



CHINA'S IMAGE BUILDING INITIATIVES IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE CONTEXT OF BRI

Dr. Shi Xiaolian

Executive Dean of World Institute of Politics, Economy and Technology

Adjunct lecturer, School of Public Administration, Shanghai Open University

PhD, School of International Relations and Public Affairs, Shanghai International Studies University

Shanghai - China

38580407@qq.com

Dr. Allauddin Kakar

PhD, School of International Relations and Public Affairs

Shanghai International Studies University

Shanghai - China

allauddin_kakar@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study aims to explore China's public diplomacy initiatives in the Muslim world in the context of BRI. Over the past several years, China has taken significant steps to promote public diplomacy in the Muslim World, evidenced by its increased engagements with Muslim countries and their public. Public diplomacy has emerged as one of the key components of BRI. Through public diplomacy, China has taken steps to build its image in Muslim nations with which China holds deep historical linkages. The Muslim world holds great significance for China, as it plays a crucial role in achieving China's foreign policy objectives. The study focuses on China's public diplomacy which aims to promote China's positive image through cultural exchange, educational exchange, economic cooperation, and the role of media. The findings of the research show that China's public diplomacy is playing a positive role and helping the country build its image and counter negative public perceptions.

Keywords: China, BRI, Muslim World, Public Diplomacy.

Introduction

In the conduct of International Relations, the image of a state plays a crucial role. China, as a rising power, is increasingly focusing on building its image. To this end, it is making huge investments in public diplomacy and employing it to create an international image. In recent years, it has emerged as a significant aspect of China's overall diplomacy. (Hartig, 2016) National image as the



key aspect has received immense focus in China's foreign policy over the past several years. Recent years have seen an increased Chinese global presence in many parts of the world, especially in the Muslim world. China has made huge investments to bolster and reshape its national image. In 2010, China announced the Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI), also known as the One Belt One Road (OBOR), or New Silk Road. The ambitious project aims to promote development and connectivity between China, Africa, and Eurasia. (Li et al., 2019) Even though BRI primarily aims to promote economic cooperation, analysts are of the view that BRI is a soft power strategy that can potentially increase China's influence and image across the globe.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, China has made remarkable economic progress and emerged as the potential country to replace the United States as the sole world power. (Kakar, 2022) This status of China is not without potential challenges and threats to its expanding role in international politics. Particularly, negative perceptions about its rise are on the rise. In this context, the role of public diplomacy plays a significant role. China's public diplomacy has been featured by its key principles of coexistence and staying away from hegemonic designs. There has been an increasing influence of the views and behaviour of the public both at the domestic and international levels on the foreign policy of China. China is playing an extensive role in the international community. It is making the best use of public diplomacy to project an image based on reality which is featured by Peace, cooperation, and promoting a harmonious society at home and abroad. (Park, 2022) It believes in the parity of religion, creed, race, culture, and language. (Consulate General of People's Republic of China, 2022) These features of Chinese public diplomacy have led to widespread recognition across the globe especially in the Muslim world where China is now more focused after the launch of BRI.

China's relationship with the Islamic world is deeply rooted in the historic Silk Road, which served as a bridge between the two great civilizations. The Silk Road played a crucial role in promoting Chinese civilization through Muslim countries in West Asia and Africa. It also facilitated Islamic civilization by opening ways for Muslim Merchants and preachers to visit China and promote Islamic civilization. Recently, China's diplomatic role in the Muslim world alongside its massive investments provided it an opportunity to promote its influence through BRI and enhance its political stature as a reliable and responsible power in the Muslim world which already exists the overarching perception of the Western hegemonic designs.

Under the framework of BRI, China aims to create an extensive cooperation framework of market, policy, and culture to increase communication and mutual benefits. Economic cooperation is the key component of BRI mainly focusing on improving infrastructure, energy, and transport. However, public diplomacy is another component of BRI that has received less attention so far. Promoting people-to-people is one of the five main components of BRI. Thus, public diplomacy is part of BRI which includes culture, education, exchange, media cooperation, cultural activities, and tourism. BRI's focus is not merely on the economy, but cultural linkages play a crucial role. As a rising power, China has been actively engaged in public diplomacy initiatives to enhance and



build its image. Since the launch of BRI, China's public diplomacy efforts have substantially increased in the Muslim world. The article finds that China's public diplomacy initiatives have played a crucial role in strengthening China's relations with Muslim countries across the globe and helped China generate positive perceptions regarding its rise and role in global politics.

Theoretical Framework

In a broader context, public diplomacy means engagements and communication of a state with foreign publics. Firstly, the term was coined by Edmund Gullion in the year 1965. (Cull, 2019) It was primarily aimed at influencing foreign publics and key stakeholders which in turn could create an impact on government policies. (Pamment, 2014) Unlike traditional diplomacy which fosters government-to-government connections, public diplomacy is a form of diplomacy that aims to promote communication between a government and foreign public to promote understanding of its ideas and ideals, its culture, and its national goals and policies. Since its introduction to the field of International Relations (IR), public diplomacy has undergone considerable transformation. In the 20th century, Radio and Television used to be the main means of disseminating messages, a one-way and limited communication. In the twentieth century, where global communication mediums have seen massive innovations, government-to-people communications have increased. Public diplomacy has now received widespread prominence across the globe. As a rising power, China has recognized the importance of a favorable image across the globe through public diplomacy. To this end, it has prioritized public diplomacy as the pivotal aspect of its foreign policy, exemplified by its deepening interactions with the foreign public.

Literature Review

Since the advent of the twenty-first century, the soft power policy of China has led to an increased focus of scholars. Over the past three decades, China's soft power policy has sought to influence and shape the perceptions of the international public regarding its peaceful rise. To this end, China has employed cultural and educational exchange programs, and economic cooperation to support its narrative of an emerging and peaceful global power. Business, education, and cultural exchange programs have played crucial roles in promoting Chinese culture and history (Kurlantzick, 2007). The past decade has seen a distinct shift in China's strategy. China is pursuing its policy of shaping opinions through an expanded communication strategy, seeking to unswervingly challenge narratives from competing global powers. (Li, 2019)

Mei Li (2019) is of the view that, in recent times, China's soft power communication has seen a discrete shift in strategy. China's leadership has switched strategies intending to promote communication, directly challenging narratives from competing powers. The author believes that BRI is an effective form of public diplomacy that seeks to foster strategic influence. In the same way, Chitty et al. (2018) believe that BRI is an effective public diplomacy tool.



For China, image building is one of the major issues and challenges to its status as a rising major power and counterweight to influence the West. For these reasons, China has increased its engagement in the Islamic world under the BRI project to promote its image across the globe and ensure the protection of its national interests in the region. China is using BRI as public diplomacy to improve its image in Egypt (Khan et al., 2023).

Li & Wong (2019) have discussed the evolution of Chinese public diplomacy. The study has highlighted the role of panda diplomacy, the Confucius Institute, Chinese mass media, and the role of various international forums in promoting China's public diplomacy such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2010 World Expo Shanghai, etc. Also, the study has examined the role of think tanks in track II diplomacy.

Al-Hasni (2019) has discussed China's public diplomacy initiatives under BRI in Oman. In Oman, the public diplomacy activities of China have been largely carried out by private-sector such as the Wangfan Corporation which has mainly focused on relational public diplomacy and country reputation public diplomacy. The author believes that China has been successful when it comes to its public diplomacy programs in Oman.

Eswar et al. al., (2023) have discussed China's public diplomacy to promote a positive image in Indonesia, especially in the Muslim community. Indonesia is a strategic cooperation partner of China. Therefore, it remains the main focus of China's public diplomacy. China has undertaken various programs in Indonesia to attract public support.

Shuto (2018), in his study, has focused on China's public diplomacy engagements in the ASEAN region. In ASEAN, China's public diplomacy started in the early period of the twenty-first century. China, since that time, has taken steps to expand public diplomacy activities in the region diplomacy by establishing Confucius Institutes (CIs), organizing cultural exchange programs, and globalizing the media.

Thuno & Nielbo (2023) have focused on the initial digitalization of Chinese diplomacy through Twitter. Their analysis has provided insights into the digitalization strategies of China's early diplomacy on Twitter. China's diplomacy on Twitter emerged during the Covid-19 outbreak to manage and avoid international criticism.

Qazi & Babur (2018) are of the view that since the initiation of BRI and CPEC, the role of China's public diplomacy in Pakistan has witnessed a notable increase. The study reveals that China is playing a positive role in building its image in Pakistan. Also, the study emphasizes increasing investment in public diplomacy.

The existing literature has discussed different aspects of BRI. Many studies have explored BRI in the context of economic development. Also, some studies have focused on China's soft power



through public diplomacy in the context of BRI. However, few studies have examined China's image-building through public diplomacy in the Islamic world. China's recent initiatives for image-building through public diplomacy have not been covered in the existing literature, especially in the Islamic world. This research will be a unique contribution to the existing literature on BRI, as it will focus on China's image in the Islamic world by exploring the historical linkage between China and the Muslim world, perceptions towards China, and China's initiatives for creating a positive image in the Muslim world, while also focusing on Pakistan which has close relations with China, especially after the initiation of CPEC—flagship project of BRI.

The Muslim World and Belt and Road Initiative

Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1995, the Bandung Conference played a pivotal role in China's cultural and public exchange with the Middle East and opened the door for communication between China and countries in the region. Through the lens of a theoretical perspective, BRI can be deemed as the extended version of the ancient Silk Road. The mega project is aimed at the transportation and trade of goods and services, connecting different regions across the globe. The historical Silk Road also served as a major way of promoting cultural interactions and exchange among various civilizations, among them were, the Chinese, Arabs, Central Asians, Indians, and Europeans. It is central to increasing China's positive image in the BRI nations in Asia. (Afzaal, 2020) The inclination of the Muslim countries to join BRI was further cemented after the China-Arab Cooperation Forum (CASCF) in July 2018, taking place in Beijing. During the occasion, Chinese President Xi Jinping conveyed the significance of economic cooperation between China and the Muslim world, especially the Arab world. China reiterated its cooperation in a range of areas which include areas of infrastructure, energy, digital technology, and satellite technology (Petranek, 2019).

For China, Islamic countries hold great importance due to their strategic location and energy resources potential that are key to BRI's success. The Middle Eastern region has been blessed with an immense energy source. China's connections with the Islamic world have increased since the launch of the BRI project in 2013. The early location of the BRI, originally referred to as OBOR or One Belt One Road, signifies the significance of the Islamic world for China. China (Rabeya & Hossain, 2019). Primarily, BRI aims to promote mutual benefits and common security. Additionally, the foreign policy priority of China the "development approach" (emphasizing economic development and prosperity) has gained more widespread popularity in the Middle East than America's "democracy approach." (Vohra, 2022). The features of Chinese diplomacy that are different from those of the Western world, are the primary reason that has led to enhancing the connections between China and the Muslim countries.

China's Interactions with Islamic World



Source: Belt and Road Initiative Quarterly

Academic and Cultural Exchange with Muslim World

Cultural exchange and the education sector are the main elements of China's BRI initiative. In the year 2016, China's Ministry of Education the Education Plan under the BRI initiative. This is considered a new form of globalization that has connected BRI participants to come together and form a collaborative community working in the education sector. Education has emerged as an effective element of public diplomacy. Also, it can be considered as a tool to foster cultural diplomacy and soft power. (Anand, 2023) Soft power has played a pivotal role in China's ascent as a significant global player. To enhance their relations, both parties have begun to adopt soft power diplomacy, with China demonstrating a particularly strong commitment to elevating this bilateral relationship. China frequently emphasizes religious, cultural, linguistic, and culinary aspects in its diplomatic endeavors.

China has prioritized cultural communication and academic exchange with the Muslim world. Fostering communications between, and promoting educational exchange, and cultural exchange has become a key aspect of China's foreign policy. (Sawahel, 2016). Despite having significant economic and military power, China has focused on soft power and public diplomacy in its relations with countries across the globe, especially the Muslim world. To this end, China, over



the past several years, has organized international events and made huge investments across the globe in development projects to assist developing countries. To build its image and counter negative perceptions regarding its peaceful rise, China has hosted a large number of foreign students (Shambaugh, 2010).

For China, academic exchange is a viable option to promote public diplomacy. Academic exchange between China and the Arab world is increasing rapidly. Over the past decade, the number of Arab fluent has substantially increased due to the academic exchange programs and the development of the Sino-Arab relationship. The number of Arab students in China has significantly increased. In 2012, it exceeded 10,000, an increase of 70% from 2010. (Gao, 2023). China Scholarship Council is offering studentships to students from the Middle East, and Muslim countries in other regions. Mainly, the application seeking admission in China is via the Internet or embassies. Apart from this, Arab Universities or Confucius Institutes and Arab universities play a role in securing scholarships for students. The main reason behind choosing China as a destination for academic pursuit is due to the Chinese scholarship. (China Scholarship Council, 2020). Recent years have seen an increase in Arab students in Chinese universities, unlike in the past when China was not the main choice for study. China is now an ideal choice for students from the Middle East, South Asia, and Muslim countries in other parts of the world.

Educational exchanges are a key aspect of China's public diplomacy. Scholarships offered to international students provide access to the educational institutes of China and create a cadre of foreign alumni with firsthand experience of China. (Lyu, 2024) The Chinese government offers various scholarship programs to foreign students to study and participate in academic exchange programs in China. Notably, the Chinese government scholarship, a fully funded scholarship for various countries across the globe, is an initiative of the Chinese government for undergraduate and postgraduate courses in China. In addition, Chinese universities are engaged in promoting study-abroad programs to attract international students, offering them opportunities to experience Chinese culture and language. China is home to a significant number of foreign students. Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Turkey, and Indonesia, have traditionally preferred China as the main destination for pursuing academic goals due to opportunities offered by the Chinese government. Since the inception of BRI, educational exchanges between China and Muslim nations have increased.

Numerous aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are closely associated with cultural and people-to-people exchanges, exemplified by a recent initiative aimed at translating hundreds of Chinese books into Arabic and vice versa. Various cities across China, including Yiwu, are experiencing a significant influx of Arabic professionals. In Yiwu alone, a commercial hub, approximately 1,000 Arabic translators are employed by various multinational outlets. Presently, Yiwu boasts numerous Arabic-learning institutions with over 10,000 students enrolled in Arabic language courses. Moreover, there is a proliferation of job opportunities for Arabic translators in numerous Chinese export companies, evidenced by the multitude of job postings available.



(Siddiqui, 2022)

China's Public Diplomacy in Pakistan

Pakistan is an important country in the Islamic world and a long-time strategic partner of China. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor CPEC, a flagship project of China's BRI, has deepened relations between Beijing and Islamabad. After the launch of CPEC, public diplomacy has emerged key aspect of China-Pakistan relationships. Under CPEC, China has taken public diplomacy initiatives which is helping it build its image in Pakistan. Collaboration between China and Pakistan includes student exchange programs, joint research projects, and the establishment of educational institutions in Pakistan. (The Nation, 2023) China has become the main destination for learning for Pakistani students. Under the CPEC, China's public diplomacy initiatives have increased. Though CPEC's main objective is infrastructural development and economic development, public diplomacy has emerged as a key aspect of the mega project. (Qazi & Babur, 2018)

In Pakistan, China's positive image is not a new thinking. For decades, Pakistan has held a positive and pro-China image. In the year 2008, Pakistan was a country where polls suggest about 76% positivity. (Global Economic Gloom, 2008). Following this, another survey in 2018 showed over 85% positivity. Apart from their engagements in strategic and economic fields, Beijing and Islamabad have retained their commitments to promote cultural interactions. The commitment of China to the people of Pakistan is remarkable. The people of Pakistan have always appreciated China's assistance in times of difficulty. China has made significant contributions to the research and development in Pakistan. Chinese companies and corporations have made strenuous efforts to assist in raising the ignored and underdeveloped sections of Pakistani society. A large of Chinese companies and over 20,000 Chinese companies are engaged to help the Pakistani government improve the standard of living in Pakistani society. (Afsah & Babur, 2018)

Role of Confucius Institutes

Confucius Institutes (Cis) are playing a crucial role in promoting China's public diplomacy goals. Generally, these institutions are planned as joint ventures between global and Chinese partners in the domain of education or cultural exchange. A more basic finding from this particular situation is China's readiness to interact and collaborate with foreigners within the framework of public diplomacy. (Hartig, 2015) The Confucius Institute has organized a range of cultural exchange programs between China and the participating nations of BRI, proving to be a productive means for China to engage in public diplomacy and global cultural governance. (Wang et al., 2021) Confucius Institutes contribute significantly to the positive perception of China by serving as a unique symbol of China's soft power. They are not just about the internationalization of education. Confucius Institutes were established in the Arab world in the early twenty-first century. As of 2021, China had established over 550 CIs globally which also includes 15 in the Middle East.



According to Arabic newspapers, these institutes have been well-received in the Arab world across all three dimensions. Beirut hosted the first Confucius Institute in an Arab country, while Egypt, with two in Cairo and Ismailia, also demonstrated a similar positive reception. In 2017, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Confucius Institute at Suez Canal University and the British University in Egypt to establish a Chinese language training center (Watan News, 2017). As per the leaders of both universities, this initiative aimed to facilitate increased Chinese language acquisition among students and better prepare them to pursue scholarships for language studies in China. In Morocco, three Confucius Institutes were established from 2008 to 2016. Similar to the Egyptian model, one of these institutes in Morocco extends its presence to other universities due to significant national demand for Chinese language instruction. (ICF, 2019). In Sudan, a comparable strategy is observed with the presence of a Confucius Institute in the capital, Khartoum. Likewise, in the United Arab Emirates, where two Confucius Institutes have been established, a similar approach is evident. For instance, during the launch of the Dubai Confucius Institute in 2010, the President of the University of Dubai emphasized the significance of establishing institutions that facilitate cultural exposure alongside commercial ties with foreign countries. (Gulf News, 2010).

Confucius Institutes have effectively established themselves in the Arab world, playing its role as a tool of soft power. It is receiving widespread recognition in the Arab world, including policymakers, university faculty, and students, without encountering significant criticism. Local people view China as an exemplary model, while the business community seeks to bolster trade and commercial ties with China. In addition, politicians and scholars view China as the best alternative to the US. By leveraging China's generally positive image in the region, Beijing achieves extensive engagement with Arab elites with minimal investment.

Role of Media

Xinhua, a Chinese state news agency, maintains bureaus in nearly every Arab capital, with its main bureau headquartered in Cairo. Additionally, Chinese media agencies operate numerous blogs focused on the Arab world. The Arab world captured Chinese attention for the first time during the 2006 Lebanon-Israel war, emerging as a prominent topic among Chinese bloggers. The establishment of the Arabic department at the Foreign Language University in Beijing underscores the growing importance of soft power diplomacy in the China-Arab world bilateral relationship. This initiative not only demonstrates China's eagerness to promote the Arabic language domestically but also reflects the Arab world's reciprocal interest in fostering such exchanges. In the same way, In Pakistan, for instance, CTTV news and documentary programs are re-broadcasted (Qazi & Babur, 2018)

Hajj

Hajj serves as another avenue for public diplomacy or employing soft power tactics to engage with



the broader Arab world, with the Islamic Association taking charge of this aspect. During the Hajj, senior officials from the association convene meetings with high-ranking officials in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to address concerns regarding the treatment of Uyghurs and work to promote a conducive environment of mutual trust and cooperation. In addition, as part of its soft power projection, China periodically hosts various exhibitions showcasing Arab cuisine and calligraphy. Recently, in Ningxia, an Islamic food expo and Arabic calligraphy exhibition were organized, attracting Arab expatriates, tourists, and traders who found Hui (indigenous Muslims) culture particularly appealing. (Siddiqui, 2022)

Conclusion

A key conclusion of this research is that China has proactively employed public diplomacy as a key tool to build a positive image and strengthen partnerships with the Muslim world. Under the BRI, China has taken notable steps in Muslim countries such as promoting cultural and educational programs, language training, and countering negative propaganda against its peaceful rise. In recent years, China has taken significant steps to build its image in Muslim nations through Public Diplomacy. Under the framework of BRI, educational exchanges, cultural exchanges, media engagements, etc. are helping China build its image and expand soft power. China's growing engagement with Muslim nations across Asia and North Africa in the West carries great significance for raising China to counter negative perceptions. BRI is playing a crucial role in determining the dynamics between China and the Muslim world, with which China shares historical linkages and development needs as part of the developing world. The economic development opportunities presented by the BRI alongside China's policy of non-interference and mutual respect have attracted the Muslim world which is coming closer to China. BRI is based on an extensive agenda of international cooperation that aims to promote closer interactions among nations from diverse cultures and traditions. In this context, promoting government-to-people ties, and people-to-people communication under the framework of BRI takes on heightened significance for China to disseminate its message to the Muslim world and build image.

Equally important is the role of China as a mediator in the region, as evidenced by its successful mediatory role in restoring Saudi-Iran diplomatic relationships. In recent years, China has enhanced its diplomatic engagements in the Muslim World. Beijing is actively engaged in diplomatic exchanges and high-level visits to Muslim countries. China's engagement with Muslim countries provides an opportunity for fostering dialogue and bilateral collaboration. These engagements are playing a crucial role in firming China's relationship with Muslim countries and building China's positive image in the Muslim world.

China needs to expand engagements with Muslim states and its people. Currently, China faces challenges to its peaceful rise, emanating from the US-led global order which perceives the rise of China as a threat to its decades-old hegemonic position in the world. The US is likely to increase its efforts to counterweight China. To this end, damaging China's image and creating a negative



perception can be the preferred choice of US policymakers. Given this, China should continue playing a positive role in resolving disputes through mediation and ending rivalries through its mediatory role.



References

- Aswar, H., Rakhmat, M., & Pashya, M. (2022). China's Public Diplomacy to Build a Positive Image among the Muslim Community in Indonesia. *Dialogia*, 20(1), 60-83.
- Al-Hasni, H. (2019). The role of china's public diplomacy in promoting the Belt and Road initiative in Oman through communication: An examination of the integrated model of public diplomacy. *Global Media Journal*, 17(32), 1-10.
- Anand. N. (2023) China's Belt and Road Initiative and Its Impact on Education Sector, USANAS Foundation, Oct 24, 2023, <https://usanasfoundation.com/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-and-its-impact-on-education-sector>
- Afzaal, M. (2020). Silk Road to Belt Road: reinventing the past and shaping the future: edited by Md. Nazrul Islam, Singapore, Springer, 2019.
- Consulate General of People's Republic of China (2022) China's Cultural Diplomacy, 14 December, 2022, http://lahore.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/PIXJP/202212/t20221214_10990549.htm
- China Scholarship Council (2020). Introduction to Chinese Government Scholarships. [https://ie-en.gdufs.edu.cn/Scholarship/Chinese Government Scholarship.htm](https://ie-en.gdufs.edu.cn/Scholarship/Chinese%20Government%20Scholarship.htm)
- Gao, S. (2013). China's Soft Power in the Arab World through, 20 December 2023, <https://repository.wellesley.edu/node/9476/ocr>
- Global Economic Gloom (2008) Global Economic Gloom – China and India Notable Exceptions,” Pew Research Centre, June 12, 2008, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/06/12/chapter-3-views-of-china/>
- Gulf News (2010) Chinese language, culture classes on offer in Dubai, August 22, 2010, <https://gulfnews.com/uae/education/chinese-language-culture-classes-on-offer-in-dubai-1.671263>
- Hartig, F. (2015). Chinese public diplomacy: The rise of the Confucius Institute. Routledge.
- Hongxiu, L. (2018). Public diplomacy in the Belt and Road Initiative within the new media: Theories and practices. *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications*, 4(3).
- Hartig, F. (2016). How China understands public diplomacy: The importance of national image for national interests. *International Studies Review*, 18(4), 655-680.
- ICF (2019) Morocco prioritizes vocational training and strengthens ties with China, October 9, 2019, <https://monitor.iccf.com/2019/10/morocco-prioritises-vocational-training-and-strengthens-ties-with-china/>
- Kakar, S. A. (2022). Containing China: The Indo-US Defence Cooperation. *BTTN Journal*, 1(1), 68-84.
- Khan, M. K., Pratt, C. B., & Akhtar, N. (2023). China's Public Diplomacy for Image Making in Islamic North Africa: Frames of the Belt and Road Initiative in Daily News Egypt. In *Public Relations Management in Africa Volume 1: Exploring Organizational Impact* (pp. 89-120). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Kurlantzick, J. (2007). Charm offensive: How China's soft power is transforming the world. Yale University Press.



- Li, C. Y., Lai, A. C., Wang, Z. A., & Hsu, Y. C. (2019). The preliminary effectiveness of bilateral trade in China's Belt and road initiatives: a structural break approach. *Applied Economics*, 51(35), 3890-3905.
- Lye, Z. (2024) China's Soft Power and Public Diplomacy, *Stratheaia*, February 10, 2024, <https://stratheaia.com/chinas-soft-power-and-public-diplomacy/>
- Li, M. (2019). Chinese television and soft power communication in Australia. Anthem Press.
- Li, H. Y., & Wong, S. (2018). The evolution of Chinese public diplomacy and the rise of think tanks. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 14, 36-46.
- Siddiqui, F. R (2022) Soft power diplomacy between China and the Arab world, OCT 08, 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/soft-power-diplomacy-between-china-and-the-arab-world>
- Qazi, A., & Babur, A. (2018). A Critical Appraisal of the role of Public Diplomacy in Pakistan China relations. *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, 7(1), 1-19.
- Rabeya, S., & Hossain, I. (2019). China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative and the Muslim World. *The Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, 44
- Shuto, M. (2018). Patterns and views of China's public diplomacy in ASEAN countries: Focusing on Confucius Institutes. *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, 7(2), 124-148.
- Shambaugh, D. (2010). China Flexes its Soft Power. *New York Times*, June 7.
- Sawahel, W. (2016). Soft Power is Attracting China to Arab Education. *Al-fanarmedia*, February 1.
- Park, H. (2012). Mapping the Chinese and Islamic worlds: cross-cultural exchange in pre-modern Asia. Cambridge University Press.
- Pamment, J (2014) *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century: A Comparative Study of Policy and Practice*, (New York, Routledge):6-8
- Petranek, L. M. (2019). Paving a Concrete Path to Globalization with China's Belt and Road Initiative Through the Middle East. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. www.plutojournals.com/asq/
- Thunoe, M., & Nielbo, K. L. (2024). The initial digitalization of Chinese diplomacy (2019-2021): establishing global communication networks on Twitter. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 33(146), 244-266.
- The Nation (2023) Pakistan, China advancing collaboration in higher education, August 10, 2023, <https://www.nation.com.pk/10-Aug-2023/pakistan-china-advancing-collaboration-in-higher-education#:~:text=The%20collaboration%20encompasses%20a%20wide,20%20projects%20in%20the%20pipeline.>
- Vohra, A. (2022). Xi Jinping Has Transformed China's Middle East Policy. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/01/xi-jinping-has-transformed-chinas-middle-east-policy/>
- Wang, Y., Uzodinma, C. G., & Niu, C. (2021). The path, value and limits of the Confucius Institute in carrying out public diplomacy. *Economic and Political Studies*, 9(2), 217-229.