

The Iron Hand in a Velvet Glove

*Domestic soft power and the struggle for
cultural influence in China.*

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to shed light upon the concept of soft power used in domestic governance by the CCP between the years of 2014 and 2017. During the initial research stages, a shift in rhetoric was noticed in soft power discourses in China between the years 2014-2015 that had not been covered by previous research, thus giving the thesis its timeframe.

The thesis builds on the puzzling observation that the Chinese Communist Party applies “soft power”, a concept known from the field of international relations and foreign policy, to an at least equal extent domestically – and does so increasingly over the course of the last decade. This study therefore examines domestic soft power in China as a government strategy, offering insights into how domestic soft power is exerted and the goals it seeks to achieve. For this purpose, this study uses a Foucauldian discourse analysis of politically guided discourse in *People’s Daily* newspaper and academic texts from the Chinese Cultural Soft Power Research Centre. The two-tier focus helps this study understand how domestic soft power is defined by the Chinese government, and consequently how it is interpreted and analysed by Chinese academics.

One of the most interesting findings the study presents is a two-stage rhetorical shift in soft power discussion in China after 2014. The first stage is a focus shift from traditional values as the core of Chinese “cultural soft power” to socialist core values, indirectly defining the term “culture” in as both the political system and mainstream ideology. The second stage is the emergence of the terms “self-confidence” and “cultural self-confidence” in soft power rhetoric, where the “self” is defined in terms of nation, government and mainstream ideology.

This study puts domestic soft power use in the context of propaganda, and argues that domestic soft power post-2014 is indeed part of the CCP’s overall propaganda strategy, used as a “counter-soft power” to Western cultural and ideological influence, where a sense of a zero-sum game between the two emerges. Secondly, governmentality theory guides the argument that domestic soft power seeks to create a “governable” public through a series of indigenisation and consensus shaping initiatives in academic and cultural sectors. In this respect, this study argues that domestic soft power in China has a goal of establishing a national identity which is presented as opposite to “The West”.

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Alexey Khudyakov
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Abbreviations

CCP - Chinese Communist Party

CCSPRC - Chinese Cultural Soft Power Research Centre

FDA - Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Thesis statement

“If a country’s hard power isn’t good, then maybe they will fall from one hit. But if the country’s soft power isn’t good, then it may fall by itself, without needing to be hit”.

(Zhang Guozuo in People’s Daily, 2014) (Appendix A2.1)

Soft power, according to Joseph Nye, is the ability of a state to shape the preferences of other nations through the means of appeal and attraction, rather than physical, economic or diplomatic force (Nye, 1990; 2004). The concept often rests on three resources: a nation’s culture, its political values, and its foreign policies. In other words, soft power is the ability of a state to “naturally” attract popularity abroad through either of these resources, and ideally through all of them. According to Nye, soft power is to a large extent the product of an autonomous civil society, the private sector and individuals. American soft power, for example, to an extent centres around everything from universities, to pop culture and corporations like Apple and Microsoft, as well as the concepts of democracy and human rights.

The quote above by Zhang Guozuo presents a view of soft power as a necessity for regime security and national stability, indicating a need for soft power in a domestic setting. “Without soft power, a nation might collapse by itself”. This usage of the term indicates a very different understanding of soft power from Nye’s original definition of attraction abroad. Consequently, there are at present two discernibly distinct ways of considering Chinese soft power initiatives among domestic scholars: one considering China’s soft power strictly in the sphere of foreign relations on one side, and one considering the dual nature of China’s soft power initiatives both in the spheres of foreign relations and domestic governance.

Wang Huning, a Chinese political scientist and a member of the 18th CPC Central Committee and the Politburo, was the first to address the concept of soft power for a Chinese audience in 1993 in his article *Culture as nation’s power: Soft Power* (Huning, 1993). In this article, Wang evaluates and discusses Nye’s original definition of soft power from 1990, while addressing the need for China to explore a soft power policy based on culture and societal values. Since that

publication, the focus of soft power in China has always been on culture, calling it “cultural soft power” (文化软实力, wénhuà ruǎnshíli), and considering the elements of the political system and characteristic traits of foreign policies, as described by Nye, as secondary.

This study is particularly interested in analysing the second diverging scholarly camp that regards Chinese soft power as both a strategy of foreign relations as well as domestic governance, and from hereon will focus solely on the latter aspect of the term. The aim of the study is to examine how the concept of soft power in a domestic setting is defined in China, through what political actions it might be exerted, and what could be the reasons behind exerting soft power as part of the Chinese Communist Party’s (henceforth CCP) domestic governance strategy. As a result, a question of the difference between domestic soft power and traditional propaganda emerges, which also seeks clarity regarding what goals domestic soft power use entails. Using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis as part of my methodology, and conducting text analyses on both macro- and micro- levels, I will analyse the representation of soft power in political and politically guided discourses in the media from *Theory* and *Editorials* sections of the official CCP newspaper *People’s Daily*, and texts and commentaries published by the *Chinese Cultural Soft Power Research Centre* (henceforth CCSPRC) between 2014 and 2017.

Given the focus of this study, I have structured my analysis into three research questions:

- *What is domestic soft power, and how is it officially defined?*
- *What political guidelines can be linked to domestic soft power?*
- *What are the goals of domestic soft power use for the CCP?*

As William Callahan points out, the topic of China’s soft power is not understudied (2015, p. 217), but the topic of soft power use in domestic governance hasn’t been covered as thoroughly as the way the CCP interprets soft power in Nye’s terms (ibid, p.218)¹. This is what this study intends to do. While conducting preliminary research, I noticed a rhetorical shift in domestic soft power discussion in China during the years 2014-2015. This shift consists of two stages: one where the focus of cultural soft power shifts from promotion of traditional Chinese culture, to a

¹ For more on this, see next chapter *Background and Literature Review*

wider notion of “culture” as “political system, socialist core values and Marxism-socialism”, and another which indicates the emergence of the terms “self-confidence” and “cultural self-confidence” in rhetoric concerning soft power use in the context of domestic governance. Therefore, this study will attempt to reconstruct the topic of soft power in politically steered discourse particularly between 2014 and 2017 based on this two-fold rhetorical shift. The sources used in this study are newspaper articles published by the *People’s Daily* and commentary and texts from the CCSPRC. These two sources are chosen to provide a coverage which is not only informational, but also descriptive, analytical and interpretative in its nature. The source corpus consists of fourteen articles from the *People’s Daily*, four texts and commentary from the CCSPRC, as well as one article from the Xinhua News Agency. Consequently, given China’s political system and the CCP’s control of the media and publishing, both of these are regarded as a part of the “political soft power discourse” or “politically guided discourse”, and are chosen to provide a different lexical context to purely political discussions. I will come back to this in the Methodology-section of this thesis.

This study argues that according to the Chinese Communist Party, soft power is divided into an “external” and an “internal” soft power. Soft power in a domestic sense is used to promote political ideology and the socialist core values, while also building consensus in society. Propaganda theory, and research on domestic CCP propaganda, is used to argue that the use of the term “domestic soft power” in China is indeed part of the overall propaganda strategy of the CCP, and that “domestic soft power” is very much alike the general Chinese propaganda definition. My findings indicate that domestic soft power can be seen as a strategy that seeks to shape public opinion and create an “ideological framework” within which the public is to operate, and that it represents a slightly different trait in propaganda than the one evoked in the usual “patriotism/nationalism” discourse.

Furthermore, this study also argues that domestic soft power is supposed to be exerted through policies concerning education and cultural development, and looks to indigenise academic research and higher education by rejecting Western theories and concepts or explaining them in a Chinese national context in line with mainstream ideology, as well as urging artistic production based on modern Chinese values and culture as they are presented by the CCP.

When discussing the goals of domestic soft power, based on the abovementioned observations, I argue that domestic soft power is used by the CCP as a “counter-soft power” to Western ideological and cultural influences, giving the impression that the Chinese government sees soft power as a zero-sum game between Western and domestic influence. On the basis of the newly emerged “self-confidence” rhetoric in Chinese soft power discourse, and following the theory of governmentality I will argue that domestic soft power can be understood as a tool of identity building employed by the CCP to create a “governable” society, one that is both an active and willing recipient and creator of propaganda, and one which actively projects its national identity as “Chinese” as an opposition to “Western”. In this respect, domestic soft power can be seen as being aimed at strengthening the CCP’s political and cultural legitimacy domestically.

1.2 Chapter outline

This thesis is structured as follows:

The introductory chapter of the study has outlined my main topic of research and its importance to the field of soft power studies in China, as well as given a brief outline of my methodology, theoretical framework and the main arguments of this study. In **chapter two** I will present an introduction into soft power studies and a literature review of previous research of soft power in China, as well as place this thesis among said research. It will go into some depth regarding previously done research in Chinese soft power both in China and abroad, briefly explaining main arguments and general views on Chinese soft power. **Chapter three** will present the methodology of this study, consisting of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, and concepts and theories of Propaganda and Governmentality. The chapter outlines concepts and definitions within the methodology that this study will employ to contextualise its findings, and how they will be used in the analysis of the findings of this study. This chapter will also address the method for construction of the corpus of sources, considerations in source selection, as well as introduce the keywords I used in during the research stages of this study.

The fourth chapter will present a definition of domestic soft power as it is viewed by the CCP. The chapter is divided into two parts, one which sheds light on the definition of domestic soft power before 2014, and one after 2014. This chapter will answer the first of my three research questions. In **chapter five** I will address my basis for answering the second research question, and present several political guidelines which can be linked to the use of domestic soft power by the CCP. This chapter will be divided into two subchapters, one discussing domestic soft power use in the education and academic sectors, and one discussing its use in the arts and literature sector. **The sixth chapter** of this study, which constitutes the final chapter of my analysis, will attempt to explain the goals of the CCP's usage of domestic soft power in light of governmentality theory and the concept of propaganda. This chapter will also present my argument of domestic soft power seemingly being perceived by the CCP as a zero-sum game between Chinese and Western ideological and cultural values. **Chapter six** will be a concluding chapter, where I summarise my findings, connect them to my research questions, discuss limitations, and address further considerations in terms of the scope and the findings of this study. **Appendix A** will provide original text to all quotes used in this study.

Chapter 2: Background and Literature Review

This chapter presents an overview of the research previously done on the topics of soft power and soft power in a Chinese context. In order to understand where this thesis places itself in this academic field, it is imperative to construct a roadmap of the field. I will first give a brief outline of general soft power research done by Joseph Nye, and expand on Nye's definition of soft power as a foreign policy tool of attraction, and then give an account of the research done on soft power in a Chinese context, both in China and in the West. Consequently, I will attempt to place this study among the different voices discussing Chinese soft power today, especially those who consider a domestic aspect to the CCP's soft power strategy.

2.1 Soft power

The concept of soft power was first introduced by the American political scientist Joseph Nye in his article for *Foreign Policy* journal titled "Soft Power" in 1990 (Nye, 1990). Later expanded upon in his book *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* from 1991 and further reanalysed (Nye, 1990b; 1991; 2004), soft power for Nye is a 20th century alternative to the traditional "hard power" of a nation, which has primarily been military capability, economic strength and a large population (Nye, 1990a; 1990b; Edney, 2012, p. 900-901). With the diffusion of power after the Cold War and in the end of the 20th century, there are three trends that have contributed to the growing importance of soft power: economic interdependence, transnational actors, nationalism in weak states, the spread of technology, and changing political issues (Nye, 1990a, p.160).

Nye's original definition of a state's soft power rests upon the ability of a state to influence other states through agenda setting, attraction and co-option, rather than direct pressure in the form of sanctions or threats (Nye, 2004, pp. 4-5; Edney, 2012, p. 901). The three resources on which a nation's soft power is based are, according to Nye, "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)" (Nye, 2004, p.11; Edney, 2012, p. 901). A success in exerting soft power then depends on the flow of information between actors, as well as the actor's reputation within a community (Barr, 2011, p.16). This traditional definition of soft power is to a large extent agreed upon by the scholarly community, recognising that soft

power is a concept used in foreign policy to attract support among foreign societies, rather than in a domestic sense, and that it is a social construct largely based on perception.

2.2 Soft power in China

It has been stated by Chinese academics that Nye's soft power definition might not fit China because it is too Western-oriented, calling for a theory with roots in Chinese history and tradition, a theory of "Soft power *with Chinese characteristics*" (Zhao, Li & Cai, 2011, p. 41). I will attempt to refrain from using the term "with Chinese characteristics" in this study, as it has become somewhat ambiguous and overused in both social and political sciences lately. Even in non-Chinese analysis of the use of the term in China it is important to point out that Nye's soft power, which relies heavily on neoliberal logic which includes obligatory respect for international norms and institutions, as well as an adherence to freedom, democracy and pluralism (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 19), may not be entirely applicable in the case of China (Wilson, 2015, p.289).

One of the things I will discuss in this study is how the Chinese definition of soft power differs from Nye's on several key points, as well as the Chinese government's approach to soft power as a policy tool. One of the crucial differences is how the Chinese government seems to see soft power not as a product of civic society occurring somewhat naturally and independently from government initiatives, but as a tool governments actively used in foreign policy to influence members of other nations' societies (Wilson, 2015, p. 293). Wilson consequently outlines China's assessment of Western soft power as (1) presenting an existential threat, and (2) as an outcome of state initiatives rather than autonomous civil society (ibid, p. 287). In addition to this perspective on soft power, it is important to note that soft power in China, both in academic circles and as perceived by the government, is that of a tool for attraction that is not only used internationally, but also domestically. Herein will lie one of the arguments in this study: that the CCP has a dual perspective of soft power which consists of a symbiotic relationship between soft power abroad and domestic soft power, and the latter is constructed and treated as a "counter-soft power" to Western cultural influence, thus giving an impression of a zero-sum game between Chinese and Western soft power.

Soft power as a theory of external influence was introduced in China in 1992, with the translation of Joseph Nye's *Bound to Lead* by He Xiaodong and colleagues (Aukia, 2014, p. 75).

Consequently, the paper that sparked interest in soft power in China was Wang Huning's *Culture as a National Power: Soft Power*. In this paper, Huning discusses Nye's theory, and explicitly states the most important aspect of Nye's three resources of soft power being culture. (Huning, 1993). Following Huning's lead, most of the Chinese discourse on soft power, both academic and political, has centered around advancement of culture and "cultural soft power" (文化软实力, *wenhua ruanshili*) as its key aspect and foremost goal (Huning, 1993; Meng 2012, p.11; Barr, 2014, p. 26; Edney, 2012, p. 901; Lai, 2012, p.11). Huning stated that "if a country has an admirable culture and ideological system, other countries will tend to follow it. [...] It then doesn't need to use its expensive and less efficient hard power" (Huning, 1993, p. 91). The topic caught widespread academic attention only in 2006-2007, after Hu Jintao's report to the 17th CPC congress in October 2007, outlining national soft power strategy and goals (Lai, 2012, p. 12; Aukia, 2014, pp. 75-76), and stressing that cultural soft power is the key for China's rise.

An important argument to address before discussing domestic soft power is the domestic aspect of Nye's soft power definition. He does mention soft power in a domestic setting, when he warns the US to pay attention to how it develops its soft power initiative on the domestic front, because it may affect its outward soft power (Nye, 2004). However, Jukka Aukia points out that this approach to seeing soft power as a domestic policy is not applicable to China, because it "sees [domestic] soft power development as a platform for other nations to observe, [consequently making it] outward oriented" (2014, pp.76-77).

Aukia also provides an excellent overview of academic discussion on Chinese soft power, conducted both abroad and in China. Academics from both sides can be divided into two camps: those who recognise the domestic element in Chinese soft power, and those who do not (Aukia, 2014, p.72). The domestic aspect of Chinese soft power, as he points out and as I have noticed during my preliminary research on the topic, is fairly understudied by non-Chinese academics, with only a handful of researchers analysing the scope and goals of domestic Chinese soft power. Among those who have done studies on it, there is little consensus. Edney, for example, has focused primarily on propaganda as the "end-game" of Chinese domestic soft power (2012), and

later argued for the regime security- perspective (2015). Michael Barr, on the other hand, focuses on nation building and party legitimacy in his book *Who's Afraid of China? The Challenge of Chinese Soft Power* (2011, p.30), also discussing the international aspect of Chinese soft power in terms of lowering the “China threat”- discussion abroad. Joshua Kurlantzick’s *Charm Offensive: How China’s Soft Power is Transforming the World* (2007) addresses Chinese soft power as an outbound initiative to decrease the “China threat”- rhetoric abroad, promoting itself as a model of socialist and economic success through trade incentives, cultural and educational exchanges and international alliances (Kurlantzick, 2007). Liu Kang, on the other hand, argues that domestic cultural soft power is a reaction to an emerging ideological crisis in the country (2012, p. 927).

William Callahan, however, considers domestic use of soft power in China as a “negative soft power” that is used by the CCP for the purposes of identity building, specifically contrasting the “Chinese” identity as opposite to “Western” (Callahan, 2015, p.224). Callahan has focused a great deal of his research on Chinese identity building efforts, and strongly argues that the CCP is actively constructing a Chinese identity based on the CCP’s perception of its inherit civilizational differences from the rest of the world (see for example Callahan, 2004; 2012; 2015; Cunningham-Cross & Callahan, 2011). He calls domestic soft power in China “negative soft power” because it “is often expressed in a negative way that equates “the foreign” with “mistakes” that are either stupid misunderstandings or evil conspiracies [and is] part of a broad practice whereby identity is constituted by excluding difference” (Callahan, 2015, p. 224-225). When discussing my findings and analysis, I will especially make note of this argument, as my sources indicate a very similar sentiment.

Chinese academics are also split in the same two camps when it comes to their assessment of China’s soft power, with some recognising the domestic aspect, while others do not, as we shall see in the analytical chapter of this study. One consensus that exists among Chinese academics when it comes to soft power, on the other hand, is that it needs to be understood as having “Chinese characteristics” (Aukia, 2014, p. 80). The findings of this study strongly suggest that there is a domestic aspect to the CCP’s soft power use. Therefore, this study argues that not only is China’s cultural soft power reconstructed by the government to have both a domestic and a foreign aspect, but also that domestic soft power is predominantly used by the government as part

of their propaganda strategy to promote domestic aspects of culture and delegitimise foreign culture, as well as creating a society that is “governable” by introducing and promoting a common set of ideals and values that coincide with and promote the values and ideals of the government.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter briefly outlines the methodology that is used in this study. I will give an outline of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, previous research, definitions and to what ends it is employed in this study, and explain the methods I used for source collection, source analysis and my keyword bank. Furthermore, this chapter will explain the theories of propaganda and governmentality, which comprise the theoretical framework this study uses to contextualise its findings.

3.1 Foucauldian discourse analysis

In order to answer the questions presented by this thesis, I will employ a methodological framework of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (henceforth FDA). FDA is a discourse analysis methodology based on a Foucault's theories of discourse, power and knowledge, and the relationship between the latter two in the former. Given that this thesis uses Foucault's Governmentality theory to contextualise the CCP's domestic soft power, a Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis is a natural choice of methodology for a number of theoretical reasons, which I will outline below.

A Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis entails looking at discourses as products of history. However, for the purpose of this study it is important to recognise that "history" in a Foucauldian sense is not a study of "cause and effect", but rather a study of "contingencies in history", which regard "history of the present" based on contingencies (Wickham Kendall, 1999, pp. 4-5). When considering domestic soft power use by the CCP, this study sees it as contingency first, and only secondly as effects of prior causes.

For the purpose of clarification, it is imperative to understand Foucault's notion of "discourse". A "discourse" in Foucauldian sense can be seen as a "narrative", or something that appears "historically" in the surface of an organisation of techniques or statements (Wickham, Kendall, 1999, p. 36). According to Foucault, a discourse presents a set of rules for production of possible statements, thus providing spaces, such as metaphors or models, for making new statements within a specific discourse (ibid, p. 41). In this respect, discourse is institutionally produced knowledge, which is "social" rather than "linguistic" (Kress, 2012, p. 35). In relation to this thesis, one can then argue that "soft power" and "domestic soft power" in a Chinese context can

be regarded as discourses, as they are narratives which are products of an organisation of statements by different actors.

However, for the purpose of this study, one also needs to regard discourse in a linguistic understanding of the term. In this regard, a discourse is “a group of ideas of a patterned way of thinking, which can be identified in textual and verbal communications, and also located in wider social structures” (Powers, 2007, p.18), or “a system of statements which cohere around common meaning and value” (Coates, 2012, p. 95). In a Chinese political and social context, and especially with the sources used in this study, one needs to acknowledge a high level of governmental influence. In this respect, I choose to regard my sources as a part of the political discourse on soft power in China, thus analysing “documents that represent how soft power is politically defined in China”. The sources of this study consist of the official CCP newspaper *People’s Daily* and texts and commentaries published by the CCSPRC, both of which to a large extent are politically guided, and which have goals and functions which are primarily political. However, I also understand that a discourse analysis would require a much broader examination, incorporating various collective voices from other participants in Chinese political discourse on soft power, but given the scope and limitations of this study, I choose to examine a small part of this discourse in my sources.

One of the reasons I found FDA applicable here is that it does not seek to uncover a certain “truth” by rather provide coherent and consistent explanations for events (Jacobs, 1999, p. 208). In this respect, a Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis would entail asking four questions: (1) which object is discursively produced, (2) according to what logic is the terminology constructed, (3) by whom is it constructed, and (4) which strategic goals are being pursued in the discourse (Diaz-Bone et al., 2007).

The methodology of FDA is also applicable here because, as I argue later in this thesis, domestic soft power is used in a cultural sense to promote a different cultural understanding and a different understanding of the “self” in a cultural context. A Foucauldian methodology, among other things, seeks to understand “culture as management”, and can be used to “present culture as a set of governmental practices aimed at producing certain sorts of persons” and “help track forms of

self, modes of ethical comportment, ways of knowing and of disciplining as products of particular cultural apparatuses” (Wickham Kendall, 1999, pp. 139-140). As mentioned earlier, this study argues that the political system and ideological foundations embodied in the CCP can be seen to be defined as a part of the new understanding of “culture” when talking about “cultural soft power”, which can be further examined using Foucauldian notions of culture as “set of governmental practices”.

When analysing the source material, I employ both a micro- and a macro analytical approach. As I explain later in this chapter, the process starts with a selection of sources based on depth, relevance and discussion. Secondly, I analyse the content of the sources from a macro perspective, recording voices and sources, as well as overall interpretations of domestic soft power. On a micro-level, I look into lexical and semantic choices and formulations the authors used when describing, interpreting and discussing the topic of domestic soft power.

3.2 Types of sources

In order to answer the three questions this study asks, I will be using articles published in the official CCP newspaper *People’s Daily*² (人民日报, *rénmín rìbào*) and texts and commentary from the Chinese Cultural Soft Power Research Center³ (中国文化软实力研究中心, *Zhōngguó wénhuà ruǎnshí lì yánjiū zhōngxīn*) (henceforth CCSPRC) at Hunan University published after 2014. Given the nature of the political system and the CCP’s control over publishing, I will read those as representations of the CCP’s political discourse, and discern interpretations and analyses from these sources. The years 2014-2015 mark a shift in rhetoric and focus of soft power discourse and research in China, which has to my knowledge been largely unexplored, providing this study with its timeframe of the years 2014-2017.

Media sources are especially interesting because they are directly intended to be read by a domestic audience, and can therefore show a different understanding and presentation of soft power in a domestic context. As Guye Tuchman put it: “To talk about media, is to talk about

² <http://www.people.com.cn>

³ <http://www.zgwhrsl.com>

politics in society” (Tuchman, 1991), therefore media representations of different policies both outline and shape public opinion and public discourse. This sentiment is even more relevant in China, where the government has near total control of media, and strict guidelines are imposed on what is allowed and not allowed to report on.

Since the aim of this study is to explore governmental representations of domestic soft power, and not news media in general, I will use the newspaper *People’s Daily* as my main source of media articles. This newspaper is the official newspaper of the CCP, and therefore strictly follows the party line and reflects the party’s views and opinions. By using this newspaper, I will not only be able to see how the party itself chooses to communicate domestic soft power to its audience, but also hope to find more in-depth analyses of the concept.

In addition to articles published in *People’s Daily*, I will use articles and commentary published by the CCSPRC. As I will explain further in my analysis chapter, the interest in soft power research in China started after Hu Jintao urged to strengthen the country’s soft power in a speech in 2007. From 2008 on, several high profile think tanks were established in the country to study soft power, most notably the Peking University National Soft Power Research Center⁴ (北京大学国家软实力研究中心, Běijīng dàxué guójiā ruǎnshíli yánjiū zhōngxīn), Jinan University Soft Power Research Center⁵ (济南大学软实力研究中心, Jīnán dàxué ruǎnshíli yánjiū zhōngxīn) and the Chinese Cultural Soft Power Research Center at Hunan University. In addition to these, the *People’s Daily* created an entire section devoted to academic and political discussion of soft power in 2009, calling it simply the *Soft Power* section⁶. Interestingly enough, these centres to a large extent stopped publishing updates and research between 2012 and 2014. The *Soft Power*-section of the *People’s Daily* was also closed around that time, with the newest update being from 2011. The Jinan University think tank saw a “reboot” in 2015, but has not published any research or academic commentary, and only updates related news.

⁴ <http://softpower.pku.edu.cn>

⁵ <http://rsl.ujn.edu.cn>

⁶ <http://rsl.people.com.cn>

The CCSPRC is the only think tank that has steadily and actively published updates, comments and to an extent academic research on the subject. This centre's director, professor Zhang Guozuo (张国祚), is currently active both in the media and in academia as an expert in soft power in general, and Chinese cultural soft power specifically. This is the main reason for using texts published by specifically this think tank.

Lastly, in a perfect world, and with more time and space at my disposal, it would have been interesting to look into more sources and to extend the scope of this study even further, incorporating voices such as readers' discussions or other comments, in order to understand how this officially steered discourse about soft power in China is actually *perceived* in other spheres, or individually. The limited scope of a master's thesis, however, has lead me to focus only on the publications of these two sources, a choice for which I have provided a systematic explanation. I am therefore still confident that in this study I have at least found a reasonable, and in the end fruitful way to approach my research questions formulated above.

3.3 Data acquisition and selection

Initially, it was difficult to find a suitable method of data collection to be used for this study. Initial searches for the topic of soft power on the *People's Daily* website through Baidu search showed thousands upon thousands of results, which varied quite significantly, and didn't give me the required options of limiting the empirical field of the study. After careful consideration and many trial-and-error attempts, I decided to use the *People's Daily* archives available at China Digital Library⁷ website, access to which I acquired through the University of Oslo library. From there, I could limit my search by preferred newspaper, timeframe, keywords in the article text, keywords in title, contributors, etcetera.

A clear challenge to this study was the sheer amount of articles my media searches provided, leading me to narrow my source pool down to two sections of the newspaper: the *Theory*⁸ (理论

⁷ <http://www.apabi.com/resources.asiaportal.info/nias> (accessible only through UiO)

⁸ <http://theory.people.com.cn>

lǐlùn) section and the *Editorials*⁹ (社论, shèlùn) section. The former often publishes articles by academics, often analysing and interpreting policies and political and social issues, while the latter is a subsection of the *Opinions*- section, which publishes in-depth articles on various political and social issues. These two sections provided articles that are more analytical and descriptive, rather than purely news articles, and proved to have the most varied discursive coverage of China’s soft power strategy.

While conducting preliminary research, I noticed a clear shift in rhetoric and coverage of the topics of soft power and cultural soft power in China somewhere between 2014 and 2015. Most of the academic research on the topic had been centred around the years prior to 2015, and prior to the rhetorical shift. I have therefore decided to limit my study’s timeframe to the years between 2014 and 2017 in order to cover the discussion after the shift and see how it differs to pre-2015 discourse.

Apart from media articles, this study also uses academic texts and commentary articles published through the CCSPRC. As I mentioned earlier, this seems to be the only high profile Chinese research centre left that specifically focuses on soft power, and actively published updates. The rest stopped publishing at one point or another, and a great deal of the academic commentary on China’s soft power seems to be coming from this think tank and its director Zhang Guozuo. The aforementioned shift in rhetoric and a smaller focus on the term “soft power” is evident in Table 1, describing the publishing and updates from CCSPRC.

Year	Number of academic articles	Focus
2014	28	”soft power” (SP) discussion
2015	30	Little mention of ”soft power” directly, mostly SP in the context of China Dream
2016	8	Start of ”self-confidence” discussion

⁹ <http://opinion.people.com.cn>

2017 (until May)	59	Primarily “self-confidence”, and “cultural self-confidence”
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I treated all articles published here to be related to China’s soft power, because the think tank’s primary mission is in fact soft power research, as the name suggests. It has therefore been interesting to see what texts published here focus on, leading me to believe that the newly emerged concept of “self-confidence” and “cultural self-confidence” is in fact closely related to the soft power discussion in China.

During the research phase of this thesis I read through and organised articles by theme, depth and relevance to this study. Out of the original selection that I read, I further selected the articles present in this study as representative of the overall dataset. Many of the articles were quite similar if not the same, and many mentioned soft power only briefly, or in a purely explanatory sense with regards to the origins of the concept. This final selection process was done by assessing which articles not only described soft power in explanatory matter, but offered comments, analyses and discussions of the term in a Chinese context. Both the *Theory* and *Editorials* sections of the *People’s Daily*, as well as articles collected from CCSPRC, were treated and analysed in the same manner, and then a selection based on relevance, depth and discussion was made. As a result, this study uses fourteen articles from the *People’s Daily*, four publications from the CCSPRC, and one article from Xinhua News Agency.

3.4 Keyword bank

One important consideration I needed to address before conducting this study is my choice of terms to use when talking about soft power in Chinese. As Aukia (2014, p.79) points out, the English term translates into several different ways in Chinese, and different translations are used variedly by different researchers. He claims that the term 软实力 (ruǎn shíli) is most commonly used to describe domestic soft power, while 软权力 (ruǎn quánli) is used when talking about international power prospective, more in tune with Nye’s official definition of soft power. My preliminary research, on the other hand, showed that the term 软实力 (ruǎn shíli) is most commonly used in both connotations, while 软权力 (ruǎn quánli) is rarely used, and when it is, it

is in reference to Jiemin Guo's 2012 paper *From National to International soft power* (从国家软实力到国际软权力, *cóng guójiā ruǎnshíli dào guójì ruǎnquánli*) where 软权力 (*ruǎn quánli*) indeed indicates soft power in foreign policy, while 软实力 (*ruǎn shíli*) indicates the domestic perspective.

Due to this fact, I have chosen to use seven keywords to focus on. 软实力 (*ruǎn shíli*) will from hereon be treated as the Chinese translation to the English term "soft power". Given that the Chinese perception of soft power puts culture in the centre of their definition, I also used 文化软实力 (*wénhuà ruǎnshíli*, cultural soft power), as coined by Wang Huning in 1993, as well as 国家软实力 (*guójiā ruǎnshíli*, national soft power). The latter term is used quite variably in both media and academic representations of soft power, but I have noticed a pattern where the term is most often used in regard to domestic soft power. In addition to these terms, I included the terms 对内软实力 (*duìnèi ruǎnshíli*, "inward soft power") and 对外软实力 (*duìwài ruǎnshíli*, "outward soft power") into my keyword group, which are used when explicitly dividing soft power between domestic and international.

Besides the different terms describing soft power, I also did searches for "self-confidence" (自信 *xìn*) and "cultural self-confidence" (文化自信, *wénhuàzìxìn*), after the terms started to appear more and more often in relation to soft power discussions both in speeches, in the media and in academic texts from 2015-2016 onwards.

3.5 Propaganda

Before we proceed with the analysis in this thesis, it is important to first consider propaganda theory in order to understand domestic soft power. Soft power usually being a tool for attraction abroad, the question that arises is "Is domestic soft power then just another word for propaganda?". This study will argue that even though domestic soft power indeed seems to be a part of CCP's propaganda strategy, it is used just as much to counter Western ideological influence as it is to promote the Chinese government's propaganda.

The etymology of the term “propaganda” comes from the Latin “propagare”, which means “to spread, to propagate”. Consequently, the term “propaganda” would in Latin mean “things/ideas that are to be spread or propagated”. In other words, the term itself is neutral in its connotations, and whether or not propaganda is “good” or “bad” relies entirely on what it is that is being propagated (Marlin, 2014, p. 191).

It was not until after World War 1, and with Harold Lasswell’s (1927) and Walter Lippman’s (1922) studies on propaganda, the term gained its negative connotation and now bears a distinct aftertaste of moral and ethical ambiguities (Marlin, 2014, p. 191). In its ultimate goal, according to Pratkanis and Aronson, propaganda seeks to change the way people behave and think, while simultaneously convincing them that said change in behaviour has been done voluntarily and independently of outside factors (1992, p.9).

Harold Lasswell and Walter Lippman share a view that propaganda, as a form of shaping public opinion by the government, is not only a useful tool for a functional society, but also somewhat necessary to a democracy, due to the average person’s lack of political or social knowledge (Baran, Davis, 2000, pp. 49-50). The survival of democratic values, Lasswell stated, is dependent upon social scientists’ active advance of this political ideology (ibid, p. 50). Some of the same view is presented by Laitinen and Rakos, who suggested that despite the lack of government control of information being a fundamental characteristic of a “free society”, the lack of aversive government control gives rise to mechanisms of influence through economic and indirect political contingencies, thus posing a greater threat to behavioural diversity (1997, p. 237). Modern propaganda, the authors state, is then facilitated by business and governmental elites without the public’s awareness.

Jacques Ellul, arguably the most influential scholar of propaganda, proposed a definition of propaganda as “[...] a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, [...] unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organization” (Ellul, 1973, p. 61). As John Corner points out, there is a nervous relationship between propaganda, political order, public opinion and the psychology of a mass society when the term is discussed (Corner, 2007, p. 671). He further explains how, due to a lack of clear definition and academic consensus on how it is

employed, given the changing nature of mass communication and the rise of such terms as “promotional culture”, the term’s theoretical cogency has become reduced and the term inadequate for analytical purposes (Corner, 2007, p.676).

Consequently, the notion of propaganda is often closely linked to ideology (Ellul, 1973, p. 62; Lasswell, 1922; Payne, 2008; Shambaugh, 2007), and it is therefore natural to mention Chomsky and Herman’s Propaganda Model from 1988. The model recognises how ideological and communicative power connect with economic, political and social power, and to explore the consequent effects upon media output. (Klaehn, 2009, p.43). The model suggests that ownership, profit concerns and size all affect media behaviour, where discourses are directly influenced by the interests of advertisers and the market, thus making political-economic dimensions influence news production processes and “shape” mainstream media output. (Klaehn, 2009, p. 44).

Propaganda in China has, since the establishment of the People’s Republic, gone through a series of restructuring efforts, aimed at adjustment to new technologies like the Internet, the commercialisation of the media and reorganisation of the means and goals of propaganda. The propaganda regulations aimed at Chinese media have shifted focus quite considerably since the beginning of the reform era, and since the 1989 Tiananmen incident (Shambaugh, 2007, pp. 26-27; Rawnsley, 2014 pp. 148-149). Nowadays the propaganda work in China consists to a large extent of maintaining party legitimacy and authority, justification of further one-party rule based on economic and recent ideological development, and national unity (Rawnsley, 2014 p.149; Chen, 2003, pp. 99-100). The areas of propaganda influence include all traditional and modern mass communication services, including newspapers, television and radio stations, magazines, publishing stations and media departments, as well as universities, schools and other educational organs (Shambaugh, 2007, pp.27-28).

The term “propaganda” itself (宣传, xuānchuán) bears little to no negative connotations in China. Chinese propaganda has come to focus more on control of information and “spinning” rather than direct misinformation to influence its audiences. Censorship is, in other words, central for the Chinese Communist Party, and propaganda is used a tool to be used proactively to educate and shape society in the 21st century (Shambaugh, 2007, pp.29), rather than direct misinformation.

As I will show in the later chapters, domestic soft power initiatives do indeed seem to be part of the propaganda efforts of the CCP, and the reasons for promotion of domestic soft power coincide with how Lasswell and Lippman viewed propaganda as a necessary tool for cultural and ideological security. Consequently, I will argue that by considering the CCP's understanding of the traditional definition of soft power as a government strategy, it seems to be natural to consider the CCP's interpretation of soft power as another propaganda content that shapes public opinion and promotes an ideological and cultural agenda.

3.6 Governmentality

The concept of governmentality was first introduced by Michael Foucault in 1978, and has since been expanded upon and to an extent redefined and restructured within the field of social sciences. It was first introduced by Foucault as an attempt to understand the shifts in relations between knowledge, power and subjectivity, and mainly in the context of early modern Western societies (Sigley, 2006, p. 490). Studies of governmentality in non-Western societies have emerged en masse in more recent years, however, including studies of governmentality in a Chinese context. Governmentality is an especially important concept for this study, given that it concerns itself with “a governable public”, and I will argue that the goal of domestic soft power can be considered a creation of a “governable” society.

The etymology of governmentality consists of two terms: “government” and “mentality”. Government, according to Foucault is meant as “the conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 1991), and in this case refers to all endeavours to guide, shape and direct the conduct of others, as well as all attempts to control one's own instincts and govern oneself (Rose, 1999, p. 3; Lemke, 2002, p. 2). Governmentality studies would, to this end, “address [...] the invention, contestation, operationalisation and transformation of rationalised schemes, programmes, techniques and devices which seek to shape conduct to achieve certain ends” (Rose, 1999, p.3-4). The key questions to answer when working with governmentality is not what happened and why, but rather what authorities wanted to happen, in pursuit of what objectives and through what strategies and techniques (Rose, 1999, p. 20; Li, 2007, p. 27). In other words, when employing the concept of governmentality, one needs to examine what authorities sought to change, to what

ends, and through what means (Li, 2007, p. 28). These are precisely the questions I ask when analysing domestic soft power use by the CCP.

When talking about governmentality and government, Foucault also emphasises the definition of “power” in this concept. There are, according to Foucault, three types of power: “power as strategic games”, “power as government” and “power as domination” (Foucault, 1988, p.19; Lemke, 2002, p.5). Power as “strategic games” can, according to Lemke, take the shape of ideological manipulations, moral advice or rational argumentation, which in and of itself can force a “responsibilisation” upon its subjects, while at the same time keeping “free” decision making in fields of action ((Lemke, 2002, p. 6). Power as government, on the other hand, is explained as “the regulation of conduct by the more or less rational application of the appropriate technical means” (Hindess 1996, in Lemke, 2002). Lastly “power as domination”, according to Foucault, refers to asymmetrical relationships of power in which the subjects have little to no room to manoeuvre because their margin of liberty is extremely limited” (1998, p.12; Lemke, 2002, p. 5). Consequently, most scholars agree that governmentality to a large extent revolves around the creation of subjects which are “governable”, not necessarily through direct control by means of domination, but rather by their own free will within a specific set of parameters.

Another movement within governmentality studies which is imperative for this study is the “self-esteem”- movement. Barbara Cruikshank has by all accounts spearheaded the “self-esteem as self-government”- movement, linking it to Foucault’s governmentality, with her paper *Revolutions within: Self-Government and Self-Esteem* from 1993 (see Barry, Osborne & Rose, 1996; Lemke, 2002; Dean, 2009). The self-esteem movement, according to Cruikshank, is not necessarily limited to the personal domain, but is a goal of a new form of government or social order (Lemke, 2002, p. 13). “Personal fulfilment becomes a social obligation [that] transforms of self-to-self into a relationship that is governable”, she writes, and the goal of self-fulfilment and self-esteem is no longer a private goal but “something we owe to society [...] that will defray the costs of social problems” (Cruikshank, 1993, p.232). In other words, the goal of self-esteem is a technology of citizenship and self-government for evaluating and acting upon ourselves so that government agents don’t have to, thus diagnosing “social problems” as “antisocial behaviour” by those who are “lacking in self-esteem” (ibid, p. 234). This discussion is especially important

when studying domestic soft power in China, as this study will show, because the rhetoric of self-confidence that has sprung up in the last two years seems to employ the logic that Cruikshank presents in her research.

The theory of governmentality is important to the study of domestic soft power because, as this study hypothesises, domestic soft power is indeed used by the CCP as a way of creating a “governable” public. In this respect, governmentality is especially concerned with “attending to the changing ways in which the objects, subjects, means and ends of government are articulated” (Walters, 2012, p. 61). Governmentality theory, as will be evident in chapter six, helps us understand the way in which domestic soft power is exerted in order to create a public which identifies the “self” as equitable to their political system and values, which are both embodied and constructed by the ruling party. This furthermore materialises in a series of political actions that seek to indigenise sciences, education and academia, and reject values that the government deems as “unfitting” to the national context.

Chapter 4: Official definitions of domestic soft power in China

This chapter will discuss how domestic soft power is defined by the CCP. I will be looking at the slightly different spheres of academic, media and government representations in order to provide insight and come to my conclusions. I used newspaper articles published in the *Theory* and *Editorials* sections of the *People's Daily*, and texts and commentary published by the CCSPRC. The chapter consists of two parts, one which outlines the definition of domestic soft power before 2014, and one which looks at the years 2014-2017.

4.1 Domestic soft power pre-2014

As earlier research on the topic shows, both Chinese academia and the Chinese government have repurposed Nye's soft power from being strictly about foreign influence, to soft power used by the government domestically (see for example Edney, 2012; 2015; Callahan, 2015; Aukia, 2014; Barr, 2013). Consequently, both Chinese academics and the CCP seem to conclude that culture is the sole most important element of soft power, and in Chinese context, the term "cultural soft power" (文化软实力, wénhuà ruǎnshíli) appears almost exclusively to describe Chinese soft power, while the single term "soft power" (软实力, ruǎnshíli) appears mostly in the context of "cultural soft power".

The first time soft power, with emphasis on national cultural soft power (国家文化软实力, guójiā wénhuà ruǎnshíli) came into the political sphere and became part of CCP Cultural policy was in 2007, when Hu Jintao mentioned it in his speech to the 17 National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Already during this speech, cultural soft power was presented in a domestic sense:

"[...] to keep advancing ahead socialist cultural development, to raise a new tide in the construction of socialist culture, to arise the creative vigor of the whole nation, and advance the national cultural soft power" (Yan, 2007) (Appendix A1.1)

He consequently put forth a four-point plan that outlines the promotion and further rise of socialist culture, with these key points:

1st: The construction of the socialist core values system, and enhance the attractiveness and cohesion of socialist ideology. To construct the process of [embedding] socialist core value system into national education and spiritual civilisation, [making it] the conscious pursuit of the people

2nd: The construction of a harmonious culture, cultivated in a civilised fashion. [...] Vigorously carry forward the patriotism, collectivism, socialist ideology, to enhance the focus and awareness on integrity, to strengthen social morality, professional ethics, family virtues, and individual moral construction.

3rd: Carry forward Chinese culture and construct a spiritual home for the whole Chinese nation.[...] [Consequently], strengthen cultural exchanges and enhance the international influence of Chinese culture.

4th: Promote cultural innovation and enhance cultural development in China, in a way which serves the people, the direction of socialism, and which is realistic, close to life and close to the masses. (Yan, 2007) (Appendix A1.2)

As his four points show, the concept of cultural soft power has since its first mention in a political discourse, had both a domestic and an international aspect. Hu Jintao's pledge to create a Chinese culture which adheres to socialist core values and the notion of a harmonious society, with the plan to embed this process into education thus making it a conscious pursuit of the people, is a sign that domestic soft power might have a close relationship with the CCPs legitimacy, nation building and national identity, and of course the party's propaganda strategy. Also, this speech alone shows that the Chinese interpretation of soft power coincides with Wilson's analysis, in terms of that the CCP indeed perceived soft power as a direct political strategy rather than the product of an autonomous civil society. (2014, p. 289).

This was the speech that sparked serious interest in soft power research in China (Lai, 2012, p. 12; Aukia, 2014, pp. 75-76; Edney, 2012 p.907), as we can see from in Figure 1. It is important to notice how cultural soft power was first presented to the Chinese public in 2007 to understand the development the concept went through after this speech.

Figure 1: Related Publications

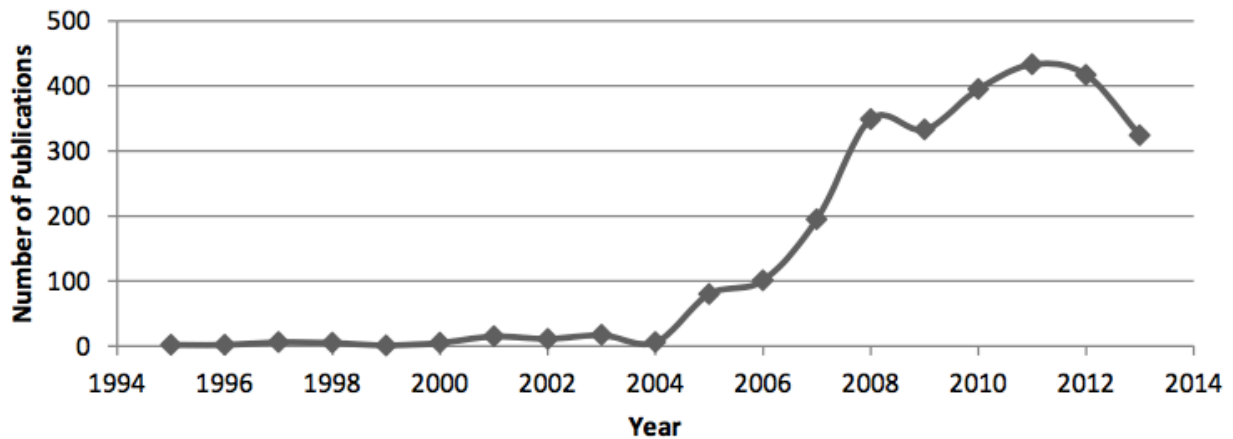


Figure 1: Number of Soft Power-related publications in China 1994-2014 (Aukia, 2014)

Prior to 2014, numerous Chinese scholars argue that cultural soft power in China should be viewed in terms of a strategy of revival of traditional Chinese values, citing speeches by Hu Jintao as well as pre-Xi Jinping academic works. Qing Cao argues that soft power is a form of articulating traditional Chinese values on the part of political and intellectual elites (Cao, 2011, p. 1). Cao argues that China's soft power is conceived as an integral part of national culture building, with traditional Chinese culture at its centre. He divides Chinese cultural soft power as a two-tier discursive formulation: one being traditional culture and the other based on Marxist socialist culture, where Marxist socialist culture is the base on which a value system based on traditional Chinese culture is built (Cao, 2011, p. 12). His views are, according to Aukia, supported by other Chinese academics, citing that the notion of soft power can be traced in Chinese tradition all the way back to the Warring States period (Ding, 2008), and that the Confucian concept of *hé* ("harmony", "union", "peace") and especially *hé er bùtóng* (homogenous yet different) represents China's traditional values, and the cultural foundation of China's soft power conception (Fang, 2007; Zhang, 2004). The focus on traditional values as the core of soft power, on the other hand, has increasingly shifted towards "socialist core values" during the last three years. As I will show in the next part of this chapter, traditional values were to a large extent replaced by "socialist core values" as the central part of Chinese cultural soft power (Xi, 2015; Zhang, 2016; Wilson, 2015; Aukia, 2014).

The interest in soft power research, and the sheer number of publications coming from Chinese academics, peaked somewhere around the years 2011-2012, but discussions about the importance of soft power as a political strategy remained nonetheless. I have not found any explanation in the existing literature as to why research started to decline after 2012, and can only speculate that it was a conscious choice by the new CCP to decrease the need for such frequent publishing on the topic in the process of redefining its central parts. However, one of the more prominent expert voices in Chinese cultural soft power discussion, both in terms of what it entails and what is to be done to improve it, seems to be Zhang Guozuo (张国祚), the former deputy director of the theory department of the Central Propaganda Department of the CCP (*People's Daily*, 2014), and the current director of the CCSPRC. This interpretation will be taken up again below. This interpretation will be taken up again below.

4.2 Domestic soft power post-2014

The previous section covered how soft power was viewed in before 2014. The next section of this chapter outlines how domestic soft power is defined between 2014 and today, and presents an argument that a two-fold shift in rhetoric emerged during the years 2014-2015. On one hand, the focus of domestic soft power became socialist core values rather than traditional values, and on the other, the term “self-confidence” emerged in relation to soft power. This shift, it would seem, is largely due to an increased focus on the CCP’s soft power use in domestic governance.

In an article in the *Theory*-section of the *People's Daily* from June 6th 2014, the author summarises a lecture by Zhang Guozuo about China’s cultural soft power. Zhang bases a lot of his views on soft power on speeches by Xi Jinping, as he points out, presenting several points one needs to understand when talking about soft power in China. The most important one here is when he outlines what cultural soft power includes on a level of definition. Among these points are: moral construction (道德建设, dàodé jiànshè), belief education (信念教育, xìnniàn jiàoyù), guidance of public opinion (舆论引导, yúlùn yǐndǎo) and patriotism (爱国主义, àiguó zhǔyì) among others. Cultural soft power is also, according to Zhang, both a part of the “China dream” and a strategic goal for the country’s development and survival. As he explains, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the Arab Spring and the Colour Revolutions as examples, without cultural soft power in a domestic context the country will not survive:

"If a country's hard power isn't good, then maybe they will fall from one hit. But if the country's soft power isn't good, then it may fall by itself, without needing to be hit".

People's Daily, 2014) (Appendix A2)

Zhang also outlines the West's soft power, both in modern times and in a historical perspective, stating that there's a "self-evident ideological contest" in China between Chinese culture and Western culture, set through their respective soft power initiatives (Appendix A2). His sixth point is perhaps the most important when talking about what China's domestic soft power actually entails, and that is the relationship between cultural soft power and the "socialist core values" (社会主义核心价值, shèhuìzhǔyì héxīn jiàzhí). This point is central in the CCP's cultural soft power in a domestic sense, where most researchers and the *People's Daily* contributors point out that socialist core values are the cornerstone of national cultural soft power (Appendix A2). When talking about the core values he comes back to Xi Jinping, and chooses to underline especially guidance in societal ways of thinking (引领社会思潮, yǐnlǐng shèhuì sīcháo), a unified guiding ideology (统一指导思想 tǒngyī zhǐdǎo sīxiǎng) and a common ideals and basic moral norms (基本道德规范, jīběn dàodé guīfàn) as central. This shows that development and enhancement of the socialist core values is one of the central roles of the CCP's domestic soft power.

This view is reflected throughout the rest of my sample group. In a 2015 article from the *Theory*-section of the *People's Daily* the same perception of domestic soft power is presented. In an article titled *Core values are the soul of cultural soft power* (核心价值观是文化软实力的灵魂, Héxīn jiàzhíguān shì wénhuà ruǎn shíli de línghún). The author outlines the core values by their official definition as promoting prosperity, democracy, civilisation, harmony, advocating freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, advocating patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendliness (Han, 2014).

Cultural soft power, according to the author, is reflected in all aspects of economic and social development, including the socialist core values, and not only in the traditional sense of "culture". Herein lies an interesting observation when cultural soft power is discussed in Chinese

sources: the term “culture” in Chinese discourse also includes China’s political ideology, socialism with Chinese characteristics, as well as their economic strategy, social development, and political system. This makes for an argument that when “cultural soft power” is mentioned in Chinese discourse in a domestic sense, it in fact entails all three of Nye’s characteristics of soft power: culture in a traditional sense, political values and in fact foreign policies. Development and strengthening of mainstream ideology is one of the main goals of China’s cultural soft power domestically, and support for government initiative and China’s peaceful rise and the China Dream are all part of that same ideology. This goes somewhat against early Chinese soft power theoreticians like Wang Huning, who claimed that a country’s culture is the most important of the three, while support foreign policy and political system come as a result of a culture’s ability to attract. In a domestic sense, in other words, cultural soft power does not only include traditional Chinese culture, but also its societal values as they are presented and developed by the current government, their political system, and their national identity and goals.

The same sentiment can be found in another article from 2015, based on several of Xi Jinping’s speeches and expositions concerning China’s cultural soft power. The article is part of a section of the *People’s Daily* concerning Xi Jinping and his governance, titled “*Studying [on] the path of Xi* (学习路上, xué Xí lùshàng) (People’s Daily, 2015). Here, Xi is quoted to outline how core values are in fact the soul of cultural soft power, and that in order to develop and progress cultural soft power, core values need to be developed and embraced by the nation. Guidance of education and public opinion, as well as guarding cultural influence and improving cultural security, is all part of both the core values and China’s cultural soft power. In another paragraph, Xi underlines that the spread of contemporary Chinese culture is also the spread of socialism with Chinese characteristics, yet again emphasising the importance of ideological work. Summing up his sentiment, Xi Jinping is quoted in saying:

To strengthen the [domestic / targeted at Chinese people] positive propaganda of the Chinese nation’s outstanding culture and glorious history; through education in schools, theoretical research, historical research, film and television works, literary works and other means to strengthen patriotism, collectivism and social education. To guide our people to establish and adhere to the correct view of history, national concepts, national

opinion, the concept of culture, and strengthen the Chinese people's moral integrity and confidence. (People's Daily, 2015) (Appendix A3)

This view coincides with Zhang Guozuo's 2016 book *Research outline for China's Soft Power*, in which he presents an academic approach to understanding Chinese soft power. The chapter important to this discussion is "People-Oriented Cultural Soft Power" (Zhang, 2016, p. 52). Guiding the public with the correct public opinion is, according to Zhang, an integral part of cultural soft power domestically. Guiding public opinion into the "correct" path means presenting factual and true information, and help people understand events and concepts. This yet again closely ties to popular support and regime security, which seems to be central in the CCP's domestic soft power strategy. Incorrect public opinion, or failure to effectively guide public opinion, is "a curse for both the public and the Party", exemplified by the fall of the Soviet Union, the Colour Revolutions and the Arab Spring (Zhang, 2016, p.52). This sentiment, describing the means through which domestic soft power strategy might be formed by the CCP, is analysed further in the next chapter of this study.

When talking about soft power since 2014, the rhetoric has shifted away from traditional values, and gone more in the direction of identity building, consensus building and shaping public opinion. Zhang Guozuo outlines that domestic soft power centres around moral construction and belief education, guidance of public opinion and patriotism. When soft power in China is still referred to as "cultural", it can be argued that the notion of being "culturally correct", according to the CCP, also entails abiding to the ideological framework presented by the government. In this respect, domestic soft power can be defined as an ideological framework within which the public is to operate, which is built on socialist core values, with predetermined value- and moral guidelines which shape and safeguard correct public opinion.

In addition, these years saw an emergence of the term self-confidence (自信, zìxìn) in relation to domestic soft power, and it has mostly appeared in a form of "cultural self-confidence" (文化自信, wénhuà zìxìn). Considering that the definition of "culture" in context of "cultural soft power" is not only the arts, but also the political system and the political ideology, it can be argued that "cultural self-confidence" is often defined as a confidence in the party, the political system and

Chinese traditional and modern culture. Xi Jinping, in a speech on the 95th anniversary of the CCP in July 2016, outlined self-confidence as “self-confidence in the path” (道路自信, dàolù zìxìn), “theoretical self-confidence” (理论自信, lǐlùn zìxìn), “system/institutional self-confidence” (制度自信, zhìdù zìxìn) and “cultural self-confidence” (文化自信, wénhuà zìxìn)” (Xi, 2016). The term “cultural self-confidence” is explained by Xi to mean three things: “China’s traditional culture” (中华优秀传统文化, zhōnghuá yōuxiù chuántǒng wénhuà), “revolutionary culture” (革命文化, gémìng wénhuà) and “culture that advances socialism” (社会主义先进文化, shèhuìzhǔyì xiānjìn wénhuà) (ibid).

This chapter has presented an outline of how domestic soft power was politically defined before and after 2014. Here we see the start of the soft power debate on a political level in China being a speech by Hu Jintao in 2007. As the sources in this chapter show, the central part of China’s soft power before 2014 seems to have been traditional Chinese culture, and a more outward orientation of soft power. However, this rhetoric experienced a two-tier shift after 2014, seemingly due to an increased domestic orientation of the CCP’s soft power use. The rhetoric changed in two ways, one of which was the shift to preliminary promote socialist core values as the central part of the CCP’s soft power, and the other was the emergence of “self-confidence” rhetoric in regards to domestic use of soft power. An analysis of what could be the reason for these rhetoric changes, and the subsequent goals of the CCP’s domestic soft power, will be presented in Chapter six, while the next chapter will discuss what political guidelines can be linked to domestic use of soft power by the CCP.

Chapter 5: What political guidelines can be linked to domestic soft power?

Considering how domestic soft power is defined, it is interesting to look at to how domestic soft power might be exerted in China. The previous chapter attempted to show that the concept's definition differs quite significantly from the traditional definition by Nye. The domestic aspect of the CCP's soft power has so far been quite understudied, but reading soft power discussion in Chinese academia, Chinese media and through political speeches, it is nevertheless important to point out that China's soft power today can be said to being directed almost exclusively towards a domestic audience. This is also exemplified in how soft power is translated into political action guidelines.

This chapter seeks to answer my second research question, giving an analysis of how domestic soft power can be seen to be exerted by the CCP, and what political actions are seen to promote domestic soft power. In this chapter, my focus lies primarily on fields education and arts and literature, due to soft power discussion often mentioning the role of these fields in promotion and development of domestic soft power. The chapter is divided into two subchapters, one concerning education and academia, and the other arts and literature, to show how a specific interpretation of soft power is reflected in concrete policy guidelines.

It is difficult to clearly ascertain the way in which Chinese domestic soft power strategy is implemented, but there are several key points which need to be addressed in this section. As per its definition, there is a strong call by the CCP and consequently the *People's Daily* to promote the socialist core values as the soul of cultural soft power at home. A call for an ideologically and strategically unified cultural sector and public opinion is strongly present in CCP's rhetoric, which in itself is said to be based on shaping a "correct" public opinion and patriotism promotion through both the arts, education, academia and media. When "socialist core values" are defined as the soul of cultural soft power, one can argue that any attempt at promotion of the socialist core values in China is also exertion of domestic soft power.

5.1 Domestic soft power through education and academia

One of the ways through which domestic cultural soft power is to be implemented, according to the aforementioned definition, is the education and academic sectors. As quoted from Xi Jinping (People's Daily, 2015), there is a need to strengthen positive propaganda through education in schools, theoretical research, film and television works [and] literary works.

In a speech from August 2015, the Minister of Education Yuan Guiren famously said to “never let western concepts (西方价值观, *xīfāng jiāzhíguān*) into the [Chinese] classroom”. The speech urged the construction and implementation of teaching materials based on Marxism and socialism using Xi Jinping's speeches in classrooms, safeguard the political integrity of the classroom, and offer positive guidance to students (Liu, 2015). These guidelines were aimed at universities, and Yuan Guiren put forth a set of guidelines as to what never to do in a classroom, including: “introduction of Western texts, attacking or defaming the Party and party leadership, discrediting socialism, constitutional violations and allowing teachers to display grievances in the classroom (Appendix A4).

A reply to this speech by Zhang Weiliang, a Hangzhou Normal University professor, published in the *People's Daily* two months later (Zhang, 2015), shared some of the same sentiment. However, Zhang argues that rather than banning Western values, Chinese students and researchers need to communicate the difference between Chinese and Western values, and that Marxist theorists need to have the confidence to use Marxist theories. Combating Western values by explaining their inapplicability to the Chinese situation is a way of strengthening Chinese soft power (Zhang Weiliang, 2015) (Appendix A5).

These two articles are among several I have encountered that deal with the perception of Western concepts and texts in academia and in university education. By acknowledging the earlier expressed need for a more patriotic education, and the fact that shaping public opinion and having education based on socialism with Chinese characteristics and socialist core values in domestic soft power discussion, an argument can be made that this turn away from Western values and Western thought in universities is in fact a policy of strengthening domestic soft power. Zhang Weiliang's focus on confidence among academics to use socialist and Marxist

theories in their research as a counterweight to Western theories that might seem inapplicable to Chinese society, is also rhetoric that has sprung up quite aggressively in the last two years.

Zhang Weiliang in his article underlines how Chinese academics need to have the confidence to use Chinese theories and disprove Western concepts' applicability to Chinese society. Discourse related to cultural self-confidence emerged in 2015-2016, where there was a clear shift in the academic focus on soft power. Cultural self-confidence has become central in most research, as is evident through updates from the CCSPRC, where all the commentary articles from 2017 are in some way connected to cultural self-confidence. The argument that cultural self-confidence and cultural soft power is interconnected, and the former to a large extent replaces the latter in political and academic discussions, becomes apparent when reading some of the more recent publications. Xi Jinping also states that cultural self-confidence is needed in order to show the reality and irrationality of the Western cultural hegemony (Xi, 2016).

Commentaries by academics published in the CCSPRC outlines cultural self-confidence as the support of Chinese cultural mission and constantly promote Chinese values and mainstream ideology (Wang, 2017), remove the effects of Western cultural colonialism and centrism (Tang, 2017) and most importantly create a Chinese discourse platform to explain Chinese phenomena, based on China's cultural background (Zhang Kangzhi, 2017). The last point by Zhang is important in this discussion, as it points towards cultural soft power, through the discourse of cultural self-confidence, also encompassing the academic sphere. As Zhang Weiliang expresses in his reply to banning Western texts from universities, and Xi Jinping points out when speaking of cultural self-confidence, domestic cultural soft power is also exerted through the urge to create a Chinese theoretical discourse, based on socialism with Chinese characteristics and the mainstream ideology (Zhang Kangzhi, 2017). The same views are expressed by Zhang Guozuo, who writes that when the state insists on "arming the people with scientific theories", there must be scientific theories adapted to Chinese Marxism that can guide socialism with Chinese characteristics to further success (Zhang, 2016, p. 87). The 13th 5-year plan for years 2016-2020 outlines these ventures in Article 16's chapter 67, which states in section 1 that there is a need to "deepen the study and propaganda of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics" (NDRC, 2016, p. 105). Section 2 of the same chapter states that to innovate

philosophy and social sciences, there's a need to "strengthen the ideological and theoretical platform and discipline construction, and in-depth implementation of Marxist theory in research and development projects (NDRC, 2016, p. 105-106). As the next chapter of this thesis will show, these political guidelines and policies seem to reflect a goal of "indigenisation" of the sciences in China.

5.2 Domestic soft power through the cultural sector: literature and arts

The same tendencies of domestic soft power policy, through its definition as promotion of socialist core values, can be seen in the arts and literature sector in China. According to Xi Jinping, Chinese artists and writers have an important task in highlighting Chinese traditional culture and values, as well as shape public opinion as well. "The cause of literature and art is an important cause for the party and the people", and artists have an important role in cultivating socialism with Chinese characteristics, Xi proclaimed at the Symposium for Development of Literature and Art in 2014 (Mo, 2016). The same sentiment was expressed by Xi in 2016, when he again stressed the importance of cultural self-confidence and the uniqueness of Chinese socialist rejuvenation and socialist core values in arts and literature. "Literary and artistic works should touch upon the people's ideological standing, cultivation of morals, spiritual pursuit, and directly or indirectly related to national spirit and values" (Mo, 2016) (Appendix A6). The goal for artists and writers, Xi explains, is to create works that speak to the people, promote the spirit of the times, and always carry the correct ideological and value orientation. (Liu, 2016).

The most obvious and prominent description of the new requirements for artists and writers was delivered by Liu Yunshan, one of the members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, director of the Propaganda and Ideology Leading Group (which CPC Propaganda Department and the State Council Information Department are under) and president of the Central Party School. In December of 2016 Liu stressed the artists' and writers' mission to "take the lead in the implementation of socialist core values, adhere to social responsibility, [and] personal cultivation" (Appendix A7.1). Consequently, he urged the Federation of Literary and Art Circles as well as the Writers' Association to strengthen their ideological and political leadership of writers and artists, and that party committees and propaganda departments on all levels need to improve leadership and guidance of the Federation of Literary and Art Circles (Xu, 2016)

(Appendix A7.2). Liu Yunshan has previously expressed the same concerns for closer ideological control over the cultural industry, stating in a 2010 speech that one of the six main tasks facing propaganda cadres is cultural development and the promotion of cultural soft power (Liu, 2016).

These sentiments yet again bear close relation to the notion of cultural self-confidence, and Xi Jinping has on numerous occasions spoken about cultural self-confidence in regards to arts and literature. Consequently, this goes hand in hand with the aforementioned cultural soft power discussion. Artists and writers' principal goal is to lead the people, write for the people and based on the people's principles and values. This is closely related to the promotion of cultural soft power, and its inclusion of socialist core values and socialism with Chinese characteristics, thus giving the artists and writers the same tasks as the academic community. Zhang Guozuo shares the same views in his book, stating that socialism with Chinese characteristics is the basis of cultural soft power, and the development of a national spirit based on patriotism and the spirit of the times would strengthen and invigorate the Chinese nation (Zhang, 2016, p. 86). The ideological attribute in the cultural industries must not be neglected (ibid, p.88), and "the ideological regime must never be breached" because "the collapse of a regime often starts from the ideological sphere". An ideological defence needs to be built to ensure the safety of China's cultural soft power (ibid, p. 89-90).

In this chapter, this study has presented a series of political guidelines and suggestions to political action which can be seen as exertion of domestic soft power by the CCP. According to my sources, the CCP seems to view use of domestic soft power through policies and guidelines directed at sectors of education, academia and arts and literature. Here, the sources indicate a rhetoric of indigenisation of social and political sciences, and a rejection of Western philosophical and scientific theories which the CCP communicates as incorrect or inapplicable in a Chinese context. This indigenisation strategy also raises a question of how this is different from nationalism. I will address this question in the next chapter, as well as present my analysis of other goals for the CCP's use of domestic soft power.

Chapter 6: What are the goals of domestic soft power?

Despite the CCP, Chinese media and Chinese academics calling China's soft power a "cultural soft power," this study shows that the term "culture" in this respect encompasses not only traditional culture, arts and literature, but also political system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and China's foreign policy of a peaceful rise and a harmonious world. This "redefinition" will be further contextualised in this chapter, where based on the findings presented in the previous chapters and research done by others, I will discuss the reasons for the CCP to see the necessity to use soft power domestically, and discuss the goals of domestic soft power by the CCP as discernible in both the *People's Daily* and the CCSPRC publishing.

This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part addresses the use of the term "domestic soft power" in the context of the CCP's domestic propaganda strategy. The second part of this chapter, based on the developments in rhetoric from 2014 to 2017, will argue that the role of domestic cultural soft power is increasingly that of a "counter-soft power" against Western cultural dominance, and that soft power in China can be perceived as a "zero-sum game" between CCP's and Western cultural influence. The third part of this chapter addresses the goals of domestic soft power in the context of governmentality theory, where the goal seems to be the creation of a "governable" public. As mentioned earlier, this chapter also addresses how domestic soft power use for legitimisation purposes is different from nationalism in China.

6.1 Domestic soft power as propaganda.

When it comes to propaganda in China, the strategy has changed considerably in the past several decades. The CCP's domestic propaganda is now less concerned with direct misinformation of the public, but rather with control of information and censorship. In this respect, ideology is indeed central in the CCP's propaganda strategy, and as mentioned earlier, parallels to Laswell's (1927) argument that propaganda by the government is a necessary strategy to promote and keep one's societal and ideological values can be drawn. In this respect, it can be argued that domestic soft power as a content of the CCP's propaganda strategy is aimed at safeguarding the system of

socialism with Chinese characteristics and Marxist and socialist values in an age of advancement of liberal democratic values and “global ethics”.

Edney (2012), for example, sees domestic soft power as nation building through propaganda. He argues that domestic cultural soft power development needs to be considered “alongside the party-state’s cultural reform program” (ibid, p.909). He points out that propaganda authorities are responsible for maintaining government control over cultural matters in the country (ibid, p.910).

This study supports the arguments presented by Edney, as the same sentiment also appears in my sources, such as speeches and comments by Liu Yunshan, the director of Ideology and Propaganda Leading Group. As previously shown, he urged propaganda cadres of all levels to strengthen guidance of and cooperation with the Federation of Literary and Art Circles in 2016. When both Xi Jinping, Liu Yunshan, and Zhang Guozuo place great importance in the national arts and literature’s mission to educate and lead the thinking of the people, and how important this type of culture is in domestic cultural soft power rhetoric, it becomes apparent that domestic cultural soft power bears a close relation to domestic propaganda in China. My analysis of the sources in this study indicates that the use of domestic soft power can indeed be considered a part of the CCP’s overall propaganda strategy, given how propaganda is regarded by the CCP, and what policy guidelines can be seen as part of domestic soft power use. Consequently, both political figures, academics and the CCSPPRC, increasingly bring up domestic propaganda concerns such as promotion of mainstream ideology and “correct” public opinion, when discussing the domestic use of soft power, thus creating a close link between the two.

6.2 The struggle for cultural influence: Domestic soft power as a zero-sum game

Domestic cultural soft power in China can largely be considered a content of propaganda, used for several different goals. However, one of the primary goals of domestic soft power use in China seems to be as a counter-soft power to Western cultural influences. Again, we come back to the definition of “culture” in this sense to being both traditional culture, China’s political system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and socialist core values. The analysis of the

sources used in this study indicates that domestic cultural soft power is used to a large extent as a counterweight, and its development as an opposite force, to Western soft power in China. This points into the direction that the CCP considers soft power in China to be a zero-sum game between Chinese cultural soft power and Western cultural soft power, which becomes especially evident since 2014. Some of the same findings about domestic soft power in China were presented by William Callahan (2015). By calling Chinese domestic soft power “negative”, he presents it as a tool to put a cultural and ideological divide between “China” and “The World” on the level of national identity, and that these identities are in fact “opposite”. (Callahan, 2015, pp. 223- 224). This notion of “opposite” is also prominent in my sources, thus further underlining the argument that there is a sense of a “zero-sum game” between Chinese and Western cultural and values systems, which becomes especially evident in the years after 2014.

The years 2014-2015 marked a change in Chinese cultural soft power rhetoric, from Hu Jintao’s focus on traditional Chinese values as the core of cultural soft power to socialist core values presented by Xi Jinping as the “soul” of cultural soft power. The advancement of cultural soft power domestically can therefore be seen as parallel to the advancement of socialist core values. Consequently, the rhetoric employed in this discussion also underlines the importance of domestic cultural soft power as a driving force of Chinese values in order to replace certain Western values in society. A good example for this is the speech by the Minister of Education Yuan Guiren, and his urge to cast out all Western texts from university classrooms, only using Chinese texts, and base all education on the Chinese context. This view is shared by Zhang Guozuo when he talks about ideological education work as well:

University students are the focus of the education work. Such education among the college student is giving serious cause for concern [when it comes to] the stability and the future of China [...]. China’s cultural soft power will amount to the spiritual character and the wit of the Chinese people, represented by contemporary college students with their thoughts and behaviour. (Zhang Guozuo, 2016, p. 61)

The reply to Yuan Guiren’s speech by Zhang Weiliang, although not urging to ban all Western texts from university classrooms, does share the same views by explaining that Western-

constructed concepts need to not be banned, but rather that Chinese circumstances and society need to be explained with Chinese concepts, based on Chinese circumstances and society. The adaptation of these concepts and the reconstruction of social science theories and political theories to fit the Chinese context better is central both here, and in the newly emerged discussion of “cultural self-confidence”, which Zhang Weiliang briefly mentions. When talking about academic research in the fields of economy, social sciences and political sciences, there have during the last two years re-emerged strong voices which advocate for the construction of Chinese theories, based on socialism with Chinese characteristics and bearing the flag of socialist core values, in order to make theories constructed in the West obsolete or prove them to be inapplicable. This sentiment can be called “indigenisation” or “indigenous self-assertion”, where the local, or indigenous, practices, culture and values are protected from and favoured over outside practices. In this respect, the term “indigenous” can be defined within a concept of “self-determination”, which covers self-identification, political and resource control, and free cultural expression (Dirlik, 2011, p. 65). According to Arif Dirlik, indigenisation in China can be described as a post-modernisation, where after the initial period of modernisation, a new period of modernisation emerges which lays culturally driven claims on modernity (Dirlik, 2002, p. 20). However, Dirlik specifically points out that the goal of indigenisation is also open to manipulation by indigenous elites, in order to promote an ideology that is not necessarily shared by the rest of the indigenous society.

With indigenisation in mind, one can argue that outside influence and by extension concepts and theories developed outside of China are regarded as a form of cultural imperialism, and subsequently reflects the CCP’s strategy of nationalising or indigenising social and political theories and sciences. This “indigenisation” rhetoric in the sources above can yet again be seen as an indication of a zero-sum game. By directly calling for “cultural self-confidence” as a tool of domestic ideological and public opinion work, and tying the term to domestic cultural soft power, the Party indirectly attempts to promote socialist core values and socialism with Chinese characteristics as a counterweight to Western culture and ideology to a domestic audience. This is prominent in other articles about cultural soft power in China, most of them based on Xi Jinping’s speeches.

The People's Daily published an article in 2017 titled *How can Chinese cultural soft power "harden up"?* which further explains the role of socialist core values and ideological work in domestic soft power. The article speaks of socialist core values as the key element of cultural soft power, also underlining that outside cultural influence is negatively affecting Chinese cultural soft power. The article states that since globalisation and opening up, Chinese culture has been affected by foreign culture, which has in turn brought about resistance to Chinese cultural soft power (People's Daily, 2017) (Appendix A8). The article further outlines how China's cultural industry and cultural soft power need to be strengthened, not only to build the correct public opinion, but to continue the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The same sentiment is expressed by Ru Xin, the executive director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in a forum discussion hosted by the *People's Daily Theory*-section editor Ye Fan in 2016. Ru Xin states that the use of culture as a means to achieve political goals is a tool Western capitalist cultures actively advocate, which is an implementation of cultural hegemonism (文化霸权主义, wénhuà bàqiánzhǔyì) (Ye, 2016).

Cultural self-confidence, as a tool to resist this cultural hegemonism and building a socialist cultural power, is therefore central to ensure China's cultural, and by extension national, security (People's Daily, 2016). Ru Xin goes on to say that in the age of globalisation, contradictions and struggle between Marxism and "wrong" ideas of all kinds are inevitable. "Hostile Western forces" (西方敌对势力, xīfāng díduì shìlì) are, according to Ru, attempting to use ideological and cultural infiltration through Westernisation, and some people are blindly accepting Western theory of thought as "universal". He stresses the importance of clarifying certain Western values, such as human rights and democracy, and giving the correct view on these issues based on Marxist theory (Ye, 2016) (Appendix A8). By implying the use "self-confidence" as a tool to address these issues, Ru Xin underlines the meaning of the "self" in "self-confidence" to mean "ideological and cultural values as presented by the political system, and the party".

This self-confidence rhetoric gives yet another dimension to the zero-sum game argument. By putting Western ideological and cultural influence as not only "erroneous" but also hostile (敌对, díduì) in regards to domestic culture, Ru Xin describes an active struggle for ideological influence of public opinion between the Chinese socialist core values- system and the

Western "universal" values, giving specific examples of concepts such as human rights (人权, rénquán), democracy (民主, mínzhǔ) and freedom (自由, zìyóu), among others, that need to be redefined in order to not undermine the unique Chinese situation.

As mentioned earlier, a question of how this is different from nationalism arises. This study argues that the goals the use of domestic soft power seeks to accomplish are not nationalism, because nationalism in general is seen through the lens of foreign policy. Nationalism is seen as a mobilisation of social forces against an external threat or competitor directly, consequently implying a "confrontational and assertive behaviour in relation to [other nations]" (Zhao, 2013, p. 536). Domestic soft power use, on the other hand, is rallying not for direct action against other nations, but to support internal unity and political stability. This is done through guidance of "correct" ideological and cultural influences which, as this study shows, increasingly reflect the ideology and values of the government. In this regard, despite the rhetoric being against "harmful Western values", the purpose is not confrontational or assertive behaviour towards other nations, as nationalism suggests, but rather a promotion of Chinese values domestically, thus communicating that Western values are not necessarily universally "wrong", but rather wrong or inapplicable specifically in a *national* context.

6.3 Domestic soft power as governmentality

When considering the argument of a zero-sum game between Western and Chinese cultural and ideological values, it becomes important to address domestic soft power again in terms of governmentality theory. As mentioned earlier, governmentality is a concept created by Foucault that he applied primarily to liberal Western societies. On the other hand, the concept is just as applicable for today's China, acknowledging that the CCP's "power" is no longer merely "power of domination", but rather "power as strategic games" where "responsibilisation" is a force guiding subjects through ideological manipulation, moral advice and/or rational argumentation (Lemke, 2002, p.53) to adhere to the correct societal value system.

6.3.1 Governmentality as strategic games: the question of self-confidence

The societal value system that domestic cultural soft power is sought to promote is socialism with Chinese characteristics, and most importantly socialist core values. Socialist core values' goal, as described by Xi Jinping in 2017, is to unite spiritual strength, provide cultural support, to spread mainstream values, to strengthen the sense of identity and belonging in the whole society (Jiang, 2017), and ensure that "socialist core values are like air: everywhere" (She, 2017). Socialist core values to a large extent propose a dialectical relationship between nation, society and citizens, and crystallises the CCP's values as an opposite to "Western values".

At the same time, Xi Jinping has clearly stated that socialist core values are to be both defined and practiced under the banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This means, among other things, that the Chinese situation or issues need to be understood, defined and discussed in the context of socialism with Chinese characteristics, relying on ideology and societal values provided by the CCP.

If we consider how power is defined as "strategic games" in governmentality theory, where the subjects of those in power are guided by ideological manipulation and moral advice, domestic cultural soft power discussion as the promotion of socialist core values can indeed be seen as a form of governmentality. This cannot be fully tested of course, but given that this study focuses on political representations and interpretations as presented by the government, rather than on direct effects as they are perceived by the public, I decided use this theory to contextualise the analysis.

The subjects of governmentality, either consciously or subconsciously, are free in terms of thought, ideology and behaviour, but within set boundaries. The boundaries in this case are socialist core values, within which the individual can be "free". Let us consider the aforementioned campaign of "self-confidence"- promotion in both everyday life, education, and academia. Promoting and strengthening cultural self-confidence can be seen as an integral part of domestic cultural soft power, as previously shown, and it also stresses the same boundaries within which the subjects are to appear free. This also fits to Cruikshank's study of the self-esteem movement in the US in the 1980s. As Lemke summarises, self-esteem in this regard has a

goal of creating a new social order (Lemke, 2002, p.13), and the self-to-self relationship transforms into something that governable, while deeming any deviation from government ideology or guidelines as a “social problem” due to “lack in self-esteem” (Cruikshank, 1993, p.234). By considering that the term “self-esteem” in Cruikshank’s research and the CCP’s “self-confidence” are essentially the same, we can draw parallels in the two discussions.

First and foremost, as we have seen from CCP rhetoric, the “self” in “self-confidence” is in fact not the individual person, but rather the nation, the party, the country and the ideology. The “self” is described as a part of a larger collectivity, thus making “self-confidence” a “confidence in the community, its rules, ideology and its values”. This analysis comes from the way self-confidence is promoted and described. Artists and writers need to have enough self-confidence to create works of art that reflect the values and ideology of society; academics need to have enough self-confidence to reject or disprove Western social and political scientific theories and explain the Chinese reality with Marxist and socialist theories. Domestic cultural soft power, in this respect, is the means through which cultural self-confidence is promoted. Cultural self-confidence, on the other hand, is the confidence to wholly adhere to the theoretic, scientific and ideological foundation of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the CCP’s socialist core value system. In this regard, any deviation from adhering to these concepts and the mainstream ideology, or any social problem that does not abide to the set boundaries of these concepts, can be deemed as “lacking in self-confidence”. The reliance on any theoretical systems developed by Western scientists, or teaching of Western texts in universities rather than relying on Marxist and socialist theory, can therefore also be deemed as a lack of self-confidence, and by extension a social problem.

6.3.2 Governmentality as national identity: China vs The World

As previously mentioned, governmentality focuses on creating a “governable” public, both in terms of self-government and government by the ruling class. The term “governable” in this context implies a society where the goal is to make political values of the government equitable with civil societal values. Cultural soft power’s domestic strategy points towards the direction of exactly that: to create a public that is not necessarily culturally superior or advanced, as would be implied by nationalism, but rather a public that adheres to the same values, morals and norms as

the ruling class. Many researchers have argued that in order to maintain national stability, the CCP needs to maintain the country's current economic growth and continue to increase standards of living and spending power of its citizenry (Gow, 2017). A slowing economic growth and GDP, together with China's transition from an export-based economic model to a more consumer-driven economy, are both indicating that Xi Jinping's time as the head of the CCP is rooted in reforming the governance and stability strategy of his predecessors. Michael Gow (2017) argues that precisely for these reasons the CCP, through socialist core values, is seeking to distillate the state's vision of state-society-citizen relations, presenting a clear set of national, societal and citizenship values with a focus on building a normative consensus and shared identity in pursuit of promoting cohesion (Gow, 2017, p.110).

As I have previously shown in this study, domestic cultural soft power use can be seen as primarily promotion core socialist values, which for the purpose of this argument can be summarised as moral construction, belief education, guidance of public opinion, and patriotism. Zhang Guozuo specifically underlines guidance of public opinion, a unified ideology and common ideals as the goals of cultural soft power. These values need to coincide with political values of the ruling class in order to ensure national security. The political values in question are all embedded in socialist core values, and it is the CCP's job to guide the public to adhere to the correct view of history, national concepts and national opinion (People's Daily, 2015). If we consider the theory of governmentality in this context, we can see power being a "strategic game" in the sense that ideological manipulation and moral guidelines are introduced to the public as the abovementioned "set of boundaries" within which society is supposed to operate.

Somewhat of the same argument is given by William Callahan when he looks at domestic soft power in light of the China Dream, where he calls domestic soft power a "negative soft power" (Callahan, 2015, p. 224). The discussion, as Callahan observes and this study confirms for most recent sources, is taking place in domestic space through Chinese-language materials, and seeks to build a national identity based on "The Chinese" which is correct, and "The foreign", which is wrong. In brief, he argues that identity of the self is created only in relation to someone else, and consists of similarities and differences of the "self" in relation to the "other".

Considering the self-confidence rhetoric from the CCP, as well as the abovementioned definition of “self” as a citizen of a state that implies the same values, morals and political ideology as the state (or in our case, the CCP), governmentality and the “self-esteem”- movement helps us understand the goals of domestic soft power as a strategy to create a society which is governable, by the means of constructing a national identity that relates to the outside world as “opposite”, and where subjects carry the same values, political ideology and opinions as the CCP. Within the CCP’s domestic soft power strategy, the mission of the Arts and Literature sector can be considered to be the shaping public opinion in order to promote the Chinese “self” as it is defined by the CCP.

In this chapter I have outlined the goals of domestic soft power in China as seen in light of propaganda and governmentality theories. I have argued that domestic soft power can be seen as a content of the CCP’s overall propaganda strategy, as it to a large extent is centred around censorship and promotion of mainstream ideology. Domestic soft power use, in this respect, seeks to control and “spin” information, and communicate “correct” public opinions, especially through the sectors of education, academia and arts and literature.

Consequently, in order to ensure this security, domestic soft power in China can be seen as a zero-sum game between CCP’s and Western cultural and ideological influence. This is evident, to a large extent, through the CCP reinforced rhetoric of indigenisation of social and political sciences, and rejection of Western theories on the basis of domestic “inapplicability”.

Lastly, with the help of governmentality theory, I have argued that the use domestic soft power can be considered a strategy to create a “governable” society, one in which individuals operate seemingly freely, but within a specific set of boundaries set by the government, which in the this case are socialist core values. By promoting “self-confidence”, where the “self” is defined as a member of a larger collectivity or a citizen of state with the same values and ideology as the state, the goal of domestic soft power use appears to be the creation a society where the public and the state are viewed as a singular unit, and a public which can “govern itself”. Consequently, the sources of this study indicate that the CCP’s use of domestic soft power is aimed at creating a Chinese identity which is defined as an “opposite” to the Western. In line with the zero-sum

game argument, by creating an identity which communicated as “opposite”, the society can be seen to become “governable” as it identifies itself solely with the ideology, values and moral guidelines presented by the government.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and further considerations

This thesis has shown, using courses from the *People’s Daily* and the Chinese Cultural Soft Power Research Centre, how the Chinese Communist Party defines soft power in a domestic setting, through what policy guidelines this domestic soft power is supposed to be exerted, and what stated and deducible goals the CCP has in regards to domestic soft power use between the years 2014 and 2017. Previously, research has been done on the topic both by Chinese and Western academics, but as this study has attempted to show, the CCP rhetoric concerning domestic soft power changed quite drastically between the years 2014 and 2015. By examining domestic soft power after this rhetorical shift, this study has attempted to shed a new light onto the topic by discussing its definition, its apparent uses and its goals within political and politically guided discourse.

Pre-2014 definition of soft power by the CCP included to a large extent traditional Chinese values as a central part of soft power, both domestically and when regarding the term as part of the government’s foreign policy. However, this study has shown that after 2014 the primary focus of Chinese soft power, as it is interpreted by the CCP, has been the promotion of “socialist core values”, and the discourse has predominantly discussed soft power in terms of domestic governance. In this regard, the main shift in focus from traditional values to “socialist core values” has also shifted the focus of Chinese soft power from “attraction abroad” to “consensus building and legitimisation of the CCP at home”, especially emphasising moral construction, belief education and guidance of public opinion as central goals. Given that the CCP’s formulation of soft power is almost always linked to culture, calling it “cultural soft power”, this study has shown that the term “culture” in this regard has been reconstructed to mean the political system, mainstream ideology and the values of the CCP.

This study has also attempted to shed a light on what types of political actions the CCP views as exertion of domestic soft power. Here, a strong notion of promotion of the correct public opinion and belief education is predominantly present. The sources informing this study indicate that in the sectors of education and academia, domestic soft power is seen to be exerted by the CCP through indigenisation of political and social sciences, and rejection of Western philosophical and scientific concepts. It can be observed that domestic soft power is exerted by the CCP through a series of guidelines directed at academics, students and professors, to create theoretical and philosophical concepts based on Marxism and socialism with Chinese characteristics, and reject Western concepts as being “inapplicable” and to an extent a form of “cultural hegemonism”. The sectors of arts and literature, on the other hand, is urged to produce works that embrace the current political system and promote mainstream ideology, and are based on “modern Chinese cultural expression”, where the meaning of culture is the same as outlined above. This rhetoric has lead me to believe that the CCP perceives domestic soft power as a zero-sum game between Western influences, which it defines as incorrect or inapplicable to the Chinese context, and its own ideological and cultural influences, which it presents as inherently “Chinese”.

Lastly, this study has attempted to analyse these findings in regards to what goals the CCP seeks to accomplish by using domestic soft power. Here, the theories of propaganda and governmentality were employed to contextualise the arguments of the thesis, and suggest several different interpretations of the CCP’s goals. Some of the findings of this study support the argument put forth by Edney in regards to domestic soft power use and propaganda, suggesting that domestic soft power use is indeed part of the CCP’s overall propaganda strategy at home. This study has also used Foucault’s governmentality theory to contextualise its argument regarding domestic soft power use. The analysis of the findings of this study indicates that the CCP uses the rhetoric of “self-confidence”, where the “self” is defined as equitable with political system and mainstream ideology, to create a public which can govern itself within a set of boundaries that socialist core values and self-confidence proposes. In this respect, this study argues, social problems or deviations from mainstream ideology can be deemed as “lack of self-confidence” and consequently a “social problem”. This study also supports the argument put forth by William Callahan, which constitutes of the CCP seeking to define the Chinese identity as being opposite to the Western. This, yet again, can be understood in terms of the creation of a

“governable” society, by defining the Chinese national identity in light of the political system and ideology, and as an opposite to the “outside”.

Given the limited scope of the sources used in this study, the findings do have certain limitations. By focusing solely on politically steered soft power discourse in the *People's Daily* and texts published by Chinese Cultural Soft Power Research Centre, this study indirectly ignores a plethora of other voices in China. On the other hand, the purpose of this thesis was to analyse in what contexts and with what goals the Chinese government itself views the use of domestic soft power. In regards to this, and on the basis of the sources available within the parameters and constraints of this study, I believe some understanding of the original topic in question has been reached. One also has to consider the methodological approach to this study, and recognise that the analysis of the findings is quite theoretically driven, oriented at a conceptualisation within the frameworks of governmentality and propaganda.

This study was meant as a contribution to a field that is to a large extent fragmented, and to some extent understudied. By looking into the last three years, this study attempts to fill a void in the currently available research on the CCP's domestic soft power uses. Many questions yet remain in regards to this topic, both considering the CCP's intentions and its perception in other domains of Chinese society. Further research on the topic is therefore imperative in order to gain a deeper understanding of the CCP's soft power use as part of domestic governance. Through the process of writing this thesis, an increasing interest in exploring how domestic soft power use is received by the Chinese public arose as well. Bringing the same questions to the playing field of the general public would make for a fascinating study, given that a study of CCP's intentions gives us only one perspective from which to analyse domestic soft power in China. A study of the reception and interpretation of the topic by the actual people at whom it is aimed would bring a whole new dimension to this discussion.

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Appendix A: Original Quotes

Appendix A1

Date: 2007, November 7

Title: 胡锦涛提出，推动社会主义文化大发展大繁荣

A1.1 要坚持社会主义先进文化前进方向，兴起社会主义文化建设新高潮，激发全民族文化创造活力，提高国家文化软实力。

A1.2

(一) 建设社会主义核心价值体系，增强社会主义意识形态的吸引力和凝聚力。

(二) 建设和谐文化，培育文明风尚。[...] 大力弘扬爱国主义、集体主义、社会主义思想，以增强诚信意识为重点，加强社会公德、职业道德、家庭美德、个人品德建设。 [...]

(三) 弘扬中华文化，建设中华民族共有精神家园。[...] 加强对各民族文化的挖掘和保护，重视文物和非物质文化遗产保护，做好文化典籍整理工作。加强对外文化交流，吸收各国优秀文明成果，增强中华文化国际影响力。 [...]

(四) 推进文化创新，增强文化发展活力。[...] 要坚持为人民服务、为社会主义服务的方向和百花齐放、百家争鸣的方针，创作更多反映人民主体地位和现实生活 [...]

Appendix A2

Date: 2014, June 6

Title: 张国祚: 谈谈”软实力”在中国热发展

A2.1 一个国家如果硬实力不行，可能一打就败；而如果软实力不行，可能不打败

A2.2 面对这种局面，中国和西方列强的思想较量早已高下自明

A2.3 社会主义核心价值体系是国家文化软实力的基石

Appendix A3

Date: 2015, June 25

Title: 习近平谈国家文化软实力：增强做中国人的骨气和底气

要加大对中国人民、中华民族的优秀文化和光荣历史的正面宣传力度；通过学校教育、理论研究、历史研究、影视作品、文学作品等多种方式，加强爱国主义、集体主义、社会主义教育，引导我国人民树立和坚持正确的历史观、民族观、国家观、文化观，增强做中国人的骨气和底气。

Appendix A4

Date: 2009, January 1

Title: 刘云山：在新的历史起点上开创宣传思想文化工作新局面

加强对西方原版教材的使用管理，绝不能让传播西方价值观念的教材进入我们的课堂；决不允许各种攻击诽谤党的领导、抹黑社会主义的言论在大学课堂出现；决不允许各种违反宪法和法律的言论在大学课堂蔓延；决不允许教师在课堂上发牢骚、泄怨气，把各种不良情绪传导给学生。

Appendix A5

Date: 2015, November 3

Title: 人民日报热点辨析：高校如何应对西方价值观挑战

做强，就是做强我们自己的文化软实力。西方价值观之所以能在我国高校出现并造成一定影响，是因为西方国家文化软实力比我们强，其媒体、文化产业、文化品牌比我们强。高校是提高国家文化软实力的重要载体，应融入我国文化强国战略体系，创作高质量、高水平的精神文化产品，如编写和出版反映当代人文社会发展趋势、具有世界影响力、能回答和解决现实问题的专著、教材、音像制品等。

[...]

讲清，就是讲清楚西方价值观的弊端，讲清楚它与我国价值观的不同。讲清的前提是有马克思主义理论自信和自觉，有“讲”的队伍和机制，讲的人有把理论讲彻底、讲明白的底气和本事。一些西方价值观具有很大欺骗性，往往以伪善和温情的面纱掩盖本质，这一点马克思主义经典作家早就看清了、揭开了。当今时代的马克思主义理论工作者也必须有勇气、有能力讲清西方价值观的性质和本来面目。例如，虽然都有民主、自由、公正等字眼，但作为社会主义核心价值观的民主、自由、公正与西方价值观有着本质的不同，必须把其中的不同之处讲清楚。

Appendix A6

Date: 2016. December 1

Title: 习近平对中国文艺工作者提四点嘱托：要有创作史诗的雄心

[...] 文艺作品影响着人的思想境界、道德修养、精神追求，直接或间接地关系到一个民族的民族精神和价值观念 [...]

Appendix A7

Date: 2016, December 24

Title: 用习近平总书记重要讲话指导文艺工作推动我国文艺事业实现新的更大发展

A7.1 要带头践行社会主义核心价值观，坚守社会责任 [...]

A7.2 刘云山强调，文联、作协要加强对文艺工作者的思想政治引领，提高联系服务文艺工作者的能力水平，扎实推进自身改革，抓好自身党的建设。[...]各级党委和宣传部门要加强对文联、作协工作的领导和指导，选优配强领导班子，关心干部成长，加大政策支持力度

Appendix A8

Date: 2017, April 25

Title: 中国文化软实力如何“硬”起来

随着经济全球化的加强，我国的本土文化也不断受到外来文化的冲击，在一定程度上削弱了我国优秀传统文化的影响力，为中国文化软实力的建设和提升带来阻力，从而影响到我国文化产业的发展壮大和文化产业链的形成

Appendix A9

Date: 2016, September 14

Title: 创造中华文化新辉煌（深入学习贯彻习近平同志系列重要讲话精神·治国理政新思想新实践

汝信：坚持和发展中国特色社会主义，必然会受到国内外各种思潮的影响，这些思潮在意识形态领域以复杂多样的形式表现出来。因此，马克思主义与各种错误思潮之间的矛盾甚至斗争是不可避免的，而且将长期存在。巩固马克思主义在意识形态领域的指导地位，牢固占领并坚守思想理论和舆论阵地，是关系党和国家前途命运、保证国家长治久安的头等大事，决不能掉以轻心。现在，西方敌对势力妄图借助思想文化渗透西化和分化中国，而国内有些人盲目崇拜西方思想理论，奉之为“普世价值”而全盘接受并大肆宣扬。我们应该对西方惯用的一些迷惑人心的理论如人权、民主、自由、宪政等进行深入系统的研究和辨析，揭露其虚伪性和欺骗性。当然，这种批判应是实事求是的、充分说理的、有说服力的。同时，还要阐明马克思主义在这些问题上的正确观点和主张，牢牢掌握话语权。马克思主义理论工作者也要在实际思想斗争中经受考验和锻炼，而不能停留于学院式的研究。