foreign publics are now targets for soft power. "The democratization of access to information has turned citizens into independent observers as well as active participants in international politics." (Melissen, 2005a, pp. 3-4). One

might argue that this can only be true in functioning democracies. However, it should not be forgotten that public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy are long term investments. The results cannot be seen or felt immediately. They resonate through a state over time and eventually

Melissen defines public diplomacy very explicitly, as being aimed at foreign publics and engaging with foreign audiences. For example: after his election, American President Barack Obama spoke in Egypt, where he chose to address the public, not only the governments or the elites by saying, “I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world” (Obama, 2009). He followed this by stressing the importance of joining with “citizens and governments; community organizations, religious leaders, and businesses in Muslim communities around the world to help our people pursue a better life”, thus making a point of not excluding anyone in the public (Obama, 2009).

Public diplomacy is the process that a state goes through to create a national image in order to accomplish success in the diplomatic arena. If positive public opinion in another state can be garnered, that state’s political leaders will most likely make decisions that are in support of “the advocate country’s foreign policy objectives” (Melissen, 2005a).

Melissen emphasizes that public diplomacy is not about “peddling” information to foreign press (Melissen, 2005a). He distances public diplomacy from propaganda. Propaganda is a word with many negative connotations, Melissen concludes that in the global information age, there is so much information available that people are more used to freely deciding their opinions and ensuing responses to this information (Melissen, 2005a). Public diplomacy is about two-way messaging that engages the foreign publics (Melissen, 2005a).

Today’s international relations are based upon who is more credible, where governments use the distribution of information as a powerful tool to improve their own credibility. Nye adds to his statement on credibility by adding integrity, saying that the information distributed should

align with the actions of that state, “Actions speak louder than words, and public diplomacy that appears to be a window dressing for hard power projection is unlikely to succeed” (Nye, 2004a, p. 110). Credibility and legitimacy play a part in public diplomacy because they can boost or damage a positive national image and reputation.

Nye identifies that public diplomacy has three dimensions; daily communications, strategic communications and development of lasting relationships (Nye, 2004a). Domestic and international press are the targets of daily communications. States often tread very carefully when it comes to what to tell the press and exactly how to do it. Strategic communications involve the many different aspects of broadcasting that reinforce the ideals, values, culture, policies, and institutions that are at the epicentre of a state. Melissen sees public diplomacy as a soft power tool aimed at “spanning bridges between different cultures” (Melissen, 2005b, p. 15)

Exchanges, scholarships, training and conferences are some of the many international activities that contribute to the development of lasting relationships between states (Melissen, 2005a) Nye connects soft power with public diplomacy by showing that the terms are interchangeable in many cases – public diplomacy is a way of wielding soft power. Melissen connects public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy by stating that public diplomacy is made up of activities that support national image and cultural relations.

C. Cultural Diplomacy

“Cultural diplomacy is a type of public diplomacy” states Nicholas Cull, who writes expansively on cultural diplomacy (Cull, 2010). He argues that it is one of many methods of conducting foreign policy by which a state or its civil society can engage a foreign public. Like other types of public diplomacy, the benefits of cultural diplomacy are long-term. Cultural diplomacy is distinctive in that it works mostly “at arm’s length” from the government (Cull, 2010).

Melissen writes that over time, “public diplomacy has broadened [...] to include cultural relations” (Melissen, 2005a). He categorizes acts of public diplomacy into either supporting national image or cultural relations thus making the link between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. Although Melissen does not use the term ‘cultural diplomacy,’ he writes about the new “convergence between public diplomacy and cultural relations” (Melissen, 2005b, p. 22). This convergence hosts traditional cultural activities as well as ideological stances like the promotion of human rights, democratic values and freedom of the media. Many of the scholars stress that cultural diplomacy is not only about arts and culture; it extends to communicating a state’s ideals and values to a foreign public.

Lord reinforces the connection between soft power, public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. Seeing public diplomacy as one of the many instruments of soft power, he argues that it is necessary to study soft power to fully understand “the larger context in which public diplomacy functions” (Lord, 2008). Lord mentions that besides the USA, China is an exemplary state in public diplomacy due to its efforts to improve its national image and promote Chinese culture.

Lenczowski uses many definitions of cultural diplomacy from other scholars. His conclusive definition is that cultural diplomacy is “the use of various elements of culture to influence foreign publics, opinion makers, and even foreign leaders” (Lenczowski, 2008, p. 77). Cultural diplomacy is a way of using exchange to promote the values, ideas and broader aspects of culture in order to be understood abroad. He quotes Joseph Nye multiple times to support the foundation of his premise linking culture as an important part of public diplomacy and soft power. Although Lenczowski wrote solely on American culture, his work had universal applications. Greater foreign appreciation of a state’s culture cultivates mutual understanding between states and improves the national image of the advocate state.

Although many scholars on public diplomacy sort activities of cultural diplomacy into various groups, for the sake of this study, Nicholas Cull does so most skilfully. In several of his books and articles (Cull, 2009a; Cull, 2009b; Cull, 2008b; Cull, 2008a), he gives practical examples of cultural diplomacy as lessons learned from other states. He groups these examples into four different categories. Working off his definition of cultural diplomacy as “an actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad” (Cull, 2009a, p. 19), he subdivides cultural diplomacy simply into four major types.

Firstly, “the prestige gift” is the presentation of the finest most valued cultural elements belonging to a state and its peoples (Cull, 2010). This could be about traditional dances, specific methods of weaving or even a historical museum exhibition. “Cultural information” is the second type of cultural diplomacy. It is the educational branch that consists of all of the presentation of information which is not typically known abroad. Cull gave the example of art or literature by minority ethnic groups (Cull, 2010, p. 1) . The third type of cultural diplomacy is “dialogue and collaboration” which Cull writes is the use of cultural activities to unite peoples and form cross-cultural, cross-national relationships. This comprises of cultural exchanges and inter-national cultural activities among others (Cull, 2008b). The last type of cultural diplomacy is “capacity building” which is the fostering of a state’s local cultural skills abroad. A key example that is applicable in the context of this study is language. A state can build the capacity of its culture if more people abroad know its language (Cull, 2008b; Cull, 2009b). This gives those foreigners access to the literature, music, news and many other core messages that are carried by the language.

Lenczowski listed thirteen tools of cultural diplomacy; the arts, exhibitions, educational programs, exchanges, literature, language teaching, broadcasting, gifts, dialogue, promotion of ideas and values, promotion of social policy, history and religious diplomacy (Lenczowski,

2008). Each of Lenczowski’s tools listed above can fit into one or more of the 4 types of cultural diplomacy outlined by Cull.

This is illustrated in Tables 1 and 2 below;

The prestige gift		Cultural information
These spread the most cherished essence of their history and culture to foreign publics around the world.		These spread the largely unknown/uncommon aspects of a culture
Example: Travelling ‘King Tut’ museum exhibition funded by the government of Egypt	Example: Japanese 'Kabuki' theatre & New Zealand traditional 'Haka' (war cry dance)	Example: Popular novel <i>Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa</i> by white Zimbabwean author Peter Godwin shows the life of a white african growing up in the 1960s.
Scientific/Cultural/Museum exhibitions	The Arts(Performaing and Fine Arts)	Literature, broadcasting, history, religious diplomacy, arts and exhibitions

TABLE 1 - LENCOWSKI'S CULTURAL TOOLS VS. CULL’S 4 TYPES OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

The arts, whether they be performing arts or fine arts usually fit into “the prestige gift” in many cases. Japanese Kabuki theatre as well as the New Zealand Haka (war cry dance) is a form of art that is highly valued and at the crux of cultural society. Major science, technology or ethnic culture exhibitions are also regarded as “the prestige gift.” As an example, Cull referred to the ‘King Tut’ exhibition that is funded by the government of Egypt. The travelling ‘King Tut’ exhibition displays artifacts from the tombs of King Tutankhamen and other great Pharaohs of the past (Cull, 2010). This exhibition spreads the most cherished essence of Egypt and Egyptian history and culture to foreign publics around the world.

Literature, broadcasting, history, religious diplomacy, arts and exhibitions are all a part of the second type of cultural diplomacy - “cultural information.” For example, since most people do not usually take time to consider that ‘white Africans’ exist, the popular novel *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* by white Zimbabwean author Peter Godwin was highly publicized. It is a special kind of cultural information as it is a testimonial story of the life of a white Zimbabwean growing up in the 1960s. Another example is *Wide Sargasso Sea* written by Jean Rhys about the identity struggle of a white Creole in the Carribean.

As shown in Table 2 below, “Dialogue and collaboration” is seen in cultural exchanges, educational programs, dialogue, gifts, promotion of ideas, values and social policy and religious diplomacy.

Dialogue and collaboration		Capacity-building	
This provides a way for fostering dialogue in the foreign state that could result in social change.		This increases the number of people around the world with access to the national literature, music and news broadcasts	This increases the number of people with the same beliefs and values, increasing the influential power of the state
Example: Engagement of foreign publics in human rights advocacy.	Example: International conferences - a useful tool for igniting dialogue on important international issues.	Example: Cultural centres like Alliance Francaise and the Goethe Institute	Example: Good governance and women’s rights
Promotion of ideas, values and social policy and religious diplomacy	Cultural exchanges, educational programs, dialogue, gifts	Language teaching	The promotion of ideas, values and social policies

TABLE 2 - LENCOWSKI'S CULTURAL TOOLS VS. CULL'S 4 TYPES OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

One example of this is the engagement of foreign publics in human rights advocacy. This provides a way for fostering dialogue in the foreign state that could result in social change. International conferences are also a useful tool for igniting dialogue on important international issues.

One could argue that the promotion of ideas, values and social policies like good governance and women's rights can also be a way of capacity building for a state. The greater number of people with the same beliefs and values, the greater the power of that state becomes, even if it is power spread across national borders.

The ultimate objectives of cultural diplomacy are three-fold. Cultural diplomacy uses the aforementioned tools to persuade and endear foreign publics in several ways outlined by Lenczowski. Firstly, states desire foreign publics to view them as having a positive national image. The culture, values and policies should be seen as admirable by foreigners abroad. Influence is the second element that states aim for with cultural diplomacy. Through cultural diplomacy, states desire the soft power "to change the policies of foreign governments" (Lenczowski, 2008, p. 77). This leads to the third aim which is to bring about political and cultural change. Change occurs as a result of the new policies. This change can be of beneficial when facing potential inter-state conflict. The newly 'imported' values and ideals influences can "prevent, manage, mitigate" this conflict (Lenczowski, 2008, p. 77) .

On soft power as a whole, Nye argues that sources of soft power are both international and domestic and the same applies to cultural diplomacy. He writes that however a state "behaves at home can enhance its image and perceived legitimacy, and that in turn can help advance its foreign policy objectives" (Nye, 2004a, p. 56).

Legitimacy plays a large role in the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy. As Cull argues, just like any form of communication, the effectiveness of a state's cultural diplomacy is dependent on

its legitimacy and credibility. More often than not, cultural organizations are able to flourish in places where the formal arm of a state would have no credibility.

Nye and Lenczowski both stress that cultural diplomacy is not only for relationship building, it is also for national security. This is where the democratic peace theory comes in again¹⁰. If the public of a state begin to take on democratic beliefs and values and the government that is voted in does the same, then the possibility of that state going to war with another becomes improbable (Nye, 2004a). Although cultural diplomacy is difficult to measure directly, it can be seen over time by an improvement in national image and better international relationships in all of the above areas.

The above literature will be used as the foundation of the empirical study to follow. By applying the characterisations of cultural diplomacy as perceived by the scholars above, this study will demonstrate how France and China have made efforts to gain soft power through cultural diplomacy in the Mekong sub-region and especially in Viet Nam.

¹⁰ See Page 21

III. Methodology

A. Thesis statement

As this study explores the cultural diplomacy of the two case study states France and China, it is an important theme to be recognised throughout is that with Cultural diplomacy, there are many mitigating factors that can possibly sway its effectiveness. What the literature above may exclude is the ‘recipe’ for cultural policies that have proven to be successful in the improvement of bilateral relationships between states.

The effects of cultural diplomacy are hard to measure, especially in the short term. Hence why this study has chosen to focus on bilateral relationships that were once riddled with oppression, violence, ethnocentrism and domination. By starting with that extreme, it can be seen in the long-term how cultural diplomacy has the potential to promote an increase in international influence as well as an improvement of national image as perceived by foreign publics and governments.

This study aims to demonstrate that cultural diplomacy in the foreign policies of France and China has the potential to improve their national image as perceived by the public and government of Viet Nam and consequently lead to an increase in their influence in Viet Nam. Further study may demonstrate that the relationship with Viet Nam may affect the regional relations with the rest of the Mekong sub-region.

B. Empirical Theory

Conceived by Waltz (1959), the ‘three levels-of-analysis’ approach to international relations is one of the most prevalent frameworks for examining relations between states. Singer (1961) further explains and reinforces the suitability of Waltz’s levels-of-analysis approach to international relations. Even though, initially, this approach was formulated for the analysis of ‘cause of War’ or ‘reason for peace’ in the international system (Waltz, 1959), it can be used in

this study as a way to describe the nature of the changing relationships between our case states and also explain the reason for change. This approach is also often used to predict the future of international relationships (Singer, 1961). Waltz's original argument is that there are three sources of explanations for the behaviours of states in the international system: the Individual, the State and the System (Waltz, 1959). This framework will demonstrate that the behaviour of France and China and the effect of their influence abroad can be explained by looking at three different levels illustrated and then described below.

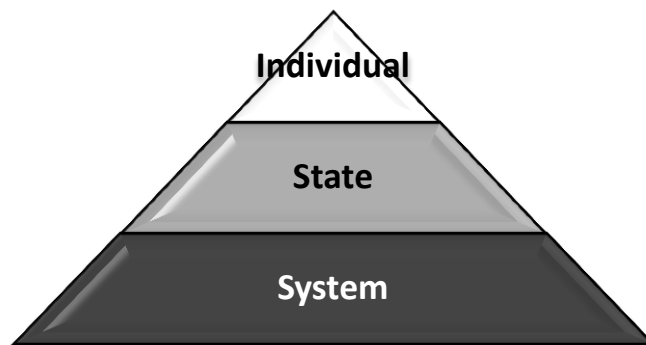


FIGURE 2: WALTZ'S THREE LEVELS-OF-ANALYSIS

i) SYSTEMIC LEVEL

At the systemic level, French and Chinese relationships with Viet Nam will be examined to see how changes in Viet Nam affect Viet Nam's role in the region and in the international system (if at all). Waltz (1959) and Singer (1961) both write about anarchy and the need to balance power in the systemic level.

As applied to the case studies, the need for soft power through cultural is to alleviate the threat of already existing hard power dealings in a bilateral relationship. At this level, power is most important (Singer, 1961). For states in the Mekong sub-region, whether or not they accept the cultural diplomacy of France and China is dependent on what a partnership/ close relationship with France or China could do for their position in the international order.

ii) STATE LEVEL

At state level, the influence of France and China (through cultural diplomacy) will be examined to see how they affect the nature of Vietnamese society and government and their opinions of France and China. The political systems of states in the MSR come to question as well as those of France and China. Each of these plays a part in determining if a state is willing to cooperate, participate in cultural exchanges, accept foreign cultural institutions, the teaching of foreign languages, foreign news...etc. The political system of the target state also determines the length of investment-time of cultural diplomacy activities. In a functioning democracy, the public (who are the targets of cultural diplomacy) decide on policies and have the opportunity to vote for their leaders. The effects of cultural diplomacy are more quickly seen and felt than in an authoritarian state, where the messages of cultural diplomacy may only reach the elites for generations and trickle down very slowly.

iii) INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

At the individual level, the choices, initiatives, priorities and decisions of leaders (elite actors) that can shape foreign policy in France and China will be studied. This level is useful because in some cases, no matter what the political system of a state, the personality behind the decisions (i.e. President) might sway the decisions in accordance to his own aggressive agenda. The influence of specific role holders is considered important because in many cases, the way in which a state's foreign policy is expressed is connected to the nature of current leadership. Dorff (2004) and Singer (1961) both discuss World War II (WWII) as a prime example. According to the individual (elite actor) level analysis, the presence of particular actors on the international scene at that specific time in history explains the causes of the War. Without Hitler's personality and his need for the domination of Germany and without Churchill and Roosevelt's inherent need to balance Germany's rising power, the war would not have happened in the way that it did (Dorff, 2004; Singer, 1961).

iv) Limitations of the Levels-of-analysis Model

Singer's (1961) article remains inconclusive in terms of selecting one level of analysis as superior to the others for explaining how best to approach international relations (Singer, 1961). In this study, the majority of the focus will be on the State level. This is because, unlike the systemic level or the individual level, the state level allows differentiations between state actors in the international system (Singer, 1961). Without these differentiations, comparisons of power preferences or foreign policy methods could not be executed.

It appears as if State-level analysis is the most 'balanced' of the three which is also why more focus will be placed on it. Both the Individual and Systemic levels of analysis are heavy with the realist tenets of anarchy and the inherent aggression of mankind. State level analysis is correct for this kind of comparative study of the policies and activities of two states. However, the state level analysis does leave the out the broader understanding of the forces in play in the whole system (Dorff, 2004). This will be explored briefly in the systemic level section¹¹.

C. Significance of this study

As the 21st century world continues to evolve, globalisation continues to alter the nature of the relations between states and balances of power. Within this context of shifting influences, the emergence of soft power in diplomacy has provided states with a less-threatening way of persuading other states to share the same values and world view, and cooperate in many fields (i.e. environmental, cultural, scientific).

Cultural diplomacy has been conducted on entire regions for centuries. At regional level, the goal of the state conducting cultural diplomacy is to influence and entire region instead of focusing merely on one individual state at a time. Cull (2009) mentions the Roman Republic (509 BC – 27 AD) as one of many ancient examples of cultural diplomacy at regional level. The

¹¹ See page 53-54

Roman Republic would invite Princes from friendly Kingdoms in their region to be educated in Rome (Cull, 2009a). Foreign students studying in Rome would learn the Roman language, Roman culture and the Roman way of life. This education would be taken back to their Kingdoms, thus expanding the influence of the Roman Republic. The same applied to the Byzantine Empire (330 ~ 1453 AD) which is known to have sponsored Orthodox evangelism across the Slavic regions (Cull, 2009a). This fostered their way of life and cultural skills abroad.

The entire Southeast Asian region, especially the Mekong sub-region (MSR) is an area of interest to both France and China because it is a region so tightly inter-connected in historical experience, culture, religion, written script...etc. France and China see the need for not only befriending and gaining influence in one of the MSR states, but all of them.

A noteworthy comment is made by Lee that although it is correct to state that there is a great volume of literature on soft power and cultural diplomacy, most of it has been focused on the soft power of the United States and the global effect of its soft power (Lee, 2011). Not many scholars have focused in on the effect of soft power of France or China especially on a region like Southeast Asia.

i) The Special Case of Viet Nam

Of all the states in the Mekong sub-region (MSR) Viet Nam is a unique case because it has had closer and longer-lasting relations with both France and China. Therefore, in order to fully apply Waltz's levels-of-analysis model in examining the effects of the cultural diplomacy of France and China, Viet Nam has been singled out as the state in which the effects of cultural diplomacy can be seen through examples from France and China.

Viet Nam's history is marred with a seemingly incessant struggle for self-determination. Proximity to China led Viet Nam into an early history of Chinese occupation that lasted an entire millennium up until the 9th century. Many similarities existed between China and Viet Nam. For

example, unlike the majority of Southeast Asia (SEA), Viet Nam's sect of Buddhism is "a mix of Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism (and a hint of animism) popularly known as *tam giao* or "Three Religions"- from China" (Calman, 1947). Viet Nam was seen in the region, as an external representation of the Chinese civilization (Stuart-Fox, 2004). In 1407, Vietnam was once again occupied by the Chinese Ming Empire which took on a radical imperialistic approach of saving the Vietnamese from barbarism and educating them with Confucian ideas. This cannot be considered soft power because it was not coercion by attraction, but by force. The culture and ideas were forced upon Vietnamese people. This forced "Sinicization" did not last long, the Chinese were expelled a decade later (Corfield, 2008)

As previously mentioned, The Franco-Vietnamese relations extend as far back as the seventeenth century. Cultural influences include the spreading of Catholicism by French missionaries throughout Viet Nam up until late in the 19th Century. There was also an interesting shift from Chinese script to Romanized script, initiated by 17th-century French Jesuit scholar, Alexandre de Rhodes (Sénat France, 2011). This is a straightforward example of the continuous push and pull of Chinese and French culture in Viet Nam.

With the 19th Century came colonization by the French which the Vietnamese endured until occupation by Japan during World War II, and the ensuing revolutionary independence in 1954 (Church, 2009). Viet Nam struggled to find its bearings after independence, splitting in two, divided by communist ideology. Viet Nam was split into a communist North and a non-Communist South until unification in 1975. The period of Communism brought Viet Nam closer to China (Stuart-Fox, 2004). Although most remnants of colonization like street names, statues and monuments were removed or made Vietnamese, the impacts of French colonization are still evident in some of the architecture of certain public buildings and chateaus and in the unavoidable presence of the French language (Stuart-Fox, 2004).

The fall of Communism and the end of the Cold War in 1991 opened Viet Nam up to Western influence and increasing inclination towards capitalism. France was one of the first Western countries to support Viet Nam's reform policies and establish trade and diplomatic ties. Today "France is Viet Nam's principal contact in Europe" (France Diplomatie, 2012). This may be because of the shared histories and shared cultural elements, or it may be as set forth in this paper, that France has used cultural diplomacy to mend and grow their relationship with Viet Nam.

China and Viet Nam's relations have more recent tales of turmoil, for example, the Vietnamese assistance of Russian forces against China and the Khmer Rouge. Viet Nam has often been the 'misbehaving little brother' to China, repeatedly rejecting China's strong hand and not aligning with China in various international disputes. However, just like France, China still has a heavy influence in Viet Nam; the Chinese language is still used, the religion is similar, and many Chinese traditions have been adapted and are widely practiced in Viet Nam (Stuart-Fox, 2004). China is a formidable ally in the region that Viet Nam has never been afraid to wield. Yes, proximity may play a large role in the continued amicable relations between China and Viet Nam, but cultural diplomacy may be a stronger force than mere proximity (Suzuki, 2009)

The goal of the application of the levels-of-analysis model on Viet Nam is to more clearly demonstrate, through examples of French and Chinese cultural activities and institutions, the effect of cultural diplomacy on the way that Chinese and French cultures, peoples and eventually governments are viewed.

IV. CHINA

A. Introduction to Chinese Cultural Diplomacy

It has become widely accepted in the field of international relations that China is regarded to be rising soft power in today's global community (Nye, *The Rise of China's Soft Power*, 2005; Zhu, 2010). Even though most scholars in the past decade have written about the soft power and cultural diplomacy of the United States, more scholars (Suzuki, 2009; Kurlantzick, 2007) are starting to see that China is continuing to rise on the soft power scale and is a fascinating study due to its unique methods of wielding soft power.

Suzuki (2009) argues that political and intellectual elites in China were early adopters of the concept of cultural diplomacy or as Suzuki calls it "cultural attraction ideology" (Suzuki, 2009). These elites see the potential in attracting others through China's history and cultural traditions. For example, the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics emphasised Chinese cultural heritage heavily and this was all part of the same effort for cultural attraction. This falls under Cull's 'prestige gift' type of cultural diplomacy since China presented its most precious, most cherished and most distinguishably Chinese traditions, music, art forms...etc. Suzuki quotes former President Hu Jintao as having called for "bringing about a new upsurge in socialist cultural development, stimulating the cultural creativity of the whole nation, and enhancing culture as part of the soft power of China" (Suzuki, 2009, p. 781).

Kurlantzick writes that China has shifted its foreign policy away from being only anti-US, to being pro-developing world. Time spent on Africa, Latin American and Southeast Asia has been China's priority since the 1990s (Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's soft power is Transforming the World*, 2007). Kurlantzick argues that China strategically takes advantage of some of the faltering relations between these regions and the USA. China has been

able to forge stronger bilateral relations with much more ease than the USA could in the same states.

China found a way to portray that its values are in line with those of much of the developing world (Gill & Huang, 2006). China veered off the beaten path and did not follow the Westphalian model of development. As signified by the Beijing Consensus, China did not follow a formula for development but customized its development according to its condition and personality as a state. China's unique model of development is well-regarded amongst developing states. China's ability to progressively develop without making momentous concessions in personal freedoms is an attractive element for some of the developing states that are still under authoritarianism. They too would like to gain economic prowess without letting go of political control (Kurlantzick, 2007).

The deteriorating relationship between the USA and Zimbabwe in the early 2000s became beneficial for China. At a time when the global community was condemning Mugabe's 'operation murambatsvina' – the brutal urban eviction of thousands of central Harare residents, China did the opposite and "lavished honours on Mugabe" (Gill & Huang, 2006). This endeared Zimbabwe's foreign policy further away from the USA and UK and closer to China. The same applies to Somalia.

Of Cull's 4 types of cultural diplomacy, dialogue and collaboration through international institutions and agreements is what China is focusing on in the developed world through developmental partnerships, cultural and educational exchanges and collaboration in the cultural industries (Kurlantzick, 2007) and China has embarked on many missions to quash disputes and initiate dialogue and collaboration. The biggest outcomes for China's soft power through cultural diplomacy have been the change in national image from being a threatening communist presence to be a forward-thinking, leading market with a fascinating history. Culture and

language (Lee, 2011; Suzuki, 2009; Kurlantzick, 2007). Shin Wha Lee writes that China is using attraction in “striving to change its image from dangerous to benign.” (Lee, 2011, p. 12) It remains a mystery how many states that China has targeted actually believe in the presence of a benign China.

Gill and Huang write about the different ways in which China has used cultural diplomacy. These fit into Cull’s 4 types of cultural diplomacy. In the capacity building category, Gill and Huang point out that more and more people are learning the Chinese language around the world. The HSK which is the Chinese language equivalent to the American TOEFL (Teaching of English as a foreign language) test has seen “an annual increase in examinees of about 40–50%, growth equivalent to the US TOEFL examination in its first ten years” (Gill & Huang, 2006, p. 18) . These numbers may simply be an acknowledgement of China’s economic power and position but this is definitely complemented by China’s push for more Chinese language speakers around the world. In 2006, the China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language had a budget of US\$200 and aggressively promulgated the Chinese language in an effort to rapidly increase the number of foreigners studying Chinese. Confucius Institutes around the world are a source for Chinese cultural resources and Chinese language. Gill and Huang write that by 2005, 32 Confucius Institutes had been set up by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 23 countries (Gill & Huang, 2006) to provide Chinese language and cultural resources.

According to the Office of Chinese Language Council international, “by the end of 2010, there have been 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius Classrooms established in 96 countries (Hanban, 2012). This number continues to increase.

The above numbers demonstrate the exponential increase in the number of Confucius Institutes around the world (Gill & Huang, 2006) The Confucius Institutes show a stronger presence of Chinese culture and language around the world. Gill and Huang compare the

Confucius Institutes to entities like the cultural and information centres; the British Council from the UK and the Goethe Institute from Germany. These cultural information and education centres are at the epicentre of the broadcasting and education about their cultures, traditions and languages. (Gill & Huang, 2006). Similarly, the Confucius Institutes promote Chinese language and culture in a way that provides China with a gentler, more amicable image around the world. Confucius Institutes can fit into 2 of Cull's 4 types of cultural diplomacy; capacity building and cultural information. They increase the number of people speaking Chinese language around the world and also provide a place for various aspects of Chinese culture to be showcased and celebrated, whether it be art, music or traditional Chinese holidays. Complementing these Confucius Institutes were the many Chinese cultural festivals that were sponsored by China all over the globe (Gill & Huang, 2006)

In the same way, the Chinese Ministry of Education has also aggressively campaigned for an increase in foreign student enrolment in Chinese Universities. The Ministry of Education supplies scholarships to foreign students for their studies in China (Gill & Huang, 2006). This is also capacity building because those foreign students would be assets for China whether they go back to their home countries or stay in China for their professional lives. Their positive experiences living in China would be taken back to their home countries, bettering the image of China via cultural information. Kurlantzick sees it as China "investing in the world", making their print and TV media available worldwide, educating their diplomats in English and other foreign languages and partnering in Free Trade Agreements all over the world. Kurlantzick even equates China's growing international popularity to its GDP growth. (Kurlantzick, 2007).

Gill and Huang's study is focused on the sources of Chinese soft power over the past 2 decades. They write that China has concentrated on seeking stable foreign relations. Gill and Huang quote official Chinese statements that emphasize "peaceful settlement of disputes, mutually beneficial economic ties, combating non-traditional security threats such as terrorism

and transnational crime, and effective disarmament and arms control” (Gill & Huang, 2006, p. 21) . Gill and Huang use the words ‘responsible’ and ‘cooperative’ to describe China’s new role in the global community (Gill & Huang, 2006). China’s most significant change was the transition that was actively made from being an aid recipient to an aid donor.

As Kurlantzick pointed out, in parts of Africa and other countries like the Philippines and Cambodia, China has actually become a bigger donor than the US or Japan (Kurlantzick, 2007). The funding from China is not used for ‘harder’, more dominant purposes like the building of large stadiums and buildings like China used to known for. China’s funding is being used for new ventures like their own version of the Peace Corps which is headed by the China Association of Youth Volunteers. Under the leadership of Chinese Communist Youth League Central Committee, it is a national voluntary non-profit social organization (Jianyu, 2011). This Chinese ‘Peace Corps’ sends what Kurlantick calls “idealistic young Chinese” (Kurlantzick, 2007) on long-term projects in developing nations in the Southeast Asian region and in Africa. Of Cull’s 4 types of cultural diplomacy, this falls under “dialogue and collaboration” and “cultural information” since the picture of China presented by a young Chinese volunteer would be different that that portrayed in the media or that presented on a state-to-state level.

In full agreement with Kurlantzick are Gill and Huang, who argue that the efforts of the Chinese embassy to reach out to major think tanks, seeking recommendations on policy also demonstrates a sophisticated turn in Beijing’s foreign policy approaches (Gill & Huang, 2006). They also mention that Chinese diplomats are now working hard on their people-to-people connections, winning friends and gaining influence amongst other diplomats at international symposia, institutional meetings, conferences...etc (Gill & Huang, 2006).

Chinese leaders have proposed the guideline of ‘do good to our neighbours, treat our neighbours as partners’ (yulin weishan, yilin weiban) and the policy of ‘maintain friendly

relations with our neighbours, make them feel secure, and help to make them rich' (mulin, anlin, fulin) (Gill & Huang, 2006, p. 23) Gill and Huang show that leaders in Beijing are looking to reassure other states that China can be a trustworthy ally. China's efforts have been for the sake of eliminating distrust and changing their previously threatening impression. Cull's cultural diplomacy through "dialogue and collaboration" appears to be the highest priority for Beijing.

i) Limits to Chinese Cultural Diplomacy

Gill and Huang (2006) make a point to state that although the Chinese have been successfully changing the nature of their foreign policy, it still had three areas where they have not been able to fully convince the outside world that they have changed.

Firstly, Chinese foreign policy through cultural diplomacy is limited by incoherence in the promotion of its foreign policy. Even though China's neighbours may see foreign exchanges and Peace Corps volunteers as well as Confucius Institutes, this is inconsistent with the Chinese government's 'harder' expressions in allowing extreme nationalism and the anti-Japanese protests in 2005 (Gill & Huang, 2006). These anti-Japanese sentiments were a direct contradiction to China's Charm offensive in the Asian region. China's current refusal to cooperate in the territorial disputes in the East China Sea also inhibits the effectiveness (Perlez, 2013). News agencies are using words like force, and terms like 'iron fist' (Perlez, 2013) to describe China's insistence on invading, occupying and lording its power and control over others in the region and this has negatively affected its cultural diplomacy (Perlez, 2013; Thuy, 2011; Storey, 2010).

Another major constraint in Chinese influence is that the, "development of an ideal mix of soft-power resources to serve its foreign-policy agenda remains a daunting challenge for Beijing due to China's lack of freedom of expression in the cultural (artistic) industries (Gill & Huang, 2006). This limits the quantity and variety of Chinese artists, books and music that break through the Chinese borders into popularity the international sphere. This narrows China's overall

influence since the sources are restricted. Even though economic development in China has elevated the overall standard of living, it has not been able to make significant changes in China's human development. The vast disparities in income distribution are worsening. According to the CIA World Factbook, China, income disparities are now even worse than the USA (CIA World Factbook, 2012). Ranking 29th out of 126 states to the USA's 41st, the Chinese government still has trouble with the provision of basic public goods like healthcare, law enforcement and education (Gill & Huang, 2006). Corruption also plays a huge role in persistent doubt about the sustainability of China's new models for development and foreign policy.

Lastly, Gill and Huang state that a "lack of legitimacy" (Gill & Huang, 2006) is a limitation of China's cultural diplomacy. China's lack of political reform along the globally-acknowledged lines of "liberalism, pluralism and autonomy" (Gill & Huang, 2006, p. 28) is inhibiting the state from being seen as a truly legitimate state amongst other top actors in international affairs. This is in addition to China's close economic and political relationships with authoritarian leaders and unsavoury regimes in the developing world creates a trust problem and undercuts the actions and intentions of the Western actors that are trying to bring liberalism, pluralism, democracy and autonomy to those regions. As long as leaders in Beijing choose to continue to have close relations with leaders like Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, the international community will forever doubt China's sincerity.

Suzuki notices that China is doing all that it can to prevent being labelled a "threat" in the international community (Suzuki, 2009). To avoid diminishing its cultural diplomacy and influence, many steps are taken to reassure the West that China is rising, but rising peacefully (Suzuki, 2009). Beijing has made efforts to compromise and in some situations, conform to international norms on delicate and complex issues like environmental protection, trade liberalization and nuclear non-proliferation (Gill & Huang, 2006). This demonstrates the softer nature of the more mature and sophisticated Chinese foreign policy through cultural diplomacy.

However, it should be mentioned that China has not made efforts to cooperate and/or compromise in many territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas (Perlez, 2013; Storey, 2010). This is one of the inconsistencies that Gill & Huang (2006) mention that tarnish China's legitimacy and credibility.

China's relationships with other states have been forced to adapt to the changing dynamic of power caused by both the emergence of liberalism and globalisation. Cultural diplomacy is the method by which China has attempted to increase the attractiveness of its national image and improved interconnectedness/ relations with states abroad. The following section will outline China's negative and oppressive history with the Mekong sub-region.

B. China's history with the Mekong sub-region

“Above all else is culture” – Zhuge Liang
(U.S. Department of State, 2005, p. 22)

Chinese military advisor Zhuge Liang made the above statement to a Chinese general during wartimes in the period of the Three Kingdoms (220-260 AD). The statement was in recognition of how culture defines a nation, even in a period of war. The need for cultural diplomacy throughout all of the territorial and cultural clashes in the region was evident to Liang many centuries ago. (U.S. Department of State, 2005)

One cannot understand changes within relationships of states without examining the prior nature of the relationships in history. History is a pivotal part of this study because it is necessary to know the nature of the individual relationships between France and China and each state in the Mekong sub-region (MSR) in the past. This way, the direction in which cultural diplomacy has taken them now in the present can be identified and investigated for how and why this change occurred. Therefore, the objective is to measure the extent of change diachronically.

Today, China shares physical borders with two of the states in the MSR, Viet Nam and Lao PDR. China has been a constant presence in the histories of all the states in the region. This section will summarise the turbulent history of MSR states with their ominously large neighbour and attempt to outline the nature of the hard-power-based relationships of their mutual past. Unfortunately, the task of summarizing the detailed history of the different Chinese empires throughout history is an ambitious undertaking with many shortcomings. To go back far into history to the early fourth, fifth and sixth centuries would be a large-scale task. Hence, in this study, the history of China in the MSR will be looked at holistically from an overarching perspective. It will merely outline the past of China in the MSR and demonstrate how and why China was viewed as a hegemonic ‘big-brother’ in the region until only recently. What is known today as the People’s Republic of China is not the same as it has been throughout history. The same goes for today’s modern states in the MSR, which have in the past made up various independent kingdoms and principalities. The powerful kingdoms that once existed in what is now southern China and Southeast Asia are no more.

The following table shows the land that belonged to the Chinese Empire in ancient times from just before the start of the first millennium, leading up to today. Land belonging to the Chinese empire is described according to how much of today’s modern Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Viet Nam was under Chinese ownership at different times throughout history. This is done in order to fully illustrate the Chinese presence in the MSR. Land belonging to the Chinese empire shifted and changed size so frequently throughout history that this table is the most concise way of showing these changes.

Name of Empire/ Dynasty	Period	Area occupied (with current state names)
Qin	221 - 206 BC	Eastern & Central China
Han	206 BC - 220 AD	Eastern China, Democratic Rep. of Korea, Northern Rep. of Korea, Southern Russia, Northern Viet Nam, Northern Lao PDR, Southeastern Myanmar
3 Kingdoms	220 – 260	Eastern China, Democratic Rep. of Korea, Northern Viet Nam
Jin	280 -581	Eastern China, North-to-central Viet Nam
Sui	581 – 618	Eastern China, North-to-central Viet Nam, Taiwan,
Tang	618 – 907	Eastern China, North-to-central Viet Nam. Southwest Mongolia
5 Dynasties	908 – 960	Eastern China
Northern Song	960 – 1126	Central eastern China
Southern Song	1126 – 1279	South Eastern China, Taiwan
Yuan (Mongol) (highest point of Chinese empire)	1271 – 1368	Northern Viet Nam, Northern Lao PDR, Myanmar, (Church, 2009)
Ming	1368 – 1644	China, Far eastern Russia
Qing Dynasty	1644 – 1911	China & Mongolia

TABLE 3: TERRITORY OF THE CHINESE EMPIRES (221 BC - 1911 AD)

(Chinafocus.com, 2012)

According to Stuart-Fox, it was only in the nineteenth century that China began to no longer be viewed as imposing its “hegemonic international order” on its neighbours (Stuart-Fox, 2003, p. 6). Until then, China’s massive size coupled with its ‘hard’ power (economy and military) were intimidating to the smaller states in its vicinity throughout all of its foreign relations.

In his historical study, Stuart-Fox focuses on the *sinocentrism* of the Chinese empire from its establishment. The Chinese sought out more land and dominance over other races because they believed in the superiority of the Chinese civilization. They believed that any other races outside the Chinese civilization were barbarians “inferior in every way to the Chinese” (Stuart-Fox, 2003). This *sinocentric* worldview meant that other races were treated as inferior to the Chinese.

It is obvious looking at today’s Africa, Latin America and Asia that the ‘colonial power vs. colonised’ / ‘occupier vs. occupied’ relationship has produced long-term enemies and very sour relations between peoples. The imposition of one civilization’s ‘superior’ and more ‘sophisticated’ world view has never been accepted with open arms by their ‘less sophisticated’ targets. This kind of imperialism has always been met with a struggle and the states in the MSR are no exception. Qin Shi Huang, who was the first Emperor of the first imperial Chinese dynasty is the Chinese leader behind the construction of The Great Wall of China as a barrier between the ‘barbarians’ in the north and northwest and core Chinese cultural area (Stuart-Fox, 2003). His goal was to unify the Chinese empire and protect the core cultural area from infiltration by inferior ‘barbarian’ non-Chinese civilizations.

Although Qin Shi Huang’s empire did not last very long, it was superseded by many empires of similar mindset. Chinese empires experienced fluctuating expansion and contraction for almost two millennia. The Chinese empire has at one point in time possessed and controlled areas such as modern Democratic Rep. of Korea, Rep. of Korea, Southern Russia, Viet Nam, Northern Lao PDR, Eastern Myanmar and Mongolia, (Chinafocus.com, 2012). This means that each of these regions were open to Chinese migration and under Chinese cultural influence. Even the Chinese writing system spread throughout the region, giving the coastal non-Chinese civilizations access to Chinese literature and the Chinese worldview (Stuart-Fox, 2003). This spreading of language, writing system, culture and values led the coastal non-Chinese to

eventually identifying themselves as Chinese after several generations (Stuart-Fox, 2003). Dubbed *sinicisation*, this process was long and drawn out, seeping down over the centuries from the literate elite to shape the thinking of the mass of the population under the empire.

Stuart-Fox (2003) writes of tributary missions by kingdoms in what is today's Mekong sub-region; tributary missions which were ways in which subordinate regions showed their recognition of Chinese preeminence. Kingdoms and states from around the world, including those in the MSR would send a regular token to the ruling Chinese emperor (Stuart-Fox, 2003). Types of tokens varied depending on the era – some were of great value (gold) and others were merely symbolic gifts (statues and art) (Stuart-Fox, 2003). It should be noted that even these tributaries were a form of cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy at this time. Even though tributary missions often included trade with the Chinese empire, rulers in the region travelled on tributary missions at the 'beckoning' of "Chinese emperors who sought...the gratification of barbarian submission" (Stuart-Fox, 2003, p. 96). Chinese emperors felt a duty to draw the 'barbaric' kingdoms into the civilized 'sino-centric' international order (Stuart-Fox, 2004). Without going to any further detail, it is clearly evident that the historical relationship between the Chinese and the non-Chinese throughout history was highly imbalanced and this kind of hierarchical structure could lead to an acrimonious relationship.

As can be seen in the table above, the modern states from the MSR -Viet Nam, Thailand, Lao PDR and Cambodia - all have a history with the Chinese empire (Chinafocus.com, 2012) - hence why they all have a degree of Chinese influence and ethnic Chinese populations. The last Chinese dynasty, the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1911), was overthrown by revolution, eventually emerging as the People's Republic of China in 1949.

During this period when the People's Republic of China was established, many changes were occurring in the region. States in the MSR were newly independent and were, like the

People's Republic of China, born into a world divided by the Cold War. Viet Nam gained independence in 1945, Cambodia in 1953, and Lao PDR also in 1953. Even though Thailand was never colonised, its constitutional monarchy was established in 1937. The Post WWII, Cold War period really defined the structure and nature of relationships in the region.

In subsequent years, China's relations with states in the MSR varied. On a global level, the Cold War led all nations to react to the polarized and very competitive global atmosphere. China made very significant policy shifts to adapt to this (Stuart-Fox, 2003), often supporting ethnic Chinese that were communist insurgents in various states on the Asian continent. During the many years of the Cold War, China was mostly seen by many states in the Asian region as an exporter of communism and a threat to be "feared and avoided" (Zhu, 2010).

Each of the states in the MSR coped with China's foreboding presence in their own way. An example of this is the establishment of the regional organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which Zhu (2010) argues was initially formed in 1967 as an anti-communist organization by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Thailand responded to China's threatening presence by being a founding member of ASEAN and by seeking closer ties with the United States of America (USA) for protection (Stuart-Fox, 2003). Cambodia followed the lead of regional neighbour Myanmar (Burma) and sought Chinese approval "through a policy of strict neutrality" (Stuart-Fox, 2003, p. 159). Stuart-Fox (2003) adds that the Soviet Union (USSR) became the source of support and protection for Viet Nam and Lao PDR after 1975.

Beijing made additional strategic moves that its regional neighbours considered threatening. Lum et al (Lum, Morrison, & Vaughn, 2008) use this to bolster their argument that relations in the region were strained and the impression of China was not positive amongst the people in the region. The Khmer Rouge regime killed millions of Cambodians in the four years of

its rule (Kurlantzick, 2006). During this time, China was the regime's closest ally and major foreign patron (Kurlantzick, 2006). Kurlantzick (2006) writes that Beijing sent the Khmer Rouge regime over 15,000 military advisers and provided the bulk of its external aid. China was a large supplier of arms to the Khmer rouge and the final blow from China came in 1979 when China responded militarily to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia (Lum, Morrison, & Vaughn, 2008).

Throughout history, MSR states were subject to violence, dominance, oppression, imperialism and occupation at the hand of the Chinese. Each MSR state has negative experiences with the Chinese in their histories. It is important to mention this to demonstrate how unfavourable the relationships were in order to demonstrate their progression towards repair, reconciliation. The same applies to relationships between MSR states and France which are covered in the following section.

C. Examples of Chinese Cultural Diplomacy in the MSR

This section follows the cultural partnership that was forged between China and the Mekong sub-region.

There are two significant events that created diplomatic space for the establishment of amicable bilateral relationships between China's and MSR states. Firstly, the defeat of the United States of America in the war in Viet Nam (1975) and secondly, the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union (Stuart-Fox, 2004) changed the atmosphere in the region. These events drove Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Thailand, states that had depended on outside protection (Thailand with the USA, Viet Nam and Lao PDR with USSR), to seek accommodation with China (Stuart-Fox, 2003).

Post-Mao China began to be seen as a 'protective big brother' in the region. China had further motive for strengthening ties with regional states after the disastrous Tiananmen Square incident in 1989. When the West imposed economic, trade and political sanctions on Beijing, making China a pariah on the outside of the global community there was a need for better

regional relations to take China out of diplomatic isolation (Zhu, 2010). Foreign Minister Qian Qichen (often nicknamed the ‘godfather of contemporary Chinese diplomacy’) was the one who made ties with regional states a priority when China was going through this period of diplomatic isolation (Zhu, 2010, p. 1).

Zhu (2010) remarks that the acceptance of China by states in the Southeast Asian region is especially significant considering the anti-communist sentiments that forged them together into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In July 1991, Qian Qichen was invited (as a guest of the Malaysian government) to attend the the opening session of the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur marking a significant turning-point in China’s regional relations and national image (ASEAN, 2012).

States in the MSR gained more interest in partnering with China after China proved that it is not only after hard power, it can be a softer neighbour. China gained praise and admiration when it refrained from devaluing its currency during the 1997 Asian financial crisis (also known as East Asia Financial Crisis), thus almost single-handedly saving and stabilizing the region’s economy (Lum, Morrison, & Vaughn, 2008). Instead of protecting itself, China chose to protect its ‘family’ in the region. The ‘protective big brother’ national image of China was reinforced and even former ASEAN Secretary General Rodolfo Severino announced, “China is really emerging from this smelling good” (Zhu, 2010). It was accepted that China was now a friend of the region, not a threat.

A year before the Asian Financial crisis, ASEAN-China relations had taken another step forward. At the 29th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1996, China was accorded full Dialogue Partner status (ASEAN, 2012). This secured China with a regional partner in “agriculture, information and communication technology, human resource development, Mekong Basin

Development, investment, energy, transport, culture, public health, tourism and environment” (ASEAN, 2012).

Cull’s 4 types of Cultural diplomacy (The prestige gift, cultural information, dialogue & collaboration, capacity building) will be used to categorise the following examples of Chinese cultural policies and activities.

i) The Prestige Gift

In association with ASEAN, China has organised various ways of sharing its ‘Prestige gifts.’ In May 2013, The ASEAN-China Culture Center organised a Chinese Traditional medicine study tour for ASEAN Ambassadors. Several Ambassadors from ASEAN states, including Mrs. Somdy Bounkhom from Lao PDR and H.E. Mr. Wiboon Khusakul from Thailand toured Dongzhimen Hospital and had the opportunity to talk to doctors and learn lessons about “Chinese traditional methods to keep fit and healthy, such as diagnosis, foot bath & leg therapy and neck massage” (ASEAN-China Centre, 2013).

ii) Cultural Information

As the educational branch of Cull’s four types of cultural diplomacy, cultural information is becoming easier in the ASEAN region as governments partner on literature, broadcasting and religious/historical/artistic exhibitions. It has also seen a change as ASEAN states sign agreements that open up their publics to foreign media (ASEAN-China Centre, 2011). China Radio International has been at the forefront of building media partnerships with ASEAN states (ASEAN, 2012). Founded in 1941, CRI broadcasts in 61 languages, including Khmer, Laotian, Thai and Vietnamese, the national languages of the MSR states. Broadcasts in Thai and Vietnamese have been available for 60 years since CRI began to broadcast in the ASEAN region. In 2010, Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhom said she once listened to CRI’s programs in Thai as a teenager, “I have learned much about China and the Chinese people by listening to these

programs." She understood the value of the CRI broadcasts to bolstering the ASEAN-China friendship (Xinhua News, 2010).

As well as focusing on radio stations available worldwide, in broadcasting, China has expanded the broadcasting of its state television and state Newswire Xinhua (Sigsgaard, 2011). In addition to broadcasting Chinese news, these broadcasts will also give the ASEAN region access to Chinese values, language, culture and world view. The reach of China's media resonates in the MSR where in the case of a developing state like Cambodia or Viet Nam, local people are more favourable of watching/listening to broadcasts from China than local broadcasts because of the better quality of media from China.

iii) Dialogue & Collaboration

Sigsgaard argues that China has shifted its foreign policy to focus on selling the idea that China will not be a threat to other nations (Sigsgaard, 2011). This is why China has played such a big part in forging partnerships for dialogue and collaboration in the cultural sectors. In doing so, China removes all thought of Chinese cultural imperialism, and is regarded as a cultural partner.

In 2005, China and ASEAN signed the Asean-China Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cultural Cooperation. The MOU promotes further exchanges and cooperation in culture between ASEAN states and China. It was the first official document that China signed with a regional organization on cultural exchange and cooperation (ASEAN, 2012). The MOU also included the establishment of the ASEAN-China Centre, which has an online portal of information on ASEAN-China relations.

On the 20th anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN-China dialogue in 2010, the China and ASEAN (10 + 1) Cultural Ministerial meeting was held (ASEAN-China Centre, 2011). At this meeting, based on China's proposal, an agreement was made to hold regular ministerial meetings (ASEAN-China Centre, 2011). Continuing in the same spirit as the Ministerial meeting,

China signed bilateral cultural agreements with to arrange exchanges of cultural officials and performance troupes with Cambodia and Lao PDR (ASEAN-China Centre, 2011).

With every additional effort that China makes in the cultural sectors, its national image in the region continues to improve.

Recently this year, at an ASEAN-China joint Foreign Ministers' Meeting, ASEAN and China proposed setting the year 2014 as the ASEAN-China Cultural Exchange Year and establishing ASEAN-China Entrepreneur Association and ASEAN-China Youth Association (ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting, 2013). This demonstrates how far China has progressed in its relationship with ASEAN as a region. Cultural Ministerial meetings with ASEAN and China are planned.

iv) Capacity Building

For China, capacity building is the oldest cultural diplomacy tradition. The teaching of language, for example, has been giving access to the national literature and music for centuries and access to national news broadcasts for many decades. This increases the number of people worldwide that share the same values, thus increasing the influential power of the shared culture.

China's new cultural diplomacy involves increasing Chinese cultural presence around the globe. Through Confucius Institutes (mentioned previously in Chapter II¹²), China has pushed the learning of Chinese language and culture in the ASEAN region. Some ASEAN states like Thailand have signed agreements to integrate Chinese into public school curricula (Sigsgaard, 2011). China is encouraging students from the ASEAN region to attend University in China and has even loosened visa policies for foreign students coming to study in China (Sigsgaard, 2011).

¹² Page 27 - China and Cultural Diplomacy

Loosening the visa regulations for foreign students going to China to study definitely endears other states to China.

V. FRANCE

A. Introduction to France's Cultural Diplomacy

When it comes to soft power, wielding cultural diplomacy has always been something that the leaders of France have prioritized in their foreign policy (Nye, 2004b). Nye cites that even as early as the 17th Century, France promoted its culture throughout the European region. France was so successful in doing this that French became the 'European' language of diplomacy for centuries - French was even used in Eastern European courts (Nye, 2004b). The spreading of a language falls under Cull's 'capacity building' type of cultural diplomacy. By making French the 'language-of-Europe,' the leaders of France were fostering a mass of people that could understand French literature, news, music...etc. if they were given access to it. Language also carries culture and this means that as the French language was used in new places in Europe, eventually more pieces of the French culture would become universal European culture.

Nye also points out that in the early 1800s, emerging from big political and ideological changes after the French Revolution, France made efforts to promote its new radical ideology in the region (Nye, 2004b). Complementing the hard power of war, the French promotion of ideas, values and social policies also falls under Cull's 'capacity-building' category of cultural diplomacy. The French government aimed at increasing the number of people with the same beliefs and values because theoretically hoping that this would, in turn, increase France's influential power.

We also cannot forget that the Alliance Française was created around the same timeline in 1883 as an international organization that aims to promote French language and culture around the world (Nye, 2004b). Scholar Walter Roberts even writes that the Alliance Française was the first deliberate "governmental endeavour to reach foreign public" (Roberts, 2007, p. 38). The

French used the Alliance Française as a valuable tool for sending public figures from France's cultural field (musicians, actors, authors, artists). Using the Alliance Française saved the French government from going through the embassies or official delegations, therefore helping them to escape the hassle of diplomatic red-tape. France's successful efforts to project the French language and culture are what spurred on other states to follow suit in their diplomacy.

Roberts' examined history and highlighted what he argues is the source of strategic foreign policy through cultural diplomacy (Roberts, 2007). He argues that in modern international relations, the concept of being able to influence foreign publics was first realized with the invention of the radio (Roberts, 2007). At the end of the nineteenth century, the radio came out as a valuable way to traverse borders without physically having to deal with customs and border controls (Roberts, 2007). After the invention of the radio, Robert lists other catalysts for cultural diplomacy, one of which was the 1923 decision by France's government to establish a cultural section in its foreign office. Roberts argues that the French were trailblazers with bold ideas of how to further cultural relations with other states (Roberts, 2007).

The French Empire at its prime in the 1920s and 1930s was approximately 10% of the total area of the land on earth (Lane, 2013). Even today in a post-colonial time, France still endeavours to keep *francophonie* alive. France has made efforts to keep its cultural ties with its ex-colonies, especially in continuing to promote the use of French language.

It is slightly challenging to find information on French cultural diplomacy written in the English language. Phillippe Lane's 2011 book, *Présence Française dans le Monde: L'action Culturelle et Scientifique* was recently translated and published in English.. Lane writes of a foreign policy in France which has, throughout history, relied heavily on cultural and scientific diplomacy (Lane, 2013). He too starts off in the 18th Century and takes the reader through France's cultural diplomacy through time up until present day. His focus lies with the three new

cultural agencies established in 2010, CampusFrance, Institut Français and FranceExpertise (Lane, 2013). These new agencies were put in place in order to provide a clear and cohesive national image of for France amongst foreign publics.

FranceExpertise is a new agency in place “to increase the effectiveness of external cultural action of the French state” (Lane, 2013). Through FranceExpertise, experts in forecasting, monitoring and evaluation of cultural activities give technical assistance to policy makers in order to maximize the effectiveness of bilateral and multilateral cultural projects (Lane, 2013). Of Cull’s four types of cultural diplomacy, FranceExpertise which focuses on bilateral and multi-lateral cross-cultural projects should be categorized as a cultural diplomacy tool for ‘dialogue and collaboration.’ The same can be said for CampusFrance, which provides scholarships and other advantages to foreign students in order to promote studies in France. It can also be considered ‘capacity building’ since Campus France is also the facilitator of inter-national cultural exchanges for students and staff with 180 Campus France stations in cities around the world (Lane, 2013). The students and teachers that have the opportunity to live in France can definitely take on French cultural habits, ideals, values and return to their home countries sharing unique points of view on France.

Institut Français was established to create French cultural activities abroad and to harmonize the cultural events of embassies, cultural centres and other cultural actors (Lane, 2013). The network of Institut Français’ is in place to coordinate French cultural activity on a global scale. French cultural events that are held abroad are often in Cull’s categories of ‘the prestige gift’ and/or ‘cultural information.’ For example, a travelling French art exhibition for could show the renowned ‘prestige gift’ impressionist artists like Monet, Renoir and Cezanne. It could also provide cultural information about the young vibrant modern art discipline in France by showcasing modern contemporary art that many might not associate with France. Each of the above new agencies has its own online portal with information on France’s progress.

The many organizational changes made in recent French foreign policy are charted by Lane in his book. Lane writes in detail about the French cultural ‘exports’ established through strategic cultural partnerships. Cultural ‘exports’ like writers, musicians, dancers and circus performers have been recognized as valuable to cultural diplomacy and greater global impact. If French literature, music, dance and circuses travel abroad, they are spreading the values and culture of France to their audiences. Strategic cultural partnerships are channels by which culture is disseminated.

As part of an ‘Open Data Policy’, France’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs has set up an online portal of information called *France Diplomatie* (France Diplomatie, 2012) where a vast amount of information on France’s diplomatic practices is free for all to access. Statistics on France’s tools of influence abroad is also available on the same website. Figures can be found in Table 1 below.

French Institutes	101
<i>Alliances Françaises</i>	900
Schools with programs in French language	486
French National Centers	5
French headquartered Research institutes	26
Campus France areas (for scholarships and exchanges)	161
Environmental Correspondents	98
French Artistic events abroad each year	50,000
Foreign students hosted in 2010/2011 – (France hosts the fourth largest number of foreign students)	285,000
Master's degree and Doctoral students each year that receive Eiffel scholarships for study in France	470
Students in French Institutes and <i>Alliances Françaises</i>	800,000
Students that Registered for French certification tests in 2010	337,000
Students in schools following the French program in 2010/2011 (40% are French nationals)	295,000
Students in bilingual sections in national education systems	1.7 Million

TABLE 4: FRANCE'S CULTURAL ORGANISATION/INSTITUTIONS IN VIET NAM

The statistics in the Table above showing France's reach across the globe are growing annually, with French cultural presence now in 161 countries through agencies connected to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (France Diplomatie, 2012). Looking at the numbers, it appears as if 'capacity-building' and 'dialogue and collaboration' are the main cultural diplomacy focus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs if looking through the cultural scope. The number of French language students and schools increases the number of people with access to French language music, films, news broadcasts, television stations...etc thus increasing the influence of the French state. Lane mentions that the viewership of French television channels like France 24, TV5 Monde and RFI shows large numbers of people around the world receiving the French perspective (Lane, 2013). Lane's research demonstrates that at the end of 2010 TV5 had records showing that it has viewed

in 215 million homes that year and in addition, 8.6 million people visited the TV5 Monde website every month that year (Lane, 2013).

During the Cold War, Nye writes that France was the global leader in spending “on policy information and cultural communication functions” (Nye, 2004b, p. 5). The establishment of the Alliance Française and the cultural section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Quai d’Orsay) were pioneering steps in the field of cultural diplomacy. France’s goal was to create a positive pro-French sentiment among foreign publics, even for those that were not Francophone¹³. Throughout history, the French have definitely been forerunners in the recognition of the value of cultural diplomacy as a tool for enhancing national image abroad. They saw the value in investing in cultural diplomacy because in return, “winning hearts and minds” would also win them easier acceptance of French foreign policy objectives.

The following section will outline the history of France with the states in the Mekong sub-region. For the same reason as for China¹⁴, this section on the history cannot be comprehensive enough to properly detail the complexities of France’s history with each MSR state. The history will merely be outlined, giving only the key historical events shaping the somewhat negative experiences of the MSR states in relation to France’s occupational and colonial presence.

¹³ French language-speaking

¹⁴ Page 36 - History of China in the MSR

B. France's History with states in the MSR

Gentlemen, we must speak more loudly and more honestly! We must say openly that indeed the higher races have a right over the lower racesI repeat, that the superior races have a right because they have a duty. They have the duty to civilize the inferior races...And that is why we needed Tunisia; that is why we needed Saigon and Indochina; that is why we need Madagascar...and why we shall never leave them! (Ferry, 1884).

Two-time Prime Minister of France, Jules Ferry (1880-1881, 1883-1885) is remembered for promoting a vast and aggressive expansion of the French colonial empire. In his 1884 speech to the French Chamber of Deputies, he stresses the importance of fulfilling their duty as 'men of a higher race' to civilise the lower races (Ferry, 1884). This was dubbed France's *mission civilatrice*. The French were present in Southeast Asia long before Ferry's statements about never leaving the region. As early as the 17th Century, Christian missionaries from the Missions Etrangères de Paris arrived in Southeast Asia (Missions Etrangères de Paris, 2013) arrived in Southeast Asia. King Louis XIV who ruled from 1643-1715 was eager to spread Christianity during his reign. Hence, he established the Compagnie des Indes Orientales (French East trading Company) to deliver and fund missions (Gin, 2004, p. 517).

Paris' political and economic initiatives in Southeast Asia only began in the late 1850s when an excuse to intervene militarily emerged. Anti-Christian violence erupted in the region and France took this as an opportunity to gain access to trading posts, naval-supply stations, a land route to the rich markets of China, and an imperial advance in competition with the British" (Furlough, 2005, p. 2)

The French military fought and conquered the region which includes the modern states of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam (Gin, 2004). Thailand is the only MSR state which was not a part of France's 'Union of Indochina.'

Under French rule and France's *mission civilatrice* (civilising mission), the people of the MSR were second-class citizens. Even the highest ranking Vietnamese made less than the lowest ranking Frenchman (Gin, 2004). French imperialism established French school systems. Just as Ferry said, the *mission civilatrice* implied that Paris had a moral responsibility to spread its superior language, culture, education system, medicine and values to others. The French ethnocentric perspective in the MSR created a path to unsavoury relationships with states in the region that faced racism and oppression under French rule (Furlough, 2005). Resistance and nationalist movements gained popularity and strength in the late 1940s until France was defeated in 1954 and retreated from the region.

It is important to note the similarities between China¹⁵ and France's¹⁶ civilising missions in the MSR as described in both of their history sections. Both states desired to spread their own 'superior' ways to lesser/barbaric people. The difference in France and China's dissemination of their culture, language and values today is their willingness to reassure its partners that they are open for cultural exchanges and dialogue and collaboration in the cultural sector, not only one-way cultural information.

C. Examples of France's Cultural Diplomacy in the MSR

Nothing great has ever been accomplished in France without culture. This also applies to diplomacy and external action. France is strong and respected when it promotes its values, its heritage, its creativity. Culture is one of our greatest strengths; it represents our heritage and a part of our future. (Filippetti & Fabius, 2013)

The above is taken from an article written by the French Ministers of Culture and Foreign Affairs, Aurélie Filipetti and Laurent Fabius July 2013. It is titled *Our Ambitions for Cultural Diplomacy in the 21st Century* (Filippetti & Fabius, 2013). In this article, the tenets of France's

¹⁵ Page 35 China's History with the MSR states

¹⁶ Page 53 France's History with the MSR states

cultural policies are summarised and most importantly, the views of the two ministers responsible for Cultural Diplomacy are heard.

By using several examples from the region, this section will focus only on the cultural partnership that was forged here between France and the Mekong sub-region. Cull's (2010) 4 types of Cultural diplomacy (The Prestige Gift, Cultural Information, Dialogue & Collaboration, Capacity Building) will be used to categorise France's cultural policies to enhance its national image, promote French cultural values, keep the states in the MSR educated on their culture and values, participate in cultural exchanges, and ultimately enrich regional relationships (Cull, 2010). Examples from the MSR will assist in establish patterns of Chinese and French behaviour towards its cultural diplomacy targets, before the study explores the same in detail in Viet Nam.

The office of the Ministry of foreign Affairs is one that originated in France and as far back as the 17th Century, de facto French ruler, Cardinal Richelieu made known that his priority goal for France was the reputation of the state (Sigsgaard, 2011). The French were applying their awareness of the importance of a good national image in their foreign policy from centuries ago.

i) The Prestige Gift

La Fête, The Thai-France cultural Festival in Thailand in organised by the French Embassy in Bangkok in partnership with the Alliance française Française. In 2013, The festival brought a special event to Thailand. To commemorate the 50th death anniversary of one of the greatest 20th century French composers, Francis Poulenc, La Fête opened with his greatest piece, "Les Mamelles de Tirésias" (La Fête , 2013). Poulenc's masterpiece was performed by a collaborative symphony orchestra made up of members of Bangkok's symphony orchestra and guest musicians from France. By bringing the work of Poulenc to Thailand's lovers of the arts, France was presenting Thailand's public with a prestige gift, some of the most precious French cultural experiences.

ii) Cultural Information

French Films are an intrinsic part of French culture. UniFrance Films is the French organization for the promotion of French films around the world. Their statistics show that in 2012, there were 144 French films released in Asian theatres and 327 French films broadcast on TVs in Asia (UniFrance, 2012). Of 11 French films released in Thailand's theatres, a total of 1.4million people viewed them. That is 1.4 million people in Thailand that received some French cultural influence.

iii) Dialogue and Collaboration

Whereas China provides the states in the MSR with a protective 'big brother' in the region, France provides the MSR with a way into a deeper connection with the European Union (EU) as a whole. This goes both ways, France also provides a deeper connection with the MSR for the rest of the EU states. It was France that pioneered the establishment of the Asia-Europe summit Meeting in 1994 to establish regional partnership between the two regions (ASEM, 2013). Through closer ties with France, which was eager for Asia-EU partnerships to grow, states in the MSR could open themselves up to closer ties with more strong EU states. In a way, France is their doorway to the whole of Europe. It is through ASEM and its only permanently established institution the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) that France continued to champion the dialogue and collaboration between Asia and Europe, gaining recognition as a state in favour of softer methods of power.

iv) Capacity building

Just like in China, capacity building is the oldest cultural diplomacy tradition in France. France's relationship with the Mekong sub-region took a different path than that of China. France was never fully disconnected from the region. As a colonial power, France left many French influences behind after the decolonization period. French language was still being used in schools in Cambodia, Viet Nam and Laos even after the decolonisation (Stuart-Fox, 2004) . Even today,

three of the four states in the MSR [Cambodia (joined 1991), Lao PDR (1972), Viet Nam (1970)] are members of the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (IOF), and the fourth [Thailand (2008)] is an observer. In the words of the IOF's own information site,

The Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie represents one of the biggest linguistic zones in the world. Its members share more than just a common language. They also share the humanist values promoted by the French language" (Organisation Internationale de La Francophonie, 2013).

Formed back in 1970 as an intergovernmental association for francophone states and adopting a new Charter and name in 2005, the IOF has 75 member States and governments worldwide. For all states in the MSR to be members demonstrates the influence of France and French language and culture in the region. A speech made by Laurent Fabius, France's current Minister of Foreign Affairs highlighted the ever-present influence of France in Southeast Asia, despite the bitter taste left by colonialism in the MSR. Speaking at the ASEAN headquarters in Jakarta, Indonesia, Fabius talks of how France's inherent connection with the region can be seen in everyday life. He gave the example of French influence in gastronomy which is seen through the prominence of bread in Vietnamese culture (Fabius, 2013).

VI. The Special Case of VIET NAM

A. Shifting Power in Viet Nam

When countries make their power legitimate in the eyes of others, they encounter less resistance to their wishes" (Nye, 2005).

France and China's search for legitimacy in Viet Nam has shifted their preference of power from being only hard power-based to including soft power. Realising that their past led to negative perceptions in Viet Nam, France and China prioritised proving that their intentions for harmonious and mutually beneficial relations were legitimate and based on credible principles, and values. Cultural diplomacy gave both France and China a way back into a strategic partnership with Viet Nam. Their presence had to be felt gradually because Viet Nam would have a right to be suspicious of the legitimacy of their objectives in the region.

China is one of the great powers in the East, and France is a great power in the West, These states are both desirable allies for many states across the world. The shared history with Viet Nam might even play to their advantage as they pursue their national interests in the Asian region. However, it is important to note that even if Viet Nam is willing to cooperate with France and China on the basis of shared economic or political interests, without the cultural diplomacy relationship, the cooperation would have limitations. As Nye wrote, "states will cooperate up to a point out of mere self-interest, but their degree of cooperation is also affected by the attractiveness [of the other state]" (Nye, 2005).

It was necessary for France and China to build up their soft power to supplement their attractiveness to Viet Nam, thus enhancing their relationships. The following sub-sections will delve deeper into the cultural activities that have been set in motion to implement cultural diplomacy as a soft power tool in Viet Nam.

Information on France's cultural policies is freely available from multiple sources. More often than not the most accurate information is found in the French language or in the language of the target state, but this does not take away from the fact that there is an excess of information concerning France's cultural activities abroad. On the other hand, information concerning the cultural policies of China are not as easy to find. Unlike Paris, Beijing has not provided its Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a forum for disseminating information in English, about its activities. Hence for this empirical study, most of the discussion on France and China's cultural diplomacy will hinge on practical examples of cultural diplomacy found in the news, international institutions, speeches, and existing literature.

Kenneth Waltz's levels-of-analysis will be used as a heuristic device to analyse this section on Viet Nam. At the systemic level, French and Chinese relationships with Viet Nam will be examined to see how changes in Viet Nam affect Viet Nam's role in the region and in the international system (if at all). At the individual level, the priorities and decisions of leaders that can shape foreign policy in France and China will be studied. Finally, at state level, the soft power influences of France and China will be examined to see how they affect the nature of Vietnamese society and government.

B. Systemic Level analysis

The more power one has, the more that state is able to achieve its goals and objectives; the less power one has, the more that state may be subject to the whims of other states (Dorff, 2004, p. 4).

Anarchy is at the centre of any analysis of state actions at the systemic level. As a realist, Waltz (1959) writes about anarchy and the need to balance power in the systemic level. His levels-of-analysis model was conceived to analyse the cause of or potential for war in the international system. Cultural diplomacy can be considered a tool in the balance of power. However, cultural diplomacy increases the soft power of a state, not the hard. What cultural

diplomacy balances is the ‘hardness’ of the hard power/ It alleviates the presence of threat by strengthening the bond between two states and creating diplomatic space for what can be called ‘mutually assured safety’ or ‘mutually assured security’. The more interconnected two states get, (especially cultural connections like sharing the same values and language), the less likely they are to use hard power as a threat against each other.

At this level, power is most important (Singer, 1961) and according to Suzuki (2009) and Lord (2008) soft power is coming to the forefront of the kind of power that will become most important. For Viet Nam, whether or not it accepts the cultural diplomacy of France and China is dependent on what a partnership/ close relationship with France or China could do its their power position in the international order.

Taking the systemic level top-down approach to this issue, it is crucial to point out the developing nation status of Viet Nam. A state’s power in relation to others in the global system is the foremost variable for decision-making at the systemic level (Singer, 1961). On the global stage, Viet Nam’s voice is not yet remarkably loud or powerful enough for it to be considered a particularly influential state. The Vietnamese economy is growing and this may eventually change its global status just like economic competitiveness has changed the status of its neighbour Thailand. For now, Viet Nam can bolster its current status, power and influence by maintaining friends in ‘high places’ to increase their power and influence. This keeps Viet Nam open for external relations with its previous foes, France and China.

i) China

Due to its proximity, China is the foreboding neighbour of Viet Nam that any other nation that wishes to threaten Viet Nam knows that they will have to face. This relationship makes waves in the MSR, especially now that Viet Nam’s economy is growing rapidly. Thailand may have the largest economy in the MSR but Viet Nam is in close competition.

Although both Viet Nam and Thailand have histories with China and large populations of ethnic Chinese, the cultural similarities between China and Viet Nam add to this close relationship. This would make it easier for Chinese culture to be understood by Viet Nam, making it easier for China to have influence with the Vietnamese public. Due to Viet Nam's high standing in the MSR, as Vietnamese people view China's image more positively, the MSR views China more positively. An interesting observation made by Gill and Huang is that Northern Viet Nam (whose people are more ethnically Chinese) views China's image more positively than Southern Viet Nam (Gill & Huang, 2006). This demonstrates that a closer ethnic/cultural tie leads to closer cultural relations.

Dorff notes that the systemic level explains theories such as the balance of power (Dorff, 2004, p. 4). This was seen in Southeast Asia at the establishment of ASEAN¹⁷. China was a state was seeking to dominate the system and this created a reaction amongst the Southeast Asian states that united as ASEAN to counter the power of that state.

Despite this, Viet Nam has enjoyed the privilege of being China's neighbour. Their already shared cultures led to more special bond between China and Viet Nam than China and other MSR states.

ii) France

France is one of Europe's great powers and this makes it a valuable ally for Viet Nam. Due to France's position as Vietnam's prime partner in Europe (France Diplomatie, 2010), and Vietnam being France's strongest Southeast Asian affiliate, the relationship between France and Vietnam resonates in the MSR and across the oceans in the European Union. Since Thailand was never colonised, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam's are all connected through their history of French colonisation.

¹⁷ See page 38

The influence of France from a top-down approach in Viet Nam begins at the high-level meetings; French presidential visits to Vietnam and various bilateral ministerial visits that are organized annually. These high-level meetings are often accompanied by cultural events and site visits. A French Minister's visit to a popular Vietnamese restaurant, for example, is a cultural diplomacy accomplishment for the French. It demonstrates that the French are open to diversity, or at least Vietnamese diversity.

C. Elite actor/Individual Level analysis

Real people make decisions that determine the pattern of behaviour among states (Dorff, 2004, p. 5)

At the individual level, the choices, initiatives, priorities and decisions of leaders that can shape foreign policy in France and China will be studied. This level is useful because in some cases, no matter what the political system of a state, the personality behind the decisions (i.e. President) might sway the decisions in accordance to his own aggressive agenda

i) China

Although Xi Jinping is China's President with ultimate decision-making power, the Chinese government as a whole is firm and decisive, a cognitive miser with no 'wobble-room.' The policies of China rarely change drastically and if Jinping had wanted to change his approach to Viet Nam, he would have done so already. This means that without the impact of any external actions, China's cultural diplomacy policies can be expected to remain the same or increase slowly as China's power position in the global system increases. Viet Nam is becoming a more important ally for Jinping especially since they are growing in economic prosperity and politically growing their influence in the Southeast Asian region. So far,

ii) France

Former President of France, Nicholas Sarkozy is known for his rife neglect of the cultural sector. Nevertheless, since the French government is built mainly on consensus-building for decision-making, the programmes already in place before Sarkozy came into power remained. It cannot be said that Sarkozy made any active endeavours towards cultural cooperation with Viet Nam. His predecessors had set everything in motion and he merely continued what they had started.

Current President Francois Hollande, however, spoke up against previous President Sarkozy's lack of cultural policies in his Presidential campaign. Hollande set in place "60 commitments for France" as his campaign platform. Referring to the major artistic works and creation in the early 1980s, Hollande announced that as President he will place "culture at the heart of Presidential engagement" (Le Monde, 2012). Hollande is expected to continue to increase France's cultural diplomacy where necessary around the globe as he already has during his term.. Since Viet Nam is in economic growth and development, Hollande's government chose continue increasing the influence of French culture. Hollande put more emphasis on domestic cultural industries in his campaign profile and his election, he has focused on promoting development in Viet Nam through cultural industries and exchanges.

In 2012, French Ambassador to Viet Nam, Claude Blanchemaison stated that Hollande would stress the importance of deepening Asia-Europe relations, giving special attention to Viet Nam (VOV, 2013). He stated that "The President will attach a lot of importance to deepening ties with other European and ASEAN countries, with Vietnam being its key partner" (VOV, 2013).

There is consistency in the attitude of France towards Viet Nam on all levels. From the above statement, one can deduce that France's leadership sees Viet Nam as its door to the rest of the MSR. This doesn't stop here. At systemic level, France sees stronger influence in Viet Nam as leading to stronger influence in the MSR.

D. State Level analysis

At state level, the characteristics of Viet Nam as a sum of its various parts will be examined, emphasizing how the cultural diplomacies of France and China benefit the Vietnamese government, economy and society.

“Because states are sovereign entities, they act relatively independently; because they are part of the same system, the interaction of those independent decisions is what leads to war or peace, conflict or cooperation” (Dorff, 2004, p. 7).

At state level, the influence of France and China (through cultural diplomacy) will be examined to see how they affect the nature of Vietnamese society and government and their opinions of France and China. The political systems of states in the MSR come to question as well as those of France and China. Each of these plays a part in determining if a state is willing to cooperate, participate in cultural exchanges, accept foreign cultural institutions, or the teaching of foreign languages and foreign news.

The political system of a target state also determines the length of investment-time of cultural diplomacy activities. In a functioning democracy, the public (who are the targets of cultural diplomacy) decide on policies and have the opportunity to vote for their leaders. The effects of cultural diplomacy are more quickly seen and felt than in an authoritarian state, where the messages of cultural diplomacy may only reach the elites for generations and trickle down very slowly. In Vietnam’s single-party socialist state, most institutions and organisations are state-owned. This means that it is unlikely that China or France could practice cultural diplomacy on a large scale without the permission of Vietnam’s government. This is important when comparing the number of French cultural institutions and organisations with those of the Chinese in Vietnam. The discussion will start with China’s cultural diplomacy.

i) China

“The strong development of culture exchange is a bridge that strengthens bonds, cultivates mutual understanding and consolidates the traditional friendship between the two nations. This is a solid foundation for the development of the comprehensive strategic co-operation relationship between China and Viet Nam” -Chinese Ambassador to Viet Nam Kong Xuan (Vietnam News, 2012)

The table below shows the different sources of Chinese cultural diplomacy present in Viet Nam today.

Source of Cultural Diplomacy	Description	Cull's 4 types of Cultural diplomacy
Chinese Bridge Proficiency Competition (for foreign College students)	Competitions to promote China's the teaching of Chinese language and skills in the world (Hanban, 2013)	Capacity building
Office of Chinese language council international affiliated with China's Min of Education	Governing body for the dissemination of Chinese language. (Include the Confucius Institutes but In Viet Nam does not have a Confucius Institute) Works with Schools that teach Chinese language (Hanban, 2012)	Capacity building
Radio	China Radio International provided In Vietnamese Language (Chinese Radio International, 2013)	Cultural Information
China-Vietnam Vietnam-China Friendship association	promoting the role of people-to-people diplomacy and mutual understanding (Vietnam News, 2013)	Dialogue & Collaboration, Cultural Information
Educational Exchange	16,000 Vietnamese students studying in China (Vietnam News, 2012)	Dialogue & Collaboration
Literature	Publishing houses like The Gioi Publishers translating Chinese books into Vietnamese (Phuong, 2012)	Cultural Information
China Central television (CCTV)	Chinese television station (CCTV, 2013)	Cultural information
Civil Diplomats	Chinese teachers sent abroad to teach Chinese language and culture	Capacity building

TABLE 5: CHINA'S SOURCES OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN VIET NAM

a. Chinese Cultural organizations/Institutions

China's influence is usually faced with slightly more hesitation than France's by Viet Nam. China's proximity leaves Viet Nam in a constant state of apprehension, waiting for the day China's soft power turns back from soft to hard. Nevertheless, since the 1990s, China has continued to slyly but aggressively court Vietnam (Stuart-Fox, 2004). Chinese music, movies,

novels and historical television series have taken over in Vietnam. Vietnamese people often choose to watch Chinese content over Vietnamese because in most cases, the Chinese quality and standard is better. Vietnamese popular culture is highly influenced by Chinese fashion, lifestyle, cinema and cuisine. A binding force in the relations between China and Viet Nam is their shared tradition, for example, the Mid-Autumn Moon festival which is celebrated both in Vietnam and China (Kurlantzick, 2006).

As previously mentioned, the Confucius Institute is a tool for the promotion of Chinese ideals, language and culture all over the world. The Vietnamese government has been very careful about welcoming an increase of Chinese influence. In the MSR, Viet Nam is the only state that has refused to accept the establishment of a Confucius institute within its borders. Many Vietnamese schools have teaching in Chinese but for most other things ‘borrowed’ from Chinese culture, the Vietnamese have adapted them to fit their traditions. Gill and Huang called it ‘the Vietnamization’ of Chinese culture (Gill & Huang, 2006).

Due to the absence of a Confucius Institute to be the epicentre of Chinese cultural activities in Viet Nam, the on-the-ground actors for China’s cultural diplomacy come from the Vietnam-China Friendship Association (VCFA). This is a group that plans activities and events “to intensify friendship and mutual understanding between the two peoples” and “promote the role of people-to-people diplomacy” (Vietnam News, 2013) It is crucial to remember that all of this can only take place because it has been granted permission under the watchful eye of the Ministry of Culture. The Vice President of the Vietnam-China Friendship association spoke about the variety of work that his organization does by organizing bilateral cultural exchange in, “artistic performances, literature, paintings and calligraphy” (ASEAN-China Center, 2011b). All activities of the, The China-Vietnam Vietnam-China Friendship Associations collaborate with the Ministries of Culture in each state. One of the events organised by the VCFA in 2011 was an

exhibition on traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting in Hanoi, Viet Nam where 35 works of art were displayed.

Another form of Chinese cultural influence in Vietnam is Chinese literature. The translation of Chinese books into Vietnamese by state-owned publishing houses like the Gioi Publishers (Phuong, 2012) is a form of cultural diplomacy which, in Vietnam, reaches the younger members of the public. A seventy-five year old translator in Hanoi stated that young readers in Vietnam are now more interested in reading about contemporary life in China rather than many of the English and Vietnamese language classics (Phuong, 2012). A cultural program that is also aimed at the younger generation is the Chinese Bridge Proficiency Competition (Hanban, 2013). Viet Nam is one of 43 countries around the world whose undergraduate and postgraduate students participate in this competition (Hanban, 2013) for full scholarships to university in China. Participating students are tested about China, must demonstrate proficiency in the Chinese language and must also show competence in Chinese culture skills “such as Chinese songs, dances, operas, musical instruments, calligraphy, painting, paper cutting and martial arts” (Hanban, 2013).

As displayed in Table 5¹⁸ China had made efforts to win the hearts and minds of Chinese people through providing them with access to Chinese culture, values and language.

b. Sino-Vietnamese cultural cooperation

In 2010, the Chinese Minister of Culture, Cai Wu visited Viet Nam on a trip to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of diplomatic relations with Viet Nam (VOV, 2010). On this occasion, Wu signed an agreement with Truong Tan Sang, a Politburo member, to continue giving assistance to Viet Nam in the development of its cultural sector (VOV, 2010). They also agreed to go ahead with the organization of a Cultural Week in each country, as well as other cultural and artistic activities to support Ha Long Bay’s bid to become one of seven new world

¹⁸ See page 62

wonders. They also agreed to continue collaborating in cultural events, cultural exchanges, and the development of cultural industries as set in their Sino-Viet Nam Culture Agreement for 2010-2012.

It is now at high levels of government that the effects of cultural cooperation are finally being seen as relevant and noteworthy. The Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam Nguyen Thien Nhan made an effort to thank the Chinese government and the Chinese Ministry of Culture for their assistance to Vietnamese delegations that attended the sixth Asian Games (ASIAD) in Guangzhou and the Shanghai International Cultural Fair 2010. It can be deduced that part of China's cultural policy is to invite delegations from its regional neighbours to cultural events in China.

Nhan also spoke of continuing on the same path of sharing a large number of cultural activities and events with China (VOV, 2010). If Heads of State and State Premiers are talking about culture and the 'strengthening of cultural bonds, it demonstrates that soft power through cultural diplomacy does complement other forms of foreign policy well./ Except for the visits by Ministers of Culture, the central purpose of each of the state visits mentioned above was not concerned with culture.

On the occasion of China's National Day, Chinese Ambassador to Viet Nam, Kong Xuan You spoke about the importance of a strong friendship with Viet Nam. He focused on bilateral exchanges of art troupes and exhibitions, students, teachers and sports men and women (Vietnam News, 2012).

E. Effectiveness of China's Cultural Diplomacy in Viet Nam

After laying out the historically hard power nature of the relationships between France and Viet Nam, and China and Viet Nam, this study described how cultural diplomacy solidified the interconnectedness of China and Viet Nam through cultural activities. The trust of Viet Nam.

By increasing their cultural influence through cultural activities and exchanges with Viet Nam, France and China increased their level of attractiveness to the Vietnamese government, society and economy. The presence of France has increased as is evidenced by the many cultural institutions and organisations. This remains true when the case is analysed with Waltz's Levels of analysis. At all levels, Viet Nam could benefit from closer relations with France.

Unfortunately for China, "Actions speak louder than words" (Nye, 2004a, p. 110) and China's insistence on battling with its regional neighbours in territorial disputes in the east and South China Seas renders any softer national image China may have built up, obsolete (Thuy, 2011; Storey, 2010). In the case of Viet Nam, China has lost so much legitimacy and credibility by its actions in the South China Sea that China's targets for cultural diplomacy (Hiep, 2012), the Vietnamese public, are out in the streets in Anti-Chinese protests (Reuters, 2013). In addition to these protests a letter written to the Philippine Ambassador in Vietnam was sent by 66 Vietnamese people in Support for the "sovereign rights" of the Philippines in the Scarborough Shoal (The Diplomat, 2012)

If China's actions in the territorial disputes continue to cause tension in the relationship with Viet Nam, then Vietnam's government may continue to limit China's access to Vietnam's public. State-owned publishing houses may no longer allow the translation on Chinese books, access to Chinese television and Radio may be blocked, and limitations could be placed on cultural exchanges. In order for China's cultural diplomacy to work in Viet Nam, China must be seen as legitimate and credible. Currently, China's benign presentation of itself is not matching the hard 'iron fist' that it is wielding to its regional neighbours in the South/East China Sea (Perlez, 2013). Storey states that "Although Chinese leaders try to reassure ASEAN governments that Beijing's intentions are benign, today, Southeast Asians seem much less willing to take these reassurances at face value" (Storey, 2010, p. 8) supporting the notion that China's 'hard' behaviour in the territorial disputes has negated the effects of its cultural diplomacy.

ii) France

In the article on France's 'ambitions for cultural diplomacy' co-written by the French Ministers of Culture and Foreign Affairs, the French emphasize that, "Culture must permeate all aspects of public action and help to support our policies in other areas" (Filippetti & Fabius, 2013). In this statement, the decision-makers in French cultural diplomacy are demonstrating their need for soft power through cultural diplomacy to complement all other foreign policies, whether they be hard power-based or not. Paris understands that soft power through cultural diplomacy can support other policies.

Culture can be used as a tool for development initiatives. For the Vietnamese government, the major benefits of French presence comes in the form of development aid from France. According to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France is the second largest donor to development activities in Viet Nam and Viet Nam is the leading recipient of French aid in the Asian region (France Diplomatie, 2010). A Partnership document signed in 2006 outlines efforts for cultural diversity and French language teaching in Viet Nam as some of the main components of bilateral cooperation in addition to development initiatives already in place. This development aid also benefits the economy since cultural diversity brings innovation and creativity which can lead to the creation of cultural goods and services that contribute to the economy. This shows how although development aid is financial and stands on the line between hard and soft power, it is well-complemented by cultural diplomacy and results in a stronger partnership between France and Viet Nam.

a. French Cultural organizations/institutions in Viet Nam

Below is a list of France's cultural organisations/institutions based in Viet Nam as well as other sources of cultural diplomacy.

Source of Cultural Diplomacy	Location	Description	Cull's 4 types of Cultural Diplomacy
Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)	Ho Chi Minh City	Intergovernmental organization for increasing the political role of La Francophonie	Dialogue & Collaboration
Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT)	Ho Chi Minh City	Intergovernmental organization for French language sharing	Dialogue & Collaboration
Department of Service for Cooperation and Cultural Action (SCAC)	Ho Chi Minh City	Facilitates Cultural cooperation, activities, events	Dialogue & Collaboration
CampusFrance	Ho Chi Minh City	Facilitates Educational Exchange	Capacity Building
Institut for Cultural Exchange with France (IDecaf)	Ho Chi Minh City	Facilitates Cultural exchange	Capacity Building, Cultural Information
French Cultural Center	Hue	Disseminates Cultural Information	Cultural Information
Institut Français (x2)	Ho Chi Minh City & Hanoi	Provides French Language teaching & Cultural information	Capacity Building, Cultural Information
Pôles Universitaires Français (x2)	Ho Chi Minh City & Hanoi	Satellite university from France offering French diploma degrees (Embassy of France, 2013b)	Capacity Building, Dialogue & Collaboration
The Franco-Vietnamese Centre for Management Training (CFVG)	Hanoi	First program of Franco-Vietnamese cooperation in the field of education, founded in 1992 by the Vietnamese government and the French Government (Embassy of France, 2013b)	Capacity Building, Dialogue & Collaboration
Lycée Alexandre Yersin (Hanoi)	Hanoi	School established in 1990 (Embassy of France, 2011b)	Capacity Building
French International School Marguerite Duras	Ho Chi Minh City	School established in 1977 (Embassy of France, 2011b)	Capacity Building
France 24	Nationwide	French television station	Cultural Information
TV5 Monde	Nationwide	French Television station	Cultural Information

TABLE 6: FRANCE'S CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS/ INSTITUTIONS

France's cultural diplomacy does not end there, IDecaf works in partnership with the Ministry of Education in Viet Nam to facilitate educational exchanges between France and Viet Nam. The interesting and often neglected element of cultural diplomacy as a soft power tool is civil society. In this case, like most, "much soft power is determined by civil society, [This] does not render it immaterial for public diplomacy" (Nye, 2005).

IDecaf is the Institute of Cultural Exchange with France in Ho Chi Minh City (Institut d'échanges Culturels avec la France a Ho Chi Minh Ville) (IDecaf, 2013). It is one of the main sources (Embassy of France, 2013a) for cultural events, French language learning, information and links for other French institutions like Campus France and ¹⁹ Institut Français ²⁰ in Viet Nam.

In support of IDecaf is the Department of Service for Cooperation and Cultural Action (SCAC) (Embassy of France, 2013b) – The role of this department under the ministry of Foreign Affairs is to firstly, support the creation of the new University of Science and Technology of Hanoi. It was agreed upon by the French Prime Minister on his 2009 visit to Vietnam. This university would focus on scholarships from the Embassy of France and partners to promote 'CampusFrance' and meet the needs of exceptional Vietnamese students wishing to study in France. The SCAC is based in the Institut Français and its other roles are to plan four recurring themes and film events in Viet Nam, to manage cooperation with academic actors and film professionals in Ho Chi Minh City, and to organise monthly schedules of movies with IDecaf.

France's ability to build cultural capital in the form of Vietnamese professionals who know the French language and have lived in France during their studies is a powerful tool. There are currently two Institut Français in Viet Nam and one CampusFrance (France Diplomatie, 2012). There are already some universities that are partnered with the French - Poles French university and the Franco-Vietnamese Centre for management training both have options for

¹⁹ See page 45-47 on France's cultural institutions

²⁰ See page 45-47 on France's cultural institutions

Instruction in the French language and partnerships for exchanges with French Universities at the graduate level (Embassy of France, 2013b).

There are two main French schools in Viet Nam, the Lycée français Alexandre Yersin and the Lycée Français International Marguerite Duras (Embassy of France, 2011b). One is in Hanoi and the other in Ho Chi Minh City. The majority of students at both school and only one-third are French or other international (Embassy of France, 2011b). This demonstrates how the Vietnamese people have embraced the French language, culture and system of education for the future of their children.

One thing that is very evident is that France has invested a lot into cultural diplomacy. This is shown by the large number of cultural organizations and portals of information of French language learning, cultural events, educational or professional exchanges in place (Annee-France-Vietnam, 2013; Embassy of France, 2013a; IDecaf, 2013; France Diplomatie, 2012; UniFrance, 2012).

Judging from the number of French cultural activities in both of Viet Nam's largest cities, Viet Nam sees the value in accepting France's cultural diplomacy and embracing French culture and values. Due to Viet Nam's willingness to disseminate the French language and cooperate in educational exchanges, it is evident that France is viewed more favourably in the eyes of the Vietnamese than China. France has multiple cultural organizations in Viet Nam and China is yet to get one Confucius Institute allowed inside Vietnamese borders.

b. Franco-Vietnamese cultural cooperation

There are multiple French cultural activities that take place in Vietnam that make a cultural impact on Vietnamese society. The website of the Embassy of France in Viet Nam lists the upcoming French cultural events on its website (Embassy of France, 2013a). The list includes various categories of cultural influence, *inter alia*; French cuisine, art scenes, conferences,

concerts and exhibitions (Embassy of France, 2012). This includes Francophone film and music festivals.

Taking a look at Vietnamese media outlets, the influence of France is evident (Embassy of France, 2011a). Recently, the winner and runners up of Viet Nam's Top Model competition were invited to France to join an exclusive fashion party. The article makes a point to mention the names of the Vietnamese designers that dressed each of the models. France's invitation is a positive contribution to Vietnam's economy since the exposure to the French market will contribute to Vietnam's fashion industry (VOV, 2012). The same media source writes of the visit of famous French pianists to the Hanoi Opera Theatre and the various activities in Ho Chi Minh City organized by IDecaf.

The year 2013 marked the 40th anniversary of Franco-Vietnamese diplomatic relations (Embassy of France, 2013a) and in celebration, France and Vietnam dubbed 2013 'the year of France in Viet Nam' and 2014 'the year of Viet Nam in France' (Annee-France-Vietnam, 2013).. This is a collaborative effort by the Institut Français. The French ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Vietnam's Ministries of Culture, Information and communication, and Foreign Affairs to have many French cultural events happening in Vietnam over the duration of 2013 and vice versa with Vietnamese cultural events in 2014 in France.

VII. Conclusion

The need for a shift in power preferences from hard power to the inclusion of soft power is a result of globalization and liberalism which changed the dynamic of power relationships. The purely anarchical international system has eroded, leaving behind a system where compromise, cooperation and interconnectedness is encouraged and liberal values and international institutions are upheld. Cultural cooperation is now a necessity for many political arrangements. The legitimacy of hard power and over coercion is in serious question, if not discredited. Soft power policies have become a necessary addition for enhancing foreign relations. In this study, it has shown to be achieved through cultural diplomacy. In accordance with the shift in the nature of power accepted in the international system, France and China have shifted their foreign policy preferences from hard power to include soft power through cultural diplomacy.

Since this study only examines the soft power influences, many other influences in Viet Nam like financial contributions for development that may be considered 'harder' power are excluded. They also contribute to the nature of the relations between Viet Nam, the Mekong sub-region and each of the two case study states, France and China.

Soft power is a less direct and less noticeable form of power, meaning that the immediate outcomes are difficult to distinguish and even more difficult to measure (Lee, 2011). Therefore, in order to gauge the success or failure of France and China's cultural diplomacy in Viet Nam and in the MSR as a whole, it is important to dwell on the objectives of power in the international system. Again, power is defined as "the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants" (Nye, 2004a, p. 2). Therefore it important to see if France and China are 'getting the outcomes they want' in the international system with the support of their improved relations with states in the MSR, especially Viet Nam.

For China, cultural diplomacy was also a way to soften its historically threatening hard-power image that it has had due to expansionism and communism and ultimately change regional perceptions of China to be seen as a benign, positive actor. Soft power through cultural diplomacy is most powerful because it reaches foreign publics, not only the high-level decision-making elites. However, in the case of Viet Nam, the single-party socialist structure controls who has access to Vietnam's public. China's 'actions' have spoken louder than its cultural diplomacy and due to this, it has lost legitimacy and credibility amongst the Vietnamese society and government. China's insistence on battling with its regional neighbours in territorial disputes in the east and South China Seas renders any softer national image China may have built up, obsolete.

Eager to cut off all Chinese access to Vietnamese publics, Viet Nam has already made moves to limit the presence of China. Access to China Central Television was blocked in Viet Nam in August 2012 (Global Times, 2012). State-owned Online Newspaper, Voice of Viet Nam removed the link to China Radio International's Vietnamese-language channel at the same time (Global Times, 2012). China's return to hard power threats and intimidations in the South China Sea has led to a decrease in China's cultural diplomacy in Viet Nam. China has also become a less desirable bilateral partner to Viet Nam.

On the other hand, France has been successful in increasing mutual understanding with Viet Nam and improving its national image in the Mekong sub-region as a whole. Because France's intentions seen benign and positive, France's efforts to bring the European Union and Asian states together is well-received by the MSR states (ASEM, 2013)..

Berger (Berger, 2005) writes that since France's 1954 retreat from the MSR, its cultural influence has actually continued to decline, leaving room for the rising Chinese influence in the region (Berger, 2005). He references that only half a percent of Lao children learning French

language in primary school. Although Berger's argument is valid, it was conceived in 2005, before France made enormous changes in its cultural policies. France's current strategy includes multiple online platforms and multiple organisations and institutions all working towards the dissemination of French language, values and culture. France's cultural diplomacy is more now than it ever has been in the past (See Table 6)²¹ Viet Nam shows more willingness accept France's cultural diplomacy. Overall, France is viewed more favourably in the eyes of the Vietnamese than China.

Soft power through cultural diplomacy usually softens already present hard power relationships, but in China's case, the lack of legitimacy and credibility negates the efforts to build shared values and a closer trust-based bilateral relationship. If a state makes a legitimate long-term soft power investment in another, in the long-term the target state could start to share the same values and beliefs, therefore support the hard power efforts of the state that is exerting its soft power. This way, states can use cultural diplomacy a strategic device for its hard power objectives. Cultural diplomacy is an effective tool for building stringer relationships between states. However, it cannot act alone. Many other factors came into play in this study, like the political structure of Viet Nam which can inhibit cultural diplomacy or the lack of legitimacy of China which can tarnish the efforts made through cultural diplomacy.

²¹ See page 70

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