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**Comparative Cultural Diplomacy:  
China Cultural Centers in Europe (Hungary)  
and Africa (Morocco)**

Abstract: This study analyzes the cultural diplomacy activities of Chinese cultural centers in Europe (Hungary) and Africa (Morocco) using a comparative case study approach. Utilizing JavaScript technology for data extraction and analysis, this paper assesses the effectiveness of cultural exchange strategies in Hungary and Morocco, with a particular focus on the importance of educational cooperation, the customization of cultural activities to individual and collective preferences, and the optimization of social media strategies. The findings suggest that cultural diplomacy activities should be tailored to the cultural characteristics and societal needs of the target country. For instance, activities in Hungary are more focused on individual participation, whereas in Morocco, the emphasis is on collective involvement. Combining the perspectives of intercultural communication theory, this study puts forward specific recommendations for enhancing local cultural adaptation and expanding the impact of activities, providing guidance for Chinese cultural diplomacy in Europe and Africa.

Keywords: Comparative Study, Chinese Cultural Center, Cultural Diplomacy.

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# I. Introduction

## 1.1 Background of Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy refers to the use of a country's cultural resources in the field of foreign policy to achieve policy objectives. With the passage of history, these objectives and the nature of the cultural resources mobilized are constantly changing. In different countries and historical contexts, people use various terms to describe the process of policy formulation.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, cultural diplomacy is commonly utilized, whereas in the UK, 'cultural relations' is the preferred term among scholars. Japan leans towards 'cultural exchange,' Germany chooses 'foreign cultural policy,' and France primarily denotes cultural diplomacy as 'exterior cultural action'.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, "cultural diplomacy" remains a viable term used to denote this particular domain of diplomatic policy, often regarded as a broader aspect of a nation's public diplomacy or, in the terms of Joseph Nye, as a component of its "soft power."<sup>3</sup>

Building upon Joseph Nye's understanding of "soft power," Milton C. Cummings defines cultural diplomacy as "the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture with the purpose of promoting mutual understanding" (Cummings, 2009, p. 365). This definition underscores the interpersonal

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<sup>1</sup> Clarke, D. (2020). Cultural diplomacy. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies.

<sup>2</sup> Cull, N. J. (2019). Public Diplomacy, Foundations for Global Engagement in the Digital Age. Ann Arbor, MI: Newark Polity Press.

<sup>3</sup> Nye Jr, J. S. (2008). Public diplomacy and soft power. The annals of the American academy of political and social science, 616(1), 94-109.

dimension of cultural exchange. With cultural permeation increasingly evident in international relations and diplomatic policies, nations utilize cultural diplomacy to promote their cultural uniqueness, thereby enhancing global cultural diversity while paving the way for cooperation and dialogue.

Cultural diplomacy employs various means, encompassing literature, arts (film, dance, music, painting, sculpture, etc.), museums and exhibitions, language and education, news and cultural programs, ceremonial gestures, religion, brand showcasing, among other cultural aspects. For instance, initiatives like the "China-Africa Children's International Cartoon Exhibition" in Tangier, Morocco, and the establishment of the "Panda Comes" cultural exchange video program in Budapest, Hungary, have enhanced local audiences' understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture.

Cultural diplomacy extends beyond mere showcasing; it encompasses a wide array of activity fields, ranging from literature, visual arts, music, dance, and theater to educational initiatives, language exchange programs, cultural heritage conservation efforts, and media propaganda. Literature, as one of the oldest forms of cultural expression, serves as a powerful tool for nations to share stories, values, and viewpoints with the world. From classical literary works to contemporary novels, poetry, and prose, literature transcends language barriers, facilitating cross-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding. Similarly, visual arts, including painting, sculpture, and photography, provide avenues for cultural exchange, enabling artists to convey universal themes that

evoke shared emotions among diverse audiences. Performing arts, such as music, dance, and theater, possess a unique ability to transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries. Through international tours, cultural festivals, and collaborative performances, artists act as cultural ambassadors, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation for diversity. Likewise, film, as a potent medium for storytelling, offers audiences a window into different cultures, traditions, and ways of life. Events like the Venice Biennale, Documenta in Germany, and Art Basel in Switzerland serve as vivid examples of cultural diplomacy.

Educational initiatives and language exchange programs play a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural understanding and fostering global citizenship awareness. Institutions like Confucius Institutes, Alliance Française, and Goethe-Institut facilitate language learning and cultural exchange, fostering connections among people from diverse backgrounds and promoting cross-cultural dialogue. Online language learning applications have also facilitated more frequent and accessible language exchanges, with apps like Duolingo, Tandem, and HelloTalk serving as platforms for cultural exchange during the pandemic.

Moreover, cultural diplomacy involves the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, including UNESCO World Heritage sites, intangible cultural heritage practices, and traditional crafts. By safeguarding cultural heritage and promoting cultural tourism, nations can showcase their rich history and traditions while promoting economic

development and sustainable tourism practices. Media and digital platforms have become crucial tools for cultural diplomacy, enabling nations to influence global audiences' perceptions through cultural programs, documentaries, virtual exhibitions, and social media campaigns. By harnessing digital technology, nations can engage with diverse audiences, amplify their cultural narratives, and foster cross-cultural dialogue on a global scale.

The study of cultural diplomacy itself constitutes an interdisciplinary effort, facing challenges in establishing consistent theoretical models applicable to historical data, thus enabling more reliable conclusions regarding the multifaceted functions and impacts of policy in this field. It can be argued that cultural displays and exchanges play a crucial role in the interactions between nations. With the emergence of modern nation-states in the early modern period, such displays and exchanges became expressions of formal diplomatic relations between courts. However, it was not until the 19th century that we witnessed the emergence of what is understood today as cultural diplomacy: no longer exchanges between rulers, but expressions of national identity aimed at international publics. In the 19th century, cultural diplomacy was closely linked to competition between great powers, especially in a colonial context. However, after World War I, cultural diplomacy gradually came to be understood as a means of ideological competition, a trend that became central to Cold War cultural diplomacy.

<sup>5</sup>However, during the Cold War, academic attention to the cultural dimensions of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ivey, B., & Cleggett, P. (2008). Cultural Diplomacy and the national interest: In search of a 21st-century perspective. The Curb Center for Art, Enterprise and Public Policy, <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/curbcenter/culturaldiplomacy>, 12.



cultural confrontation between the two superpowers overshadowed other forms of cultural diplomacy aimed at promoting unity among post-colonial countries. The "post-Cold War" world witnessed a shift in discourse around cultural diplomacy, with countries now often competing for markets, investment, and attention, incorporating economic dimensions into cultural diplomacy.

Nevertheless, we have also witnessed a diversification of cultural diplomacy strategies, with various actors adjusting their approaches according to their circumstances and needs. Despite the renewed interest in the concept of cultural diplomacy among scholars and policymakers in the 21st century, "the ways in which the concept is used, the exact content of its practices, the reasons for its importance, or how it operates are often distinctly lacking in clarity"<sup>6</sup>. Representations of cultural diplomacy combine ideas about open-ended cross-cultural dialogue while seeming more driven by interests in propagating a nation's policies to external audiences.

In contrast, Patricia Goff's definition implies a greater distance from state policies, framing cultural diplomacy as a means to mitigate negative perceptions caused by high-level politics through presenting an alternative narrative about a country<sup>7</sup>. According to Goff, cultural diplomacy primarily aims to bridge differences and promote mutual understanding by presenting an alternative narrative about a country, differing in

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<sup>6</sup> Ang, I., Isar, Y. R., & Mar, P. (2015). Cultural diplomacy: Beyond the national interest? *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21(4), 365–381.

<sup>7</sup> Goff, P. M. (2013). Cultural diplomacy. In A. F. Cooper, J. Heine, & R. Thakur (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of modern diplomacy* (pp. 1–19). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588862.013.0024>

implication from official policy<sup>8</sup>. However, regardless of the definition, the essence of cultural diplomacy lies in providing a shared space for human interaction, cultural exchange, intellectual collision, and dialogue on beliefs.<sup>9</sup> In this space of dialogue, we need to consider its historical and cultural context, as well as the understanding and practices of different countries, regions, and communities.

## 1.2 Importance of Sino-Europe and Sino-Africa relations

The significance of Sino-European relations and Sino-African relations on the contemporary world stage is increasingly pronounced. These two sets of relationships not only have significant implications for the respective developments of China, Europe, and Africa but also exert profound impacts on the global economic, political, and cultural landscape.

Sino-European relations epitomize the trends of economic globalization and multilateralism. <sup>10</sup>The diplomatic relations between the European Union and the People's Republic of China have undergone various stages of development since their establishment in 1975. However, the European Union's perception of China has been evolving. In recent years, with China's rise and the strengthening of its economic power, the European Union has gradually come to regard China as one of the world's major

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<sup>8</sup> Goff, P. M. (2013). Cultural diplomacy. In A. F. Cooper, J. Heine, & R. Thakur (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of modern diplomacy* (pp. 1–19). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588862.013.0024>

<sup>9</sup> Grincheva, N. (2024). The past and future of cultural diplomacy. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 30(2), 172–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2023.2183949>

<sup>10</sup> Wai, T. (2011). EU-China Relations in the Age of Globalization and Regionalization. *EurAmerica*, 41(1).

superpowers and has established a bilateral strategic partnership with it. However, the inconsistency within the European Union and different interpretations of the relationship with China have led to the complexity of this relationship.<sup>11</sup>

Since 2003, the European Union and China have gradually realized that security cooperation needs to be supplemented beyond economic and political dialogues.<sup>12</sup> Since the reform and opening-up, China's involvement in international security affairs has been limited, which has also reduced the opportunities for cooperation or conflict between the European Union and China. However, China's presence in United Nations peacekeeping missions indicates its increased engagement in African security architecture.<sup>13</sup> The potential partnership between the European Union and China on African issues is described as 'a difficult balance between divergence and convergence trends,' and this relationship may still be unresolved, ranging from 'pure cooperation at one end to unrestrained competition at the other end.'<sup>14</sup> Scholars hold different attitudes towards the cooperation between the two countries in Africa. Some scholars are optimistic about Sino-European cooperation but lack empirical support<sup>15</sup>; others are pessimistic, believing that there is competition between China and Europe, and cooperation agreements only mask hostility.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> War, C. (2012). Challenges and opportunities in EU-China relations. *Europe and China: Strategic Partners or Rivals?*, 1, 19.

<sup>12</sup> Kirchner, E. (2015). China and the EU as global actors: challenges and opportunities for joint cooperation. *Economic and Political Studies*, 3(1), 98-113.

<sup>13</sup> Geeraerts, G. (2019). The EU-China partnership: balancing between divergence and convergence. *Asia Europe Journal*, 17, 281-294.

<sup>14</sup> Duggan, N., & Hodzi, O. (2021). The challenges of China-European Union security cooperation in Africa. *Asia Europe Journal*, 19(1), 43-57

<sup>15</sup> Hooijmaaijers, B. (2018). China's rise in Africa and the response of the EU: a theoretical analysis of the EU-China-Africa trilateral cooperation policy initiative. *Journal of European Integration*, 40(4), 443-460.

<sup>16</sup> Wissenbach, U. (2010). China-Africa relations and the European Union. *China and Africa development*

Nevertheless, the relationship between the European Union and China remains an integral part of the world order and a key factor in adapting the world order to the normative views of emerging powers.<sup>17</sup> The desire of both sides to jointly strengthen their institutionalized relations is also reflected in the Strategic Agenda for China-EU Cooperation 2020<sup>18</sup>, signed in 2013, which provides a framework for deepening cooperation. For China, the European Union is one of the most valued partners because Europe's vision for the future of modernization aligns with China's future development goals.<sup>19</sup>

The European Union's triple positioning of China as a partner, competitor, and adversary, while relatively entrenched, is also subject to change to some extent due to Chinese behavior.<sup>20</sup> Given the numerous uncertainties facing Europe currently, the EU's ability to act is somewhat constrained, making it imperative to address the issue of how to deal with China perceived as a primary competitor and adversary. Despite certain trade disputes and diplomatic obstacles in the Sino-European strategic partnership, the determination of both sides to uphold and potentially deepen the

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relations.

<sup>17</sup> Geeraerts, G. (2019). The EU-China partnership: balancing between divergence and convergence. *Asia Europe Journal*, 17, 281-294.

<sup>18</sup> China-EU 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation released at 16th China-EU Summit (2013) China-EU 2020 strategic agenda for cooperation released at 16th China-EU summit. Available at: [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/2649\\_665393/201311/t20131123\\_679356.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/201311/t20131123_679356.html) (Accessed: 26 February 2024).

<sup>19</sup> Kirchner, E. (2015). China and the EU as global actors: challenges and opportunities for joint cooperation. *Economic and Political Studies*, 3(1), 98-113.

<sup>20</sup> Feng, Z. (2022). Internal and external factors affecting China-EU relations. *China International Strategy Review*, 4(1), 74-90

partnership continues to exist.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, the evolution of attitudes towards China among European governments, as well as political, academic, and economic elites, is also noteworthy. This evolution is reflected in the European Commission's March 2019 Strategic Outlook<sup>22</sup>, which portrays China as a systemic rival, indicating a shift in Europe's attitude towards China. Against this backdrop, the challenges and opportunities of Sino-European cooperation become more pronounced.

In terms of economic and trade cooperation, Sino-European trade in services is developing rapidly, particularly with enormous potential for cooperation in cross-border e-commerce zones and the creative cultural industries. However, challenges also exist, such as the carbon tax implemented by the EU under France's leadership and the anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese electric cars, which pose challenges for both parties. In this context, cooperation between China and Hungary stands out. Hungary is one of the member countries of the "17+1" cooperation mechanism aimed at promoting cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries. Hungary has close cooperation with China in infrastructure construction, energy, finance, and other areas. For example, under the Belt and Road Initiative, China and Hungary have cooperated on a series of infrastructure projects such as the Budapest-Belgrade Railway<sup>23</sup>, which not only promotes trade between China and Europe but also enhances

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<sup>21</sup> Michalski, A., & Pan, Z. (2017). *Unlikely Partners?: China, the European Union and the Forging of a Strategic Partnership*. Springer.

<sup>22</sup> European Commission (2019) EU-China – A strategic outlook. rep. Available at: <https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2019-03/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf> (Accessed: 2024)

<sup>23</sup> Hungary: 'Eastern Opening' Meets 'Belt and Road' (2023).

匈牙利: “向东开放”遇见“一带一路” (2023). Available at: [http://www.china-ceec.org/jmh/202310/t20231031\\_11171069.htm](http://www.china-ceec.org/jmh/202310/t20231031_11171069.htm) (Accessed: 06 March 2024).

connectivity in the Central and Eastern European region. These cooperation examples demonstrate the achievements and potential of Sino-European cooperation, providing new ideas and opportunities for future cooperation between the two sides.

In terms of technological cooperation, Europe places great emphasis on climate change issues and has become a key economic partner with China. The potential for Sino-European digital and green partnerships is enormous, and China also hopes for deeper collaboration with Europe in areas such as electric vehicles, as evidenced by the construction of a battery factory in Hungary supported by the Chinese power battery manufacturer CATL(Contemporary Amperex Technology Co., Limited)<sup>24</sup>. This shift in the cooperation model heralds the development of Sino-European relations towards a more equitable and reciprocal direction.

In terms of industrial chain and supply chain cooperation, the high-quality development of China-Europe freight trains has contributed to the stability of global supply chains and industrial chains. Projects such as the China-Europe Land-Sea Express and the Polar Silk Road further consolidate the links between China and Europe. President Xi Jinping's eight-point action plan proposed at the Third Belt and Road International Cooperation Summit Forum specifically mentions the direct routing through the Trans-Caspian corridor, from Xinjiang, through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, to Europe, bypassing Russia and Ukraine, further tightening the connection between China and

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<sup>24</sup> CATL's Hungary battery factory Phase I has commenced construction, with an expected completion in 2 years (2023)The Paper.

宁德时代匈牙利电池工厂一期已开工建设，预计2年建成 (2023) 澎湃新闻. Available at: [https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_24999468](https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_24999468) (Accessed: 06 March 2024).

Europe. <sup>25</sup>These developments provide ample space and potential for Sino-European cooperation.

Furthermore, the significance of Sino-African relations cannot be overlooked, representing the importance of South-South cooperation and China's support for Africa. Since the Bandung Conference in 1955, Sino-African friendly cooperative relations have demonstrated immense historical significance in endeavors such as anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and national liberation. In the current international landscape, Sino-African cooperation has become an integral part of global economic development and cultural exchange. The Chinese government lauds its relations with African countries as 'a model of relations among developing countries,' emphasizing this as a cornerstone of China's foreign policy and a longstanding strategic choice.<sup>26</sup>

In recent years, Sino-African relations have undergone significant and incremental advancements, particularly since 2000. The establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has provided a new mechanism and platform for Sino-African relations, with its strategic significance increasingly evident<sup>27</sup>. China's robust demand for African commodities has become a significant factor driving economic growth in

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<sup>25</sup> Wang Yibei: China-Europe Relations, Looking at Tomorrow from the Day After Tomorrow (2024) Tencent News.

王义桅：中欧关系，从后天看明天 (2024) 腾讯新闻. Available at: <https://new.qq.com/rain/a/20240221A08DAQ00> (Accessed: 08 March 2024).

<sup>26</sup> The New Era of China-Africa Cooperation (2021) The New Era of China-Africa Cooperation\_White Paper\_China Government Website

新时代的中非合作 (2021) 新时代的中非合作\_白皮书\_中国政府网. Available at: [https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-11/26/content\\_5653540.htm](https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-11/26/content_5653540.htm) (Accessed: 08 March 2024).

<sup>27</sup> Liu, Hongwu. (2008). 30 Years of China-Africa Relations: A Lever to Shift the Structure of China's External Relations. *World Economics and Politics*, 11, 80-88.

Africa. <sup>28</sup>Additionally, China has collaborated with some African countries to establish economic development zones, investment and trade processing zones, and technology innovation parks, providing new impetus for Sino-African economic and technological cooperation. Research findings indicate that Sino-African economic cooperation in recent years has contributed at least 5% to Africa's economic growth and has unearthed the potential for improving and developing Africa's economic structure.<sup>29</sup>

Today, Sino-African cooperation is no longer merely declarative but embodies rational and pragmatic action plans and projects. <sup>30</sup>China's policy towards Africa is increasingly characterized by modern governance and efficiency. For instance, at the 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit, President Xi Jinping announced the 'Eight Major Initiatives' for China-Africa cooperation, including initiatives to cultivate leading young agricultural research talents and support African youth innovation and entrepreneurship, aiming to provide more employment opportunities and development space for African youth. China's policy towards Africa has expanded from simple economic cooperation to encompass various fields such as education, culture, and health. Confucius Institutes are established in multiple African countries for language teaching, and China's medical assistance is also deployed across Africa. These actions not only promote exchanges and understanding between the peoples of China and Africa but also provide substantial support for Africa's development.

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<sup>28</sup> Alden, C. (2007). *Emerging countries as new ODA players in LDCs: The case of China and Africa*. Paris, IDDRI, *Idées pour le débat*, 1, 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Peluola Adewale, "China: A New Partner for Africa's Development?" (2007) *Pambazuka News*. Available at: <https://allafrica.com/stories/200703231092.html> (Accessed: 06 March 2024).

<sup>30</sup> Thompson, D. (2005). *China's Soft Power in Africa: From the 'Beijing Consensus' to Health Diplomacy*. *China Brief*, 5(21).



"In summarizing the aforementioned content, we can emphasize the significance of Sino-European relations and Sino-African relations in the global political, economic, and cultural landscape. These two sets of relationships not only have profound impacts on the respective developments of China, Europe, and Africa but also significantly influence global stability and prosperity. Sino-European relations epitomize the trends of economic globalization and multilateralism, highlighting the trend of win-win cooperation among countries in international politics. Meanwhile, Sino-African relations embody the importance of South-South cooperation and mutual political support, providing a model and impetus for unity and cooperation among developing countries. Despite some challenges and differences in the cooperation process, we can observe that Sino-European cooperation and Sino-African cooperation have expanded from simple economic cooperation to various fields such as cultural exchange and health, as cooperation deepens and broadens. Particularly, enhanced cultural exchange enables mutual populations to better and more comprehensively understand each other's ideas, thereby fostering trust and cooperation. These collaborations not only bring substantive benefits to both parties but also provide new examples and ideas for global governance, promoting the common development of the international community.

### 1.3 Purpose and objectives of the study

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of cultural diplomacy between China and Europe, specifically Hungary, and China and Africa,

specifically Morocco. This analysis will delve into the intricate dynamics of cultural exchanges and diplomatic interactions between these regions, with a particular emphasis on the role of intercultural communication. By examining the historical evolution of Chinese cultural diplomacy and the strategic considerations behind selecting Hungary and Morocco as case studies, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the complexities and nuances of Sino-European and Sino-African relations in the realm of cultural diplomacy.

## II. Literature Review

### 2.1 Historical Evolution of China's Cultural Diplomacy

In international relations, culture has always been an indispensable element. However, due to its intangible nature as a form of spiritual existence, culture has often been overshadowed by "hard power" factors such as economics, politics, military, and technology in long-standing studies. This has led to culture being viewed in international relations research merely as an implicit factor that indirectly influences diplomatic decision-making processes and behaviors, thus often failing to garner scholarly attention.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, with the end of the Cold War, international relations have displayed increasingly complex trends, witnessing the emergence of new configurations of interests and shifts in geopolitical landscapes. Against this backdrop,

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<sup>31</sup> Xie, & Guohai. (1997). A Perspective on the New World Order from the Cultural Point of View (Part I). *Foreign Social Sciences Digest*, (12), 14-15.

谢弗, & 国海. (1997). 从文化观点看新的世界体系 (上). *国外社会科学文摘*, (12), 14-15.

concepts such as the "clash of civilizations" and the theory of "soft power" have begun to capture the attention of Western scholars, while constructivist theories have gradually gained prominence, leading international relations studies towards a sociological orientation.<sup>32</sup>

In recent years, the Chinese academic community has seen a gradual increase in research centered on cultural "soft power," closely related to changes in both domestic and international environments. On one hand, the modernization goals of China's national governance system and governance capabilities necessitate the establishment of core social values and mainstream cultural consciousness to prevent social disorder and cultural security risks. On the other hand, against the backdrop of rapid advancement in "hard power," China urgently needs to construct a discourse system for external communication, actively shaping an international image as a "responsible major power." This pressure has prompted vigorous development in the study of enhancing the country's cultural soft power, becoming a hot topic in the field of international issue studies.

Among the myriad studies involving "soft power," cultural diplomacy has emerged as a new branch. However, due to the lack of systematic theory and relevant literature, its research boundaries often remain blurred. This is mainly due to the broad nature of the concept of culture, making it difficult for people to fully comprehend and describe.

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<sup>32</sup> Qin Yaqing. (2010). Culture, Civilization, and World Politics: A Deepening Research Agenda. *World Economics and Politics*, (11), 4-15.

秦亚青. (2010). 文化, 文明与世界政治: 不断深化的研究议程. *世界经济与政治*, (11), 4-15.

Related to this is the "ubiquitous" nature of culture, which also leads to overlaps and confusion with other means in diplomatic practice. For example, various forms of foreign investment attraction activities featuring "cultural presentation with economic performance" launched by nations appear to be forms of economic diplomacy, yet in reality, due to culture's role in shaping external images, they also align with the objectives of cultural diplomacy.<sup>33</sup>

Cultural diplomacy involves a nation's government utilizing its resources such as ideologies, education, arts, information, and creative products to establish understanding, trust, and even admiration among foreign populations through long-term actions.<sup>34</sup> This is not merely about interpreting and directly propagating foreign policies but rather presenting one's own cultural characteristics, value ideals, and societal life naturally to people. This requires generations to continuously invest funds, talent, courage, and time.

As a nation with rich cultural heritage and substantial resources, especially since the reform and opening-up policy, China has witnessed a rapid increase in the number of its citizens traveling abroad, reaching 1.2 billion person-times in 2015, with over 150 countries worldwide becoming destinations for Chinese citizens.<sup>35</sup> By the first half of

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<sup>33</sup> Wu Baiyi. (2016). Cultural Diplomacy: Historical Examination and Reflection on Reality. *American Studies*, (03), 9-33. 吴白乙. (2016). 文化外交: 历史, 现实的审视与思考. *美国研究*, (3), 9-33.

<sup>34</sup> United States. Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy. (2005). Cultural Diplomacy, the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy: Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy. US Department of State.

<sup>35</sup> Wang Yi: "Around 120 Million Mainland Chinese Citizens Traveling Abroad, with a Growth of Approximately 10%," (2016) China National Radio.

《王毅: 中国内地公民出境增长 10%左右达 1.2 亿人次》2016 年央广网 Available at: <http://news.china.com/20161h/news/11176754/20160308/21761847.html> (Accessed: 06 March 2024).

2023, data released by the National Immigration Administration of China showed that the number of inbound and outbound travelers had reached 168 million person-times.

<sup>37</sup>This vast flow of people not only expands the influence of Chinese culture but also accelerates the interaction and integration of Chinese civilization with the outside world.

When we review the developmental trajectory of China's cultural diplomacy, it can be delineated into the following key phases:

### 2.1.1 Early Initiatives and Cultural Foundations

China's cultural diplomacy has deep historical roots, with early initiatives rooted in its rich historical and philosophical traditions, particularly concepts from Confucianism and Taoism, which provided a foundation for cross-cultural exchanges. The Spring and Autumn Period (771–476 BCE), known as the era of the Hundred Schools of Thought, was one of the periods in Chinese history that emphasized dissemination and harmony the most. During this period, historical thought flourished, and culture and knowledge saw significant development, a tradition that still holds practical significance in contemporary China's soft power construction and capacity-building efforts. Great thinkers like Confucius (551–479 BCE) and Mencius (372–289 BCE) emphasized achieving national goals through diplomatic means rather than territorial expansion through force. Their political philosophies emphasized the restriction and regulation of power, highlighting the importance of education and humanities over warfare. Ancient

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<sup>37</sup> National Immigration Administration: 168 Million Entries and Exits in the First Half of the Year, July 19, 2023. 《国家移民管理局：上半年 1.68 亿人次出入境》，2023 年 7 月 19 日。Available at: <https://www.nia.gov.cn/n741440/n741567/c1589194/content.html> (Accessed: 06 March 2024).

Chinese strategists tended to enhance the country's prestige through diplomatic means rather than territorial expansion. Successive dynasties' governments also placed great importance on cultural diplomacy. For example, during the Han Dynasty, envoys like Zhang Qian and Ban Chao were dispatched to the Western Regions, opening up the "Silk Road"; during the Han and Tang dynasties, eminent monks journeyed westward to India and eastward to Japan for religious propagation; during the Ming Dynasty, Zheng He led seven voyages to the Western Seas, and so forth.<sup>38</sup>

## 2.1.2 Modernization and Global Integration

Modern China's cultural diplomacy integrates history with reality, reflecting its efforts in modernization and global integration since the early 20th century. The May Fourth Movement marked a significant historical moment for Chinese society to adapt to global dynamic changes, representing China's pursuit of science, democracy, and cultural revival. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government highly valued the role of cultural exchanges in foreign relations, explicitly stipulating in seminal documents that developing cultural relations with other countries is an important aspect of China's diplomacy. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence proposed by China in the 1950s—mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence—provided basic guidance

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<sup>38</sup> Ye Jing. (2009). An Analysis of China's Cultural Diplomacy in Building a Harmonious World. *Journal of Huazhong Agricultural University: Social Sciences Edition*, (5), 67-71

叶静. (2009). 浅析构建和谐世界中的中国文化外交. *华中农业大学学报: 社会科学版*, (5), 67-71

for cultural diplomacy. During this period, cultural diplomacy became an integral part of the country's overall diplomacy, engaging in active cultural exchanges and cooperation with other countries through various channels. China's external interactions during this period mainly focused on the Soviet Union and socialist countries in Eastern Europe, as well as the vast regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. China signed cultural agreements with multiple countries and dispatched delegations and artistic groups for visits and performances abroad. For instance, Mei Lanfang's performance of Peking Opera in the United States in 1930 demonstrated China's ongoing cultural exchanges with the outside world.<sup>39</sup> Zhou Enlai likened cultural diplomacy to being a "pioneer" and a "sower," instructing friendly activities to be conducted in Latin American countries under American control, forging friendships. He personally implemented this policy, forming friendships with a group of cultural figures, such as Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and artists like Jose Venturelli, Cuban poet Nicolas Guillen, and Brazilian writer Jorge Amado.<sup>40</sup> Under the influence of these cultural figures, many Latin American countries established Chinese cultural associations dedicated to introducing Chinese culture and promoting visits to China, inviting Chinese cultural celebrities to visit.<sup>41</sup> Overall, during this period, China's cultural diplomacy, despite limited national strength, effectively mobilized and integrated internal cultural resources, expanded its international influence, and conveyed Chinese values of openness to

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<sup>39</sup> Wu Baiyi. (2016). Cultural Diplomacy: Historical Examination and Reflection on Reality. *American Studies*, (03), 9-33. 吴白乙. (2016). 文化外交: 历史, 现实的审视与思考. *美国研究*, (3), 9-33.

<sup>40</sup> Wu Baiyi. (2016). Cultural Diplomacy: Historical Examination and Reflection on Reality. *American Studies*, (03), 9-33. 吴白乙. (2016). 文化外交: 历史, 现实的审视与思考. *美国研究*, (3), 9-33.

<sup>41</sup> Huang Zhiliang: "Rediscovering the New Continent: Zhou Enlai and Latin America," World Knowledge Press, 2004 edition, pp. 60-62

黄志良: 《新大陆的再发现: 周恩来与拉丁美洲》, *世界知识出版社* 2004 年版, 第 60 ~ 62 页

exchange and advocating for peace.

### 2.1.3 The Cold War period

During the Cold War period, China's cultural diplomacy was profoundly influenced by ideological struggles, attempting to export revolutionary ideologies. However, the Cultural Revolution led to a period of isolation. In the 1970s, the Chinese government actively utilized cultural exchanges to respond to diplomatic blockades and encirclement led by Western countries, notably the United States. During this period, breakthroughs were achieved in China's relations with the United Kingdom, France, and Japan. For instance, through "Ping-Pong Diplomacy" and other means, China and the United States altered the pattern of mutual isolation and confrontation, paving the way for President Nixon's visit to China and the normalization of bilateral relations. By the 1980s, China began to strengthen cultural diplomacy in Africa and opened Chinese cultural centers in Mauritius and Benin in 1988.

Despite facing numerous challenges, including the Cultural Revolution, China never ceased its cultural exchanges with the outside world. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong marginalized Confucianism, but subsequent generations of leaders actively embraced Confucianism. Whether it was Jiang Zemin's proposition of "governing the country with virtue" or Hu Jintao's advocacy of a "harmonious society," Confucian ideals deeply integrated into the formulation and practice of modern China's national



vision. Mao Zedong emphasized the consistency between culture and politics, suggesting that the Communist Party should utilize literature and art to serve national interests, a viewpoint that still holds some influence in contemporary Chinese cultural diplomacy. Until the late 1980s, China's exchanges with the world remained intermittent. The prolonged isolation by the international community, Western countries' high-profile rhetoric labeling China as a destabilizing force, and the spread of the "China collapse" theory after the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident forced China to seriously consider shaping a positive image.<sup>42</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Reform and Opening-Up

At the end of the Cold War period (1947-1991), China embarked on reform and opening-up in 1978, implementing economic reforms and an open-door policy, which marked its active engagement with the international community. At the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1997, General Secretary Jiang Zemin emphasized the importance of China's culture being inseparable from the common achievements of human civilization. He proposed various forms of cultural exchanges with foreign countries to showcase the achievements of China's cultural construction. Subsequently, in 2004, culture was declared as the third pillar of China's diplomacy after politics and economics. The government's rhetoric quickly matched massive investments in various highly anticipated initiatives. Since 2004, "Chinese Culture

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<sup>42</sup> Sinha, P. (2013). China's cultural diplomacy: Historical origin, modern methods and strategic outcomes. China Research Center, 12(2)

Year" events have been successively held in countries such as France and Italy, while China began establishing Confucius Institutes worldwide. According to public data from the Confucius Institute Headquarters, at its peak, Confucius Institutes were established in 162 countries and regions globally, with a total of 550 institutes and 1172 classrooms. In 2004, the "Chinese Culture in Africa" event lasted for seven months, covering 22 countries in Africa, becoming a significant event in the history of China's cultural diplomacy. In 2005, the "Chinese Culture Festival" held in Washington, D.C., was praised by The New York Times and The Washington Post as the "boldest and most ambitious international cultural cooperation project in the history of the arts center," unprecedented in breadth and depth.<sup>43</sup> In 2006 and 2007, China and Russia successfully held "National Year" events, with Russia hosting the "Chinese Cultural Festival" in 2006, sending 22 performance groups and six art exhibition groups to China for exchanges, while China hosted the "Russian Cultural Festival" in 2007, sending 14 performance projects and seven exhibition projects to Russia for exchanges.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo marked significant milestones in China's cultural diplomacy. These two international events were not merely sports competitions and exhibitions but also concentrated showcases of Chinese culture, history, and modern development achievements. The Beijing Olympics, as a significant milestone in China's cultural diplomacy, showcased China's traditional culture and modern civilization to the world

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<sup>43</sup> Minister Sun Jiazheng on China's cultural exchanges with foreign countries: Cultural diplomacy reveals its charm.(2005) Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China. 孙家正部长谈我国对外文化交流：文化外交彰显魅力。(2005) 中华人民共和国文化和旅游部. Available at: [https://www.mct.gov.cn/whzx/whyw/201112/t20111201\\_708400.htm](https://www.mct.gov.cn/whzx/whyw/201112/t20111201_708400.htm) (Accessed: 10 March 2024).

through the opening ceremony, venue design, and volunteer services, thereby enhancing international recognition of China. The 2010 Shanghai World Expo served as another important platform for China's cultural diplomacy, showcasing its historical culture, technological innovation, and urban development achievements through pavilions, thematic exhibitions, and cultural performances, attracting participation and visits from countries worldwide, promoting cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and the world. Although the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasized the role of culture in formulating foreign policies, the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-2010) focused more on urging China to play a greater role in the international cultural market. During this period, China was committed to advancing global cultural markets, especially in spreading Chinese culture to Western audiences. China not only sought to create platforms that connected people but also attempted to use examples such as Zheng He's voyages during the Ming Dynasty as models of China's friendly cultural traditions, promoting cultural, economic, and trade exchanges worldwide in international relations and establishing an image of China as a responsible stakeholder.

### 2.1.5 The 21st Century and Global Influence

With the changing global media landscape in the 21st century, China's cultural diplomacy has also encountered new opportunities for development. Starting from 2010, China began to expand new channels through online media, launching 24-hour cable news channels and newspapers such as "China Daily Asian Weekly" and "European

Weekly." These media platforms not only strengthened cultural dissemination among overseas Chinese communities but also showcased China's cultural charm and developmental achievements to global audiences. Additionally, China also placed advertisements promoting its image in renowned locations such as New York's Times Square, enhancing China's visibility and image on the international stage.

However, China's cultural diplomacy in the era of new media also faces some challenges. One of the most prominent issues is the controversy surrounding Confucius Institutes. As an important platform for promoting Chinese culture, Confucius Institutes have achieved certain successes but have also raised questions and resentment in some countries. Particularly in the United States, some schools and institutions have requested scrutiny of Confucius Institutes and have severed their cooperation with them. In Europe, countries like Sweden have successively closed Confucius Institutes, sparking widespread attention and discussions in the international community.

In response to the controversy surrounding Confucius Institutes, the Chinese government has taken a series of adjustments and responses. Firstly, the Chinese Ministry of Education established the Center for Chinese and Foreign Language Exchange and Cooperation in 2020 to assist in China's language and cultural exchange projects, replacing the Confucius Institutes. Secondly, Chinese universities have begun to collaborate with foreign partners in establishing innovative universities within China to promote cultural exchange and understanding. For example, the University of

Nottingham Ningbo China, the first Sino-foreign cooperative university approved by the Ministry of Education in 2004, was jointly established by the University of Nottingham and Zhejiang Wanli University. There are also institutions such as Shanghai New York University, jointly established by New York University and East China Normal University, and Wenzhou-Kean University and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, among others. Furthermore, prior to this, Chinese universities and foreign universities have cooperated to offer joint programs within Chinese universities, such as the International Media Business Master's Degree program jointly offered by the Communication University of China and the University of Westminster, and the Master of Laws program jointly offered by Tsinghua University and Temple University, among others. As of June 2020, there were a total of 2282 Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions and programs in China, including 1196 at the undergraduate level or above.

In 2021, China began to shift its strategy of introducing foreign universities to one of exporting its own universities, including Fudan University's plan to establish a branch campus in Budapest, which will become the first branch campus of a Chinese university in the European Union. However, this plan, launched with the support of the Hungarian government, has sparked widespread controversy. Hungarian media outlet "direkt 36"<sup>44</sup> conducted a series of investigations and reports on the plan, pointing out that the construction cost of the project is estimated to reach \$1.8 billion, which is more than the total expenditure by the Orbán government on the entire higher education system in

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<sup>44</sup> Demonstrations erupt in Hungary's Budapest to protest construction of a branch of China's Fudan University. 匈牙利首都布达佩斯爆发示威游行,抗议中国复旦大学建设分校 (2021) BBC News. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/world-57375134> (Accessed: 10 March 2024).

2019. This has led to strong opposition from many Hungarian citizens, ultimately resulting in the project currently being put on hold.

Gary further explores the challenges faced by Chinese cultural diplomacy in his research, which stem from China's political culture and the authoritarian style of its regime. When engaging in cultural diplomatic activities, the Chinese government inevitably faces the challenge of finding a balance between domestic political control and external cultural dissemination. <sup>45</sup>The uniqueness of China's political culture and the strict control exerted by the government over cultural expression have profound implications for China's cultural diplomacy. Under the guidance of the Chinese government, cultural diplomatic activities are often seen as a means to strengthen national image, promote specific political agendas, and enhance China's influence on the international stage. Today, Chinese culture has become a familiar part of the international audience's experience, with people worldwide frequently encountering Chinese cultural products such as Chinese cuisine, films, traditional New Year celebrations, and the presence of overseas students. These cultural exports not only deepen international society's understanding of China but also provide opportunities for the Chinese government to establish a more positive image on the international stage.

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<sup>45</sup> Rawnsley, G. (2020). Cultural Diplomacy Today: A 'Culture of Dialogue' or a 'Dialogue of Cultures'?. In *Transnational Sites of China's Cultural Diplomacy: Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Middle East and Europe Compared* (pp. 13-33). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

## 2.2 Intercultural Communication Theory

The practical significance of intercultural communication theory is evident in its provision of robust frameworks for comprehending and analyzing cultural disparities at both national and individual levels. Hofstede metaphorically likened culture to a tree, a comparison that offers valuable insights into the interplay between deep-seated cultural values and observable behaviors.<sup>46</sup> In this analogy, cultural patterns are akin to the roots of a tree, providing guidance for decision-making and communicative behaviors, while the movements and colors of its leaves offer observable behaviors, furnishing communicators with immediate feedback to facilitate more effective communication and adaptation to dynamic backgrounds. Thus, the key to successful intercultural communication lies in the awareness of the deep-rooted cultural drivers behind behaviors and decisions.

In the realm of diplomacy, diplomats may differ from others within their own cultures but may adhere to similar norms in cross-national communication, such as refraining from directly addressing controversial questions concerning government policies. Such behavior aligns with the stability of cultural values, providing a background for communication to function efficiently.<sup>47</sup> An important assumption of intercultural theory is that individuals raised in particular cultures find it easier to communicate with those of the same culture. However, when individuals enter cross-cultural environments,

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<sup>46</sup> Hofstede, G. (2004). Diplomats as Cultural Bridge Builders. In Slavik, H. (Ed.), *Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy*, pp. 25-38. Malta: Diplofoundation.

<sup>47</sup> Ryan, S. B. (2015). Cultural Diplomacy in International Relations: understanding hidden bias in cultural knowledge. *Yamagata University Bulletin*, 27, 63-86.

they are faced with the question of whether to adjust their cultural background knowledge to accommodate the new culture. Research by Fisman and Miguel (2006) found that United Nations diplomats from countries with higher levels of corruption were more likely to violate traffic rules, whereas diplomats from less corrupt countries tended to adhere to the law, further confirming the influence of cultural background on behavior.<sup>48</sup>

In analyzing cultural diplomacy, Hofstede's cultural dimension theory and Hall's high and low-context culture theory are commonly used theoretical tools. They aid in a better understanding of differences between cultures and provide guidance for achieving more effective international exchanges.

### 2.2.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory

Hofstede (2004, 2010) established a robust framework for comparing national cultures by providing six dimensions to begin analyzing cultural differences, including power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, short-term versus long-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint.<sup>49</sup> Initially, Hofstede analyzed data from a large-scale global survey conducted by IBM in the 1960s to 1970s. Initially, he categorized the value orientations of different cultures into four basic dimensions, including power distance, individualism, uncertainty

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<sup>48</sup> Fisman, R., & Miguel, E. (2007). Corruption, norms, and legal enforcement: Evidence from diplomatic parking tickets. *Journal of Political economy*, 115(6), 1020-1048.

<sup>49</sup> Hofstede, G., Gofstede, G. J. and Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations. Software of the Mind. Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*. New York: McGraw Hill.



avoidance, and masculinity. Subsequently, based on research comparing Eastern and Western cultures by Professor Michael Bond at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hofstede added a fifth dimension, long-term orientation, to reflect Confucian values.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, in 2010, based on the analysis of data from the World Values Survey by Michael Bond, Hofstede expanded this model by adding a sixth dimension, indulgence versus restraint.<sup>52</sup>

According to Hofstede, culture is an abstraction of the thought, emotions, and behavioral patterns of members of society, that is, the unwritten rules of social behavior, focusing on the aspect of values of society members. From the macro level of nations and societies to the micro level of families and units, each member of a social group has a set of common behavioral patterns. For example, high power distance cultures are characterized by "status-based credibility, experiential, authoritarian decision-making, top-down role relationships, rewards and punishments based on age, status, or position"<sup>53</sup> . In contrast, low power distance cultures tend to emphasize personal credibility, accountability, democratic decision-making styles, egalitarian relationships, and equality in rewards and punishments.

Uncertainty avoidance refers to "the degree of tolerance of cultural members for conflict or uncertainty situations and the extent to which they attempt to avoid these uncertain

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<sup>51</sup> Leung, K., & Bond, M. H. (1984). The impact of cultural collectivism on reward allocation. *Journal of Personality and Social psychology*, 47(4), 793.

<sup>52</sup> Li, L. M. W., & Bond, M. H. (2010). Value change: Analyzing national change in citizen secularism across four time periods in the World Values Survey. *The Social Science Journal*, 47(2), 294-306.

<sup>53</sup> Ting-Toomey, S., & Oetzel, J. G. (2001). *Managing intercultural conflict effectively*. Sage.

situations".<sup>54</sup> A more specific example is that compared to the United States, Chinese culture has higher uncertainty avoidance, manifested as intolerance for extremism and an emphasis on dialectical thinking, namely the "middle way" philosophy. In Sino-American relations, this philosophy is specifically manifested in China's advocacy for resolving issues through dialogue and negotiation, such as its stance on the North Korean nuclear issue. China actively promotes the peaceful resolution of the North Korean issue and plays the role of mediator and organizer in the Six-Party Talks. In contrast, the United States operates in a culture environment with lower uncertainty avoidance, more accepting of deviant behavior, emphasizing logical thinking, and sometimes tending towards a binary attitude. The United States' attitude towards China's rise as a new major power exhibits characteristics of low uncertainty avoidance and emphasizes its own hegemonic position. This cultural tendency prompts the United States to emphasize China's compliance with its established international rules, further maintaining its own hegemonic position, with diplomatic activities often conducted with a mindset of "conquest".

## 2.2.2 Hall's High and Low Context Culture Theory

Another important theory of intercultural communication is Hall's (1976) theory of high and low context cultures. This theory emphasizes the different preferences for communication styles in different cultures. In high-context cultures, the importance of

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<sup>54</sup> Ting-Toomey, S., & Chung, L. C. (2005). *Understanding intercultural communication* (p. 352). New York: Oxford University Press.

nonverbal communication and contextual information is more prominent, whereas in low-context cultures, the information conveyed directly through language is more important for better predicting the behavior of listeners in direct communication.<sup>56</sup> Understanding this difference helps to avoid misunderstandings and ambiguities in cross-cultural communication.

High-context cultures share a range of characteristics with low-context cultures. High-context cultures are implicit and subtle, favor coded messages, use more nonverbal coding, and have few outward reactions, as well as differentiating between inside and outside the interpersonal circle, with a high level of commitment and flexibility in time management. In contrast, low-context cultures are more exoteric and explicit, tend to have explicit messages, use more verbal coding, are more outwardly responsive, have flexible relationships within and outside the circle, are less interpersonal, have low levels of commitment and are highly organized in their time processing.

There are communication barriers between high-context and low-context cultures, mainly manifested in modes of expression, customs, and values. In terms of modes of expression, high-context cultures tend to imply implicitly, while low-context cultures are more direct and concise. This difference may lead to misunderstandings and discomfort. In terms of customs, due to the influence of long-term historical

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<sup>56</sup> Gudykunst, W. B., & Nishida, T. (1993). INTERPERSONAL AND INTERGROUP COMMUNICATION IN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>. *Communication in Japan and the United States*, 149.

development, different countries and ethnic groups have formed different etiquette customs and value concepts. For example, in terms of addressing and conversation, Chinese etiquette emphasizes respect and hierarchy, while the United States tends to emphasize equality and directness. In terms of values, different cultures have different understandings and reactions to the world and things, which may lead to different views and evaluations of the same event. For example, the "Yijing" (Book of Changes) states that morally upright individuals always maintain a humble attitude. Since ancient times, in Chinese society, people have attached great importance to "humility," which can be considered a virtue of the Chinese people. The so-called "humility" means having a lower regard for oneself and a higher regard for others, exhibiting a mentality and behavior of humility and learning from others. However, the meaning of humility in Western culture is "reducing self-praise rather than not self-praising at all," as Western humility puts oneself on an equal footing.

Additionally, the cultural orientation towards time theory helps reveal deep-seated cultural values that most people are unaware of. Monochronic cultures perceive the progress of time and tasks as linear and logical, emphasizing adherence to schedules and sequential completion of tasks. In contrast, polychronic cultures (such as Japan) pay more attention to the situational and emotional aspects of time and tasks.<sup>57</sup> Time orientation theory overlaps with the universalism-particularism theory, where universalists tend to provide equal standards for everyone, while particularists focus

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<sup>57</sup> Adams, S. J., & van Eerde, W. (2010). Time use in Spain: is polychronicity a cultural phenomenon?. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 25(7), 764-776.

more on specific contexts. This difference in approach may lead to a lack of trust between parties in public diplomacy.<sup>58</sup>

The practical significance of intercultural communication theories lies in providing diplomats with necessary tools and perspectives to better understand and address communication challenges within diverse cultural contexts. Dr. Seong-Hun Yun's research found empirical associations between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and excellence in public diplomacy, particularly significant associations between the dimension of uncertainty avoidance and excellence.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, low uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and low power distance cultures were also found to be advantageous for excellence. However, the research also indicates that the overall impact of societal culture on excellence may not be strongly pronounced. Robert Kohls' iceberg theory further emphasizes the covert influence of culture in communication,<sup>60</sup> highlighting that culture not only manifests in surface norms and behaviors but also profoundly shapes our modes of communication and decision-making.

In this context, it becomes imperative to analyze the similarities and differences between Central-European cultural diplomacy and Sino-African cultural diplomacy through the lens of intercultural communication theory. This analysis aids in formulating and executing cultural diplomacy strategies that align with local cultural backgrounds more effectively. Hofstede's cultural dimension theory and Hall's high and

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<sup>58</sup> Hampden-Turner, C., & Trompenaars, F. (1997). Response to geert hofstede. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 21(1), 149.

<sup>59</sup> Yun, S. H. (2008). Cultural consequences on excellence in public diplomacy. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 20(2), 207-230.

<sup>60</sup> Kohls, L. R. (1984). *The values Americans live by*. Washington, DC: Meridian House International.

low-context culture theory serve as beneficial starting points for understanding and analyzing cultural differences at the national level, providing guidance for diplomats to better fulfill their tasks in cross-cultural communication.

## 2.3 Previous Studies on Sino-European and Sino-African Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy, as a vital component of a country's overall diplomatic strategy, plays a crucial role in contemporary international relations by facilitating mutual understanding, fostering trust, and enhancing reputation. Since the beginning of the new millennium, China has achieved significant milestones in cultural exchanges.

<sup>62</sup>Initiatives such as 'Chinese Culture Years,' 'Olympic Diplomacy,' 'Expo Diplomacy,' and the establishment of Confucius Institutes have greatly strengthened China's international cultural influence, demonstrating the vibrancy and development trend of Chinese cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy has become an integral part of China's overall diplomacy and a new diplomatic growth point.<sup>63</sup>

The Chinese government has formulated a series of policies and strategies in cultural diplomacy, such as the cultural 'going out' policy and the Belt and Road Initiative, providing frameworks and support for cultural exchanges between China and Europe and China and Africa. Core institutions in Chinese cultural diplomacy include the

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<sup>62</sup> Zhong, Z. (2019). Development Characteristics and Innovative Paths of Chinese Cultural Diplomacy. *Journal of Changchun Normal University*, 11(2019).

仲昭曦. "中国文化外交的发展特点与创新路径." *长春师范大学学报* 11(2019)

<sup>63</sup> Du, R. (2013). Development of Chinese Cultural Diplomacy in the New Era: A Case Study of Confucius Institutes (Doctoral dissertation, Qingdao University)

杜瑞增. 新时期中国文化外交的发展——以孔子学院为例. Diss. 青岛大学.

Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, and the Communist Party, which coordinate and implement various cultural exchange initiatives.<sup>64</sup> Among these, the most significant is the Confucius Institute, a non-profit public institution affiliated with the Ministry of Education, responsible for disseminating Chinese language, culture, and values globally.<sup>65</sup> Scholars describe the Confucius Institute as a strategic engagement tool, relying on commitments from local stakeholders<sup>66</sup> and initiatives sponsored by universities.<sup>67</sup> According to Staerr, the establishment of Confucius Institutes reflects China's desire for global recognition of its cultural contributions.<sup>68</sup>

Confucius Institutes, along with Confucius Classrooms, adapt their activities to local contexts and draw inspiration from successful models in countries such as Spain, the UK, Germany, and France.<sup>69</sup> The multifunctional objectives of these institutions range from Chinese language education to cultural exchange to promoting cooperation and friendship between China and its partners. As of the end of 2019, there were a total of 550 Confucius Institutes globally<sup>70</sup>, and their rapid expansion underscores their importance in Chinese cultural diplomacy.

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<sup>64</sup> LIHUA, Z. et al. (2015). China's Cultural Diplomacy: Strategy, Policy, and Implementation. Available at: <https://carnegietsinghua.org/2015/04/17/china-s-cultural-diplomacy-strategy-policy-and-implementation-event-4807> (Accessed: 12 March 2024).

<sup>65</sup> ČIEFOVÁ, M. (2018). Selected issues of cultural diplomacy. *Almanach*, 13, 2, 4-13.

<sup>66</sup> HARTIG, F. (2012). Cultural diplomacy with Chinese characteristics: The case of Confucius Institute in Australia. *Communication, Politics & Culture*, 45, 2, 256-276.

<sup>67</sup> SU-YAN PAN (2013). Confucius Institute Project: China's cultural diplomacy and soft power projection. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 2, 1, 22-33.

<sup>68</sup> STARR, D. (2009). Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes. *European Journal of Education*, 44, 1, 65-82.

<sup>69</sup> Chinese Consulate General in Frankfurt (2012). Confucius Institutes are taking root in countries around the world. Available at: [http://frankfurt.china-consulate.gov.cn/sbwl/201203/t20120301\\_3539270.htm](http://frankfurt.china-consulate.gov.cn/sbwl/201203/t20120301_3539270.htm) (Accessed: 12 April 2024).

<sup>70</sup> Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China (2019). The number of Confucius Institutes worldwide reaches 550. Available at: [https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-12/10/content\\_5459864.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-12/10/content_5459864.htm). (Accessed: 12 April 2024).

As Confucius Institutes continue to expand, different regions present various opportunities and challenges. In Sino-African relations, cultural and educational assistance occupies a significant position within China's growing aid to Africa, with Confucius Institutes playing a crucial role and becoming an integral part of cooperation mechanisms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Given the lack of Sinology research foundations on the African continent, Confucius Institutes' role in promoting Chinese language teaching in this region is relatively more critical than in others. <sup>71</sup>In Sino-European relations, the construction of Confucius Institutes needs to correspond with contemporary Chinese studies to enhance their role in mutual understanding between China and Europe. Despite political and economic relations dominating Sino-European relations, cultural relations remain a neglected topic. <sup>73</sup>Lisbonne de Vergeron (2015) emphasizes China's impact on European soft power and the challenges posed by China's renewed focus on cultural diplomacy to Europe.<sup>74</sup>

However, in recent years, the EU and its member states have increased their support for European studies on China, leading to numerical growth of Confucius Institutes in Europe. Nevertheless, if the construction of Confucius Institutes does not correspond with contemporary Chinese studies, their role in promoting mutual understanding between China and Europe may be limited. Song and Qiqi (2018) argue that cultural

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<sup>71</sup> Hartig, F. (2015). China's soft power and Confucius Institutes in Africa. Hongming Zhang & W. He (Éds.), *African Development Report*, (17), 94-110.

<sup>73</sup> Martín, M., & Santiago, M. (2021). Beyond cultural diplomacy? The role of culture in EU-China Relations.

<sup>74</sup> Lisbonne de Vergeron, K. (2015). China-EU relations and the future of European soft power: a strategy for a European cultural diploma.



diplomacy plays a vital role in helping Central and Eastern European countries understand Chinese concepts, emphasizing the necessity for China to be more proactive in conducting cultural diplomacy with these countries.<sup>75</sup>

Although Confucius Institutes have dominated the landscape of Chinese cultural promotion, Chinese Cultural Centers have also contributed to the development of bilateral relations by organizing various cultural activities, teaching Chinese language and culture, and disseminating information about China.<sup>76</sup> Chinese Cultural Centers are cultural promotion organizations established by the People's Republic of China in other countries, overseen and managed by the International Exchange and Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China. Unlike Confucius Institutes, Chinese Cultural Centers showcase more of China's tourism resources rather than Chinese language education.<sup>77</sup> Although Chinese Cultural Centers have less influence compared to Confucius Institutes, they operate globally, particularly with a significant presence in Europe. As of 2022, there are a total of 45 overseas Chinese Cultural Centers strategically distributed across continents, with 20 in Europe and 8 in Africa. These Chinese Cultural Centers are typically located in capital cities or cosmopolitan areas of other countries, and their tourism and cultural events attract locals with a high level of cultural openness.

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<sup>75</sup> Song, L., & Qiqi, Z. (2018). A model for the Belt and Road Initiative: China's cultural diplomacy toward Central and Eastern European countries. *The Belt & Road Initiative in the Global Arena: Chinese and European Perspectives*, 55-68.)

<sup>76</sup> CHINA CULTURAL CENTER (CCC) (2015): About China Cultural Center. Accessed: <http://en.cccweb.org/aboutccc>. (Accessed on 18 April 2024).

<sup>77</sup> Wei, Z., & Chen, L. (2015). Enhancing the Communication Capability of Overseas Chinese Cultural Centers. *Hongqi WenGao*, (4), 29-30.

卫志民, & 陈璐. (2015). 提升海外中国文化中心的传播能力. *红旗文稿*, (4), 29-30.

However, China has long focused on promoting its political and economic achievements abroad, and this ideological approach has made it challenging for Chinese culture to be well-received by local populations in Western countries.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, in recent years, China has gradually improved high-level cultural exchanges with both Europe and Africa, and government-level cultural exchanges and cooperation mechanisms have continued to strengthen.<sup>79</sup> As of June 2023, China has signed cultural and tourism cooperation agreements with 144 co-building countries.<sup>80</sup>

China's rich tourism resources not only serve as windows for people to understand Chinese culture but also act as effective entry points for promoting cultural diplomacy. Xiang Wenhui (2020) mentioned in the functionality of tourism in diplomacy that the ultimate goal of tourism diplomacy is to reduce biases between countries and promote consensus among nations, thus achieving win-win cooperation in the international community by acting as a medium connecting tourist source countries with destination countries.<sup>81</sup> Cultural diplomacy between countries through the linkage of tourism resources can indeed yield positive results. With the surge in outbound tourism from China, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Africa has also sharply increased. Since

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<sup>78</sup> Sun, S., & Wen, J. (2015). *Translation and Chinese Cultural Diplomacy: Historical Development and Strategic Analysis*. Shanghai Translation, 1.

孙三军, & 文军. (2015). 翻译与中国文化外交: 历史发展及策略分析. 上海翻译, 1.

<sup>79</sup> Yan, X. (2020). Responding to the "China Threat Theory": China's Soft Power Utilization and International Image Building from the Perspective of Cultural Diplomacy. *Journal of Central South University (Social Science Edition)*, 26(5), 168.

严骁骁. (2020). 应对“中国锐实力说”: 文化外交视角下中国的软实力运用与国际形象塑造. *中南大学学报(社会科学版)*, 26(5), 168.

<sup>80</sup> Ma, Q. (2020). Research on China's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy Strategy. *Communication Studies*, 4(29), 33-37.

马琼焯. (2020). 中国的软实力与文化外交策略研究. *传播力研究*, 4(29), 33-37.

<sup>81</sup> Xiang, W. (2020). Formation, Connotation, and Changes of Tourism Diplomacy. *International Perspective*, 12(5), 102-118.

项文惠. (2020). 旅游外交的形成, 内涵和变化. *国际展望*, 12(5), 102-118.

Morocco granted visa-free entry to Chinese citizens in 2016, the number of Chinese visitors to Morocco has increased by 378% year-on-year.<sup>82</sup> By the end of 2023, China had unilaterally implemented visa-free policies for some European countries. From November 2023 to March 2024, unilateral visa-free policies were successively implemented for passport holders from 11 European countries, including France, Germany, and Italy.<sup>83</sup> These measures are conducive to China achieving its cultural diplomacy goals through the promotion of tourism resources.

The strategies of cultural diplomacy between China and Europe often draw inspiration from and learn from each other, as do the strategies between China and Africa. China has gradually opened visa-free policies to European countries, similar to its approach to Africa. Meanwhile, cultural diplomacy between China and Africa has become increasingly enriched with cultural activities, attempting to draw inspiration from successful experiences in Europe. For instance, the "China-France Cultural Year" event in 2003 was regarded as a major breakthrough in the history of cultural exchanges between China and Europe, demonstrating the potential and importance of cultural diplomacy.<sup>84</sup> In Africa, similar cultural activities, such as the "Chinese Year," were not held until 2015, marking the first time China co-hosted a "national cultural year" event with African countries.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Travel Weekly | Voice of the Travel Industry. (2018). Hotels & Destinations: Travel Weekly. Accessed: <https://www.travelweekly.com/> (Accessed: 18 April 2024).

<sup>83</sup> Interview with European Commission Commissioner on China-EU People-to-People Exchange Mechanism: Striving for Balanced Bi-Directional Flow of Chinese and European Students. The Paper. 专访 | 欧委会委员谈中欧人文交流机制: 努力实现中欧学生平衡的双向流动. 澎湃新闻. Available at: <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1794758574621189745&wfr=spider&for=pc> (Accessed: 18 April 2024).

<sup>84</sup> Peng, X. (2006). Understanding China's Cultural Diplomacy from the "China-France Cultural Year". Journal of Shandong University of Science and Technology (Social Sciences Edition), 8(3), 81-87. 彭新良. (2006). 从“中法文化年”看我国的文化外交. 山东科技大学学报: 社会科学版, 8(3), 81-87.

<sup>85</sup> Zheng, W. (2016). The 2015 South Africa "Year of China": Culture as the Most Dynamic Element. Sino-Foreign Cultural Exchange, (2), 82-86.

Whether it is cultural diplomacy between China and Europe or between China and Africa, both are continuously increasing various types of cooperation projects and endeavoring to facilitate exchanges and collisions with local cultures as much as possible. As Pinna (2009) pointed out, such cooperative projects between countries help narrow the gap between developing and developed countries, promote deeper understanding among partners, and establish necessary cultural bridges for global dialogue. These efforts in cross-cultural cooperation not only contribute to the development of intergovernmental relations but also provide a broader platform for cultural exchanges among people worldwide.<sup>86</sup>

In the research process, we found many similarities between cultural diplomacy between China and Europe and between China and Africa, but there is a lack of comparative studies between the two. Additionally, there is a lack of evaluation criteria and methodologies for assessing the impact of Chinese cultural diplomacy activities, which hinders a comprehensive and objective assessment of their actual effects. Therefore, we will use Hungary and Morocco as specific case studies, employing intercultural communication theory for comparative analysis. We will start with a macro perspective to understand cultural diplomacy, gradually delve into micro-level case studies, summarize historical experiences from these case studies, and provide specific recommendations for the strategic planning and practice of Chinese cultural diplomacy.

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郑文. (2016). 2015 南非 “中国年”: 文化是最活跃元素. 中外文化交流, (2), 82-86.

<sup>86</sup> Pinna, C. (2009). EU-China relations in higher education: Building bridges in global cultural dialogue. *Asia Europe Journal*, 7(3), 505-527.

# III. Research Design and Research Questions

## 3.1 Comparative Case Study Approach

The comparative case study method is a commonly used research approach in the social sciences, particularly suitable for analyzing how different social actors respond to social forces and shape social and cultural environments. <sup>87</sup>Widely employed in social research, the comparative case study method synthesizes information across time and space, considering global, national, and local levels, making it an effective qualitative tool for studying the impact of policies and practices.<sup>88</sup>

By using the comparative case study method to analyze cultural diplomacy between China and Europe and between China and Africa, we can comprehensively compare the policy and practice impacts across different scales, locations, and historical periods using Hungary and Morocco as cases. This method allows for in-depth and comprehensive analysis through the application of vertical, horizontal, and transverse axes.

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<sup>87</sup> Ortner, S. B. (1984). Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties. *Comparative studies in society and history*, 26(1), 126-166.

<sup>88</sup> Bartlett, L., & Vavrus, F. (2016). *Rethinking case study research: A comparative approach*. Routledge

Specifically, the use of the vertical axis helps us focus on the impact of cultural diplomacy policies between China and Europe (Hungary) and between China and Africa (Morocco) at different scales. By analyzing from global to national to local levels, we can gain insights into the similarities and differences of these policies at different levels and their degree of influence on each scale.

The use of the horizontal axis enables us to compare the deployment of similar cultural policies by China in Hungary and Morocco in different locations. By observing their actual effects and influences in different social environments, we can explore the adaptability and feasibility of these policies in different geographical and cultural contexts more deeply.

The use of the transverse axis allows us to consider the historical evolution and positioning of cultural diplomacy policies between China and Europe (Hungary) and between China and Africa (Morocco). This helps us understand the reasons and trends behind the changes in these policies, thereby better grasping their future development direction and potential.

By employing the comparative case study method, we will be able to gain a profound understanding of the similarities and differences in cultural diplomacy policies between China and Europe (Hungary) and between China and Africa (Morocco), and reveal the influencing factors in different cultural, historical, and socio-political environments.

Through comparative analysis of policies and practices, we will provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding and insights for relevant fields, promoting the development of academic research and practical applications.

### 3.2 Case Study Selection: China Cultural Centers in Hungary and Morocco

Hungary, as an important partner for China in Europe, has established close cooperative relations with China, providing favorable conditions for the China Cultural Center to conduct more cultural exchange activities in the region. Hungary was the first European country to join China's Belt and Road Initiative. In addition to the Belt and Road framework, the two countries have engaged in various forms of friendly exchanges: as early as 1949, Hungary was one of the first countries to recognize and establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Over the past 70 years, the two countries have supported each other, mutually benefiting. In 1982, with the assistance of China, Hungary joined the International Monetary Fund, fully demonstrating the friendship between the two countries. In the 1980s and 1990s, multiple Chinese delegations visited Hungary to study economic policies, accumulating experiences for domestic reforms. Benefiting from the good economic and financial relations between the two countries, the Bank of China established a representative office in Hungary in 2002, becoming the first Chinese bank to open in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2015, Hungary became the first European country to co-build the

Belt and Road with China.<sup>89</sup>

In addition to economic ties, the two countries have also cooperated extensively in the cultural field. For example, Hungary was the first European country to establish bilingual Chinese-Hungarian primary and secondary schools in Budapest. In 2013, the governments of China and Hungary signed an agreement on mutual establishment of cultural centers. The Beijing-Hungary Cultural Center was officially inaugurated in 2013, becoming the first cultural center established in China by a Central and Eastern European country. In 2020, the China Cultural Center began operating in Budapest, the capital of Hungary. Furthermore, Fudan University will establish its first overseas campus in Budapest. Therefore, selecting Hungary as a case study object is conducive to exploring the practices and strategies of Sino-European cultural diplomacy in depth, providing valuable insights for cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Europe.

Morocco, as an important country in North Africa, has become one of the important locations for China to establish cultural centers in Africa due to its friendly cooperation with China. The cultural exchanges between China and Morocco have a long history. In the 8th century AD, the Tang Dynasty navigator Du Huan arrived in Morocco, and in the 14th century, the great Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta traveled to China along the ancient maritime Silk Road. Today, a statue of Ibn Battuta stands in front of the Quanzhou Maritime Silk Road Museum. Politically, Morocco was the second African

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<sup>89</sup> HORVÁTH, L. (2023) Built on commonalities, Opinion - Chinadaily.com.cn. Available at: <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202304/18/WS643e0a25a310b6054face446.html> (Accessed: 10 March 2024).



country to establish diplomatic relations with China. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1958, the two countries have supported each other's national independence and development endeavors. The late Premier Zhou Enlai visited Morocco and, together with King Hassan II, established a solid friendship between the two countries, initiating bilateral exchanges and cooperation in various fields. In 2016, China and Morocco established a strategic partnership, and bilateral comprehensive exchanges and cooperation have rapidly developed under the framework of the Belt and Road.<sup>90</sup>The China Cultural Center was established in Rabat, the capital of Morocco, in 2018, becoming the second overseas Chinese cultural center established in an Arab country, providing a new platform and opportunities for cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Morocco. Therefore, selecting Morocco as a case study object is conducive to a deeper understanding of the cultural exchange practices and cooperation results between China and Morocco, providing important theoretical and practical references for further promoting cultural exchange and cooperation between the two sides.

The study will focus on the China Cultural Centers established by China in Hungary and Morocco. The layout of China Cultural Centers globally differs from Confucius Institutes, as they have a wider range of cultural activities and larger venues, providing a broader space for China to showcase its multiculturalism on the international stage. In this context, Hungary and Morocco are strategic targets for China to establish cultural

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<sup>90</sup> Liang, J. (2021). Research on the Construction of Cultural Exchange and Cooperation Mechanism between China and Mozambique. Times Report.

梁家伟. (2021). 中摩文化交流合作机制建设研究. 时代报告.

centers. These two countries have unique geographical locations, cultural traditions, and social backgrounds, providing a rich comparative framework for this study.

### 3.3 Research Questions

This study aims to address the following key questions:

1. How has Chinese cultural diplomacy evolved over time and what historical factors have shaped its current trajectory?
2. What strategic considerations influenced the choice of Hungary and Morocco as key focal points for cultural diplomacy?
3. How do the Chinese cultural centers in Budapest and Rabat play a role in intercultural communication objectives?
4. What useful lessons can be drawn from the experiences of these two cultural centers in Hungary and Morocco for China's cultural diplomacy in Europe and Africa?

By exploring these questions comprehensively, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the impact of intercultural communication on cultural diplomacy activities in both the Central European and Central African contexts. Through a systematic analysis of the diplomatic practices of the Chinese Cultural Center in Budapest and the Chinese Cultural Center in Rabat, we aim to provide strategic recommendations and support for China's strategy to enhance its cultural diplomacy strategy and influence in

the international arena.

## IV. Methodology

### 4.1 Data Collection Methods

This study will use a variety of methods to collect data in order to analyze in-depth cultural diplomacy activities in Central Europe (in the case of Hungary) and Central Africa (in the case of Morocco). First of all, a document analysis will be conducted to select and review relevant documents such as official reports, press releases and cultural exchange agreements. This process will be conducted based on a comparative case study approach, focusing on the collection of official documents related to Chinese cultural centers. In addition, in order to obtain first-hand information, I will participate in the activities of the Chinese Cultural Center as a volunteer, directly observing and documenting the actual situation of the activities.

During the data collection process, we will adopt a mixed research methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. Specific technical means include using a web crawler written in JavaScript to collect data from the Chinese Cultural Center on Facebook. In addition, we will also collect and analyze data from the YouTube platform to comprehensively compare the activities of the Chinese Cultural Centers in Budapest and Rabat and their publicity effects.

At the same time, we will also refer to previous scholarly studies on the cultural dimensions of Hofstede in Hungary and Morocco, which cover the dimensions of individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, long-term vs. short-term orientation, and achievement orientation. These cultural dimensions are recognized as key factors influencing intercultural communication. By incorporating actual event data, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the differences between different national cultures and to provide more targeted recommendations for cultural diplomacy strategies.

## 4.2 Data Analysis Techniques

A variety of data analysis methods will be employed in order to explore in depth the core issues of cultural diplomacy between China, Europe and China. First, content analysis methods are applied to qualitatively analyze relevant documents and event records to identify key themes and perspectives. Second, quantitative data are processed using statistical analysis methods to reveal trends in the attitudes and behaviors of different groups. Finally, the inductive approach is combined to summarize the three-axis comparison using comparative case study methodology to synthesize the similarities and differences in cultural diplomacy between China and China, as well as its strategies and outcomes.

The combined use of these data analysis techniques will help us to fully understand the

challenges and opportunities of Chinese cultural centers in Europe (Hungary) and Africa (Morocco), thus providing insights and analysis for the study.

## V. Empirical Analysis

### 5.1 Overview of China Cultural Centers in Hungary and Morocco

The establishment of Chinese Cultural Centers in Hungary and Morocco is a significant initiative by China to promote cultural diplomacy. These cultural centers were established not only due to the deep historical ties and strong political relations but also driven by the demand for educational exchanges and cultural needs. Set up by the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism, these centers aim to promote Chinese culture through cultural activities, educational training, and information services, fostering mutual understanding and friendship between the people of the respective countries.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1949, China and Hungary have maintained close political and economic ties. Particularly in the late 2000s, China's Belt and Road Initiative further strengthened cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries, with Hungary becoming a crucial bridge for China's cultural exchange in the region. Additionally, the "2016-2019 Bilateral Cultural Cooperation Work Plan" signed between the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and the Chinese Ministry of Culture in 2015,

along with the cooperation agreement between the Hungarian National Gallery and the Beijing Fine Art Academy, provided a solid institutional guarantee for the establishment of the cultural center. Meanwhile, the growing interest of the Hungarian people in Chinese culture and the increasing demand for learning Chinese led to the official registration of the Budapest Chinese Cultural Center in 2020, making it the first cultural center established by China in the Central and Eastern European region. A detailed timeline of Sino-Hungarian diplomatic relations can be found in Table 1 of the appendix.

The Budapest Chinese Cultural Center (referred to as CCC Budapest) was successfully registered on June 15, 2020. Its establishment was based on the "Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Hungary on the Mutual Establishment of Cultural Centers" signed by the two countries in 2013. The process involved extensive preparation and planning, including property research, surveys, and negotiations since 2017, and the successful acquisition of the property in September 2019. Located in the heart of Hungary's capital, Budapest, the center covers nearly 5,000 square meters in a five-story European-style building with a beautiful surrounding environment. The interior skillfully blends Suzhou garden elements with Hungarian classical style. Through Chinese language classes, cultural experience activities, and displays of tourism resources, the Budapest Chinese Cultural Center has become an important platform for Hungarians to learn about Chinese culture. It actively uses social media platforms to post bilingual images, videos, and interactive activities,

thereby expanding the influence of Chinese culture.

In comparison, the cultural exchange history between China and Morocco is even longer. As early as the Tang Dynasty, Du Huan visited North Africa and documented his travels in the "Jingxingji." In the 14th century, Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta also visited China and recorded his rich observations. Morocco became the second African country to establish diplomatic relations with the new China in 1958, opening a new chapter of friendly exchanges between the two countries. In 1982, China and Morocco signed a cultural cooperation agreement, laying the foundation for bilateral cultural exchanges. The establishment of Confucius Institutes in Rabat and Casablanca in 2009 and 2013 marked a new stage in cultural exchanges between China and Morocco. The visit of King Mohammed VI of Morocco to China in 2016 established a strategic partnership between the two countries, followed by the signing of the Belt and Road cooperation agreement in 2017. The strong political relationship and the long-standing historical and cultural exchanges led to the official inauguration of the Chinese Cultural Center in Rabat, Morocco's capital, in 2018, becoming China's 36th cultural center in Africa. A detailed timeline of Sino-Moroccan diplomatic relations can be found in Table 2 of the appendix.

The Rabat Chinese Cultural Center (referred to as CCC Rabat) was officially inaugurated on December 18, 2018. It is an official cultural institution established by China in Morocco and is the first national-level cultural exchange platform set up

overseas by Chengdu. As the second overseas Chinese cultural center established in an Arab country, it marks a further expansion of China's global cultural communication network. Located in the Agdal district of Rabat, the center covers an area of 2,500 square meters and includes exhibition halls, multipurpose rooms, training classrooms, and a library. It fulfills seven major functions: introducing Chinese national conditions, cultural activities, humanistic dialogue, industry promotion, tourism recommendations, teaching training, and information services. Through cultural activities such as photo exhibitions, tea ceremonies, Shu brocade and embroidery, and lacquerware exhibitions, the Rabat Chinese Cultural Center showcases traditional Chinese culture and art. It also offers a library open to the public for free, providing multilingual books and e-book lending services. Additionally, the center actively promotes exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and Moroccan artists, fostering the deep development of cultural exchanges between China and Morocco.

The Chinese Cultural Centers in Hungary and Morocco have similarities in their functions and goals, such as promoting and publicizing Chinese culture through various forms of cultural activities and educational training, serving as platforms for cultural exchanges, and enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between the people of the two countries. Both centers are equipped with exhibition halls, multipurpose rooms, Chinese cooking experience rooms, and libraries.

However, there are differences in their establishment times, backgrounds, geographical



and cultural environments, and partners. The Budapest Chinese Cultural Center (CCC Budapest) was established after long preparation and planning with agreements and support from both China and Hungary. In contrast, the Rabat Chinese Cultural Center (CCC Rabat) was quickly advanced within the framework of China-Morocco cultural exchange cooperation, being established earlier than CCC Budapest. Located in Central Europe, CCC Budapest has a different cultural background compared to North African Morocco, leading to differences in specific cultural promotion activities and exchange forms.

CCC Rabat is established in cooperation between the Chengdu Municipal Government and the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism, with a focus on promoting Chengdu's tourism resources in its tourism promotion activities. On the other hand, CCC Budapest is set up in cooperation with the Suzhou Municipal Government and the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism, incorporating Suzhou garden elements into its architectural style and tending to promote Suzhou in related activities. Despite these differences, both Chinese cultural centers play important roles in promoting cultural exchanges and fostering mutual understanding between China and other countries.

## 5.2 Comparison of cultural contexts and activities

### 5.2.1 Cultural Background and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Analysis

Based on Hofstede's data, a table comparing the cultural dimensions of Hungary and Morocco was produced—Table 3 is placed in the Appendix.

#### A. **Power Distance and Social Structure**

Morocco has a larger power distance, where society generally accepts inequality in power and status, emphasizing hierarchy and authority. This means that in cultural exchanges, the importance of local authorities and traditional institutions must be fully considered. For example, in 2019, the Rabat Chinese Cultural Center (CCC Rabat) collaborated with the Moroccan government to host the "Belt and Road" China-Morocco Media Exchange Conference. In 2022, CCC Rabat, along with the Moroccan Fez "Bridges to The Future" Center and the African China Cooperation and Development Association (ACCAD), co-hosted the China-Morocco Handicraft Sharing and Exchange Conference. Activities at CCC Rabat are always organized in cooperation with official institutions.

In contrast, Hungary has a smaller power distance, with society tending towards equality and questioning authority. The Budapest Chinese Cultural Center (CCC

Budapest) interacts with the local population in a more egalitarian and open manner. For example, in 2024, CCC Budapest hosted the 2024 Image Asia China Film Screening Week at the Hungarian National Opera House, including events such as the "Film and Literature" themed book club and China-Hungary Director Dialogue Salon. Renowned Chinese directors like Xie Fei and Ding Sheng were present, and these activities were open to the Hungarian public without prior registration.

## **B. Individualism vs. Collectivism**

In Morocco, studies show that the management style exhibits a high degree of collectivism, mainly derived from Islamic religious traditions. Islam encourages a collective spirit through charitable donations and alms (Zakat and alms).<sup>91</sup> In 2022, CCC Rabat initiated a "Stories of Chinese People in Morocco" contest, and the winning entry was a video by the China-Morocco Express Company (Speedaf Express). This promotional video highlighted their business in Morocco and emphasized collective honor. CCC Rabat's activities often focus on collective themes, such as the 2022 China-Morocco Olympic Story Sharing Session and Olympic Movement Exhibition, and the China-Africa International Children's Comic Exhibition.

In contrast, Hungary tends to emphasize individualism, focusing on personal rights and independence. CCC Budapest attracts individuals and small groups through personal art

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<sup>91</sup> Al Maache M. (2002), « Peut-on parler d'un style de gestion marocain ? », Cahiers de recherche de l'ISCAE.

exhibitions. For example, in 2022, the "Culture and Bridges" canvas bag creative design activity showcased how Hungarian designers integrated Chinese and Hungarian cultural elements, attracting many individual art enthusiasts. CCC Budapest also created branded activities for individual columns, one being the food blogger series "Xiaofeng in Hungary." Hungarian Xiaofeng uses "dialogue" and "experience" methods to introduce and help locals understand Chinese culture, including programs on Chinese cuisine, tea culture, and music. Another series is the travel blogger "Tianyu in China," where Hungarian Tianyu shares photos, articles, and videos about his travels in China. By the end of May 2024, he had shared 26 articles.

### **C. Uncertainty Avoidance**

Moroccan society tends to reduce uncertainty and believes that it is the will of God. The phrase "Insha Allah" (meaning "if God wills") frequently appears in everyday Moroccan discourse, expressing a general fatalism. Therefore, cultural activities are often conducted in a structured, predetermined manner.<sup>92</sup> For example, in 2019, the Rabat Chinese Cultural Center offered Chinese culinary and painting classes. Additionally, in 2022, a Moroccan fashion show inspired by Hanfu was organized.

Hungarian society scores higher on uncertainty avoidance, emphasizing adherence to rules and structure.<sup>93</sup> However, the format of cultural activities still showcases

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<sup>92</sup> Balambo, M. A. (2014). Hofstede's model revisited: an application for measuring the Moroccan national culture. *International Journal of Business Quantitative Economics and Applied Management Research*, 1(3), 7-20.

<sup>93</sup> Falkné Bánó, K. (2014). Identifying Hungarian cultural characteristics in Europe's cultural diversity in the

innovation and diversity. For instance, the 2021 "Charm of Qipao: Co-Design a Hungarian-Style Qipao" event exhibited the integration and innovation of Chinese and Hungarian cultures through creative design. Furthermore, the 2022 "Dragon Boat Festival Cultural Experience Day" event brought traditional games and a garden fair into Budapest schools, allowing students to learn about Chinese culture in a fun and interactive environment.

## 5.2.2 Comparison of Social and Political Backgrounds

Based on the activity data from the Facebook pages of the Budapest Chinese Cultural Center and the Rabat Chinese Cultural Center, Tables 4 and 5 have been created.

### **A. Educational Cooperation**

In terms of educational cooperation, exchanges between China and Hungary are more intensive. As early as 1997, the two countries signed an agreement on mutual recognition of academic degrees and diplomas. In 2004, Budapest established the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School, the first public full-time school in Central and Eastern Europe to offer teaching in both Chinese and the local language. Additionally, in 2013, Hungary announced the provision of 200 government scholarships annually to Chinese students, promoting deep cooperation between the two countries in the field of education.

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21st century: a controversial issue.

In contrast, educational cooperation between Morocco and China is concentrated on the establishment and development of Confucius Institutes. In 2009, the Confucius Institute at Mohammed V University was established in Rabat, becoming an important platform for promoting Chinese language and culture in Morocco. Subsequently, in 2013, the second and third Confucius Institutes were established at Hassan II University and in Tangier, making Morocco the only Arab country with three Confucius Institutes. These institutions provide Moroccan students with important opportunities to learn Chinese and understand Chinese culture.

## **B. Cultural Exchange and Activities**

In terms of cultural exchange, both CCC Budapest and CCC Rabat host a variety of activities, but with different focuses. CCC Budapest emphasizes dialogue between Chinese and Hungarian cultures. For example, the Chinese-Hungarian Science Fiction Literature Seminar, organized in collaboration with the Chinese-Hungarian Literary Readers Club, facilitated in-depth discussions on Chinese literature among literature enthusiasts from both countries. Additionally, in 2023, the "China-Hungary Art Dialogue" event invited renowned Chinese embroidery artist Ms. Yao Jianping and famous Hungarian embroidery and lace artisan Ms. Pap Julianna Bernadett to share their respective embroidery stories. The same year, the "From Petöfi to Chinese Poetry—China-Hungary Poetry Dialogue" event, co-hosted by the Budapest Chinese

Cultural Center and the Petőfi Literary Museum, further enhanced cultural exchanges between the two countries.

In contrast, CCC Rabat focuses more on showcasing the cultures of China and Morocco to promote cultural exchange and integration. For instance, the 2022 Moroccan fashion show inspired by Hanfu highlighted the creativity and integration of Chinese and Moroccan clothing designs. Additionally, the 2023 China-Morocco Photography Exhibition, which displayed landscape photos taken by people from both countries, enhanced mutual understanding of each other's cultures.

A more specific example is the global Chinese calligraphy event "Lanting Gathering," initiated by the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Chinese cultural centers worldwide host this event, with local adaptations. On May 14, 2024, CCC Rabat held the "Lanting Gathering" Chinese Contemporary Calligraphy Art Exhibition—Chengdu Edition, inviting Chinese calligraphy teacher Chen Chaochen and Moroccan Arabic calligraphy teacher Khourari to showcase Chinese and Arabic calligraphy to the local community, demonstrating the integration and interaction between Chinese and Moroccan calligraphy. On June 28, 2024, CCC Budapest hosted the "Lanting Gathering" Chinese Calligraphy Theme Event, where Chinese-European calligrapher and painter Zhao Wenjie and Hungarian graphic artist and calligrapher Janos conducted an exchange and dialogue, focusing on discussions about Chinese calligraphy between Hungarians and Chinese participants.

### C. Tourism and Economic Cooperation

In terms of tourism and economic cooperation, the collaboration between China and Hungary is broader and deeper. In 2011, the two countries signed 12 bilateral cooperation documents covering investment, infrastructure, finance, logistics, and culture, with a total value of approximately 1.8 billion USD. <sup>94</sup>Based on this foundation, the Budapest Chinese Cultural Center (CCC Budapest), established in 2020, collaborates with the Suzhou Municipal Government to share resources from Suzhou. For example, activities such as the Suzhou National Orchestra's performance "Blossoming Flowers and Full Moon," the exhibition "When Su Embroidery Meets Honor of Kings," the China Suzhou Cultural and Creative Design Industry Fair, and the "Meet Beijing, Discover Jiangnan" Suzhou Cultural and Art Exhibition have been organized.

In contrast, Morocco's tourism cooperation with China mainly focuses on cultural and tourism promotion activities. The Rabat Chinese Cultural Center (CCC Rabat), registered in 2018, collaborates with the Chengdu Municipal Government to showcase numerous tourism resources related to Chengdu. In 2019, CCC Rabat organized the "China Tourism and Culture Week" series of activities, which included the "Beautiful China" photo exhibition, Chinese culture on campus activities, Chengdu intangible cultural heritage displays, China tourism promotion conferences, and tourism film

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<sup>94</sup> Bakondi, B. (2021). A comprehensive evaluation of Sino-Hungarian diplomatic relations from the political, economic, medical and educational perspectives. 从政治, 经济, 医疗, 教育各个方面全面评价中匈外交关系. POLGÁRI SZEMLE: GAZDASÁGI ÉS TÁRSADALMI TUDOMÁNYOS FOLYÓIRAT= CIVIC REVIEW: JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, 17, 302-313.



screenings. These activities covered major Moroccan cities such as Rabat, Casablanca, and Tangier.<sup>95</sup>

### 5.3 Evaluation of Effectiveness

The Chinese Cultural Centers in Hungary (Budapest) and Morocco (Rabat) are committed to promoting Chinese culture and deepening cultural exchanges with the local communities through a series of cultural activities and online interactions. These centers' activities include art exhibitions, concerts, lectures, and interactive social media content. By analyzing the social media data of the two cultural centers (mainly Facebook and YouTube), as shown in Tables 4 and 5 in the appendix, we can gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of these cultural diplomacy efforts in achieving their goals.

According to the homepage of the Budapest Chinese Cultural Center on Facebook, it has 11,000 followers and a group with 3,200 members, indicating a certain level of influence on social platforms. From July 14, 2020, to July 1, 2021, the center posted 698 posts on Facebook, covering topics such as Chinese tourism, education, language learning, and arts.<sup>96</sup> As shown in Table 4 in the appendix, although the average number of likes per post is 60.86, indicating that the content is appreciated by the audience (high

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<sup>95</sup> Wenlv Chengdu. (2019, July 25). Rabat Chinese Cultural Center: The "Bridgehead" for the Overseas Dissemination of Tianfu Culture. 文旅成都. (2019年7月25日). 拉巴特中国文化中心: 天府文化海外传播的“桥头堡”. Retrieved from <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/3s7ISBrTBtyxoMbH4ax0wg>

<sup>96</sup> China Cultural Center in Budapest. (n.d.). Facebook [Facebook page]. Retrieved July 1, 2024, from <https://www.facebook.com/CCCBudapest>

number of likes), the engagement (shares) is relatively low. For example, a post about "Liu Cixin and Chinese Science Fiction" received 21 likes and 2 shares, suggesting that while science fiction has a certain appeal to the audience, there is limited interaction.

On the YouTube platform, the Budapest center has 163 subscribers and 376 videos, mainly reposting tourism promotional videos of Chinese cities.<sup>97</sup> The Chinese titles of the video content may limit access for non-Chinese audiences, resulting in most videos having only single-digit views. Nonetheless, two featured programs—"Panda is Here" and "Tianyu in China"—which tell stories about Chinese culture from the perspectives of Chinese people in Hungary and Hungarians in China, respectively, using Hungarian with Chinese subtitles, show potential in increasing local audience interest.

The Rabat Chinese Cultural Center is also highly active on Facebook. According to the CCC Rabat Facebook homepage, it has 3,900 likes and 4,600 followers. From September 4, 2020, to July 1, 2021, the center posted 876 posts. The post with the highest number of likes was a job posting, receiving 822 likes, indicating that specific and practical information (such as job information) is very popular.<sup>98</sup> According to Table 5 in the appendix, posts about cultural and artistic activities also garnered significant attention, such as a post about a photography exhibition which received 285 likes, demonstrating the popularity of cultural events.

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<sup>97</sup> China Cultural Center in Budapest. (n.d.). YouTube [YouTube channel]. Retrieved July 1, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/@chinaculturalcenterinbudap577>

<sup>98</sup> China Cultural Center in Rabat. (n.d.). Facebook [Facebook page]. Retrieved July 1, 2024, from <https://www.facebook.com/centreculturelchinoispageofficielle>

Additionally, the CCC Rabat Facebook homepage frequently updates its cover photo to showcase posters of upcoming events. The social media content is primarily published in Arabic, which helps attract the local community's attention and maintain their continuous engagement and participation.

On YouTube, the Rabat Chinese Cultural Center showcases its excellent communication strategy. The center's YouTube account has 550 subscribers and 383 videos, which are meticulously categorized into 12 sections, including "Events and Exhibitions," "Tourism," "Cuisine," etc., helping viewers choose content based on their interests. Video titles are a combination of French, Chinese, and Arabic, optimizing search efficiency and expanding the audience reach.<sup>99</sup> Additionally, the inclusion of emojis in the titles caters to the tastes of younger viewers, making the content more attractive.

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<sup>99</sup> China Cultural Center in Rabat. (n.d.). YouTube [YouTube channel]. Retrieved July 1, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/@cccrabat>

# VI. Discussion of the Results and Findings

## 6.1 Cultural Diplomacy Strategies of China in Hungary and Morocco

While China's cultural diplomacy strategies in Hungary and Morocco share the common goal of promoting Chinese culture and strengthening bilateral relations through cultural activities and educational cooperation, their implementation is adapted to local contexts. The establishment of CCC Budapest and CCC Rabat has allowed the dissemination of Chinese culture to be more extensive and flexible. By engaging the public through various activities, these centers have strengthened interactions and exchanges with local people, deeply understanding each country's cultural background and social structure, and developing cultural diplomacy strategies more suited to the local context.

In Hungary, China's cultural diplomacy emphasizes educational cooperation, particularly in higher education and research. By establishing the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School and Confucius Institutes, China has deepened educational ties with Hungary, promoting cultural and knowledge exchange. The Budapest Chinese Cultural Center (CCC Budapest) actively organizes science fiction literature seminars and online cultural video series such as "Panda is Here" and "Tianyu in China." These activities not only attract young audiences but also showcase the diversity of Chinese culture through

modern technology and artistic creation, emphasizing individual participation and innovation.

In contrast, Morocco's cultural diplomacy focuses more on utilizing tourism and cultural resources to promote Chinese culture. The Rabat Chinese Cultural Center (CCC Rabat) organizes activities such as fashion shows inspired by Hanfu and Chinese tea culture exhibitions, showcasing the integration of Chinese and Moroccan cultures. These activities reflect the traditional charm of Chinese culture while incorporating Moroccan local features. Events like the "China-Morocco Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition" and the "China-Morocco Youth Cycling Activity" emphasize collective participation of families and communities, highlighting the importance of collectivism and tradition.

Although these strategies differ, both aim to deepen cultural understanding and friendship between China and Hungary, and China and Morocco through cultural education and interactive activities. Through these efforts, the Chinese cultural centers in both countries have not only enhanced bilateral cultural exchanges but also promoted broader social participation and cultural integration, laying a solid foundation for further cultural diplomacy.

## 6.2 Challenges and Opportunities

The main challenges in implementing cultural diplomacy in Hungary and Morocco include language barriers, political sensitivities, and cultural differences. However,

there are also opportunities, such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the growing interest in Chinese culture, which together shape the complex landscape of Sino-Hungarian and Sino-Moroccan cultural diplomacy.

In Hungary, cultural diplomacy places particular emphasis on educational cooperation, leveraging the widespread Chinese language courses offered by the five Confucius Institutes. For example, the Confucius Institute at Eötvös Loránd University conducts Chinese language teaching at several universities and high schools, greatly promoting the spread of Chinese and understanding of Chinese culture. Hungarian cultural activities tend to adopt a "dialogue" format, such as the "China-Hungary Poetry Dialogue" and "China-Hungary Art Dialogue" organized by the Budapest Chinese Cultural Center. These events not only attract a wide audience but also deepen cultural interaction and understanding between the two countries.

In contrast, Chinese language education resources in Morocco are relatively limited, confined to only three Confucius Institutes. Therefore, cultural activities are mainly focused on "exhibition" formats, such as the Moroccan fashion show inspired by Hanfu and the China-Morocco Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition organized by the Rabat Chinese Cultural Center. These activities attract audiences by showcasing tourism and cultural resources while leveraging historical figures like Ibn Battuta to deepen mutual understanding between the peoples of the two countries.

Political sensitivity is another significant challenge. As official departments of the

Chinese government, Chinese Cultural Centers may face resentment from certain groups, particularly those critical of Confucius Institutes. However, Chinese Cultural Centers differ from Confucius Institutes in that they engage in a broader range of cultural activities, including cuisine, arts, and language, conducted in independent venues, providing conditions for greater diversity and scope in cultural activities.

Additionally, the cultural differences between Hungary and Morocco require Chinese Cultural Centers to consider local customs and traditions when planning events. For instance, during important religious holidays such as Ramadan in Morocco, it is essential to avoid scheduling activities to demonstrate respect and understanding of the local culture.

On the opportunity side, the Belt and Road Initiative provides a broad platform for cultural exchange cooperation between China and both Hungary and Morocco. A typical example is the "Suzhou Impressions—Suzhou Taohuawu Woodblock Prints Exhibition" organized by the Budapest Chinese Cultural Center in cooperation with the Suzhou Municipal Government. Such events not only enhance mutual cultural understanding but also deepen cultural ties between the two countries. Good diplomatic relations provide a solid foundation for cultural diplomacy activities, as seen in the successful China-Morocco Media Exchange Conference organized by the Rabat Chinese Cultural Center in collaboration with the local government.

Technological advancements, particularly in digital media and the internet, also offer new platforms and methods for disseminating cultural content. Both the Budapest and Rabat Chinese Cultural Centers use social media and online platforms to publish multilingual content, expanding the influence and participation of cultural activities, making cultural exchange broader and more in-depth.

Despite the challenges, through strategic planning and leveraging existing opportunities, China's cultural diplomacy activities in Hungary and Morocco can effectively promote cultural integration between China and these countries, deepen friendships and understanding between their peoples, and demonstrate the important role of cultural exchange in enhancing international relations.

## VII. Conclusion

### 7.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study provides a detailed analysis of the cultural diplomacy activities conducted by Chinese cultural centers in Hungary and Morocco, exploring educational cooperation, the individualistic and collective nature of cultural activities, and the optimization of social media strategies. The results of the empirical analysis enable us to gain a deep understanding of the cultural diplomacy strategies between China and Hungary, and China and Morocco, revealing the specific performance and effectiveness of various



strategies in practice. This not only enhances the understanding of cultural diplomacy strategies but also offers valuable insights and concrete recommendations for research and practice in this field.

### **1.Importance of Educational Cooperation:**

The educational cooperation between China and Hungary is closer, as evidenced by bilingual schools and scholarship programs, highlighting the emphasis on educational exchanges. Although Morocco mainly promotes Chinese language and culture through Confucius Institutes, there is still a strong desire for cultural learning and exchange. This difference underscores the central role of educational cooperation in cultural diplomacy, particularly in fostering long-term cultural exchange and understanding.

### **2.Cultural Differences in Individualism and Collectivism:**

Hungary's individualistic tendencies lead to cultural activities that focus more on individual participation and independent thinking, such as literary seminars. In contrast, Morocco's collectivist culture favors organizing exhibitions and group activities, such as fashion shows and photography training. This difference not only reflects the influence of social and cultural structures in both countries but also guides the adaptive strategies in designing cultural activities.

### **3.Diversification of Cultural Activities:**

Sino-Hungarian exchanges tend to be promoted through academic and cultural dialogues, while Sino-Moroccan exchanges are enhanced through cultural displays and experiential activities. This finding emphasizes the need to customize cultural activities according to the cultural characteristics and reception modes of the target country to improve the effectiveness and attractiveness of cultural exchanges.

#### **4.Optimizing Social Media Strategies:**

The study found that effective social media strategies include community building, publishing multilingual content, optimizing video content classification and search, and activity optimization based on popular content. For example, the Budapest center successfully built a community on Facebook, while the Rabat center significantly increased audience engagement and activity reach on YouTube through multilingual and detailed classification strategies.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of customized cultural exchange strategies in different cultural contexts and the use of modern technological means such as social media to optimize cultural dissemination strategies. These insights not only provide specific guidance for China's cultural diplomacy practice but also contribute valuable experiences and strategies to the global field of cultural diplomacy research and practice.

## 7.2 Insights for Sino-European and Sino-African Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy activities need to be tailored to the cultural characteristics and social needs of the target country. For example, the Budapest Chinese Cultural Center effectively integrates into Hungary's cultural environment by hosting concerts that combine Chinese folk music with Hungarian folk music. In Morocco, the Rabat Chinese Cultural Center attracts a large number of young Moroccan audiences by organizing Chinese Film Weeks, showcasing modern Chinese culture.

The diversification of activity forms is also essential for the success of cultural diplomacy. For instance, CCC Budapest significantly enhances the reach and impact of cultural activities by hosting China Culture Day at Corvinus University of Budapest and the Asia Film Screening Week at the Hungarian State Opera House. These events make the dissemination of Chinese culture in Hungary more widespread.

At the same time, establishing long-term and stable cooperative relationships with local governments and cultural institutions is key to ensuring the sustained effectiveness of cultural diplomacy activities. Such cooperation not only provides the necessary resources for cultural exchange but also helps standardize and systematize the conduct of cultural activities. For example, the cooperation between CCC Rabat and the Chengdu Municipal Government provides continuous support for Sino-Moroccan cultural exchanges, a model that is worth promoting in other regions' cultural diplomacy

practices.

Innovation is the driving force behind the development of cultural diplomacy activities. By utilizing digital media technologies, such as interactive online activities with the Chengdu Museum virtual tour, the Chinese cultural centers in Hungary and Morocco have successfully diversified the ways of disseminating Chinese culture. This innovation not only increases participation in cultural activities but also significantly enhances the influence of Chinese culture among the younger generation, demonstrating the flexibility and foresight of cultural diplomacy in adapting to modern technological developments.

### 7.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should enhance the in-depth analysis of social media data by utilizing natural language processing techniques to assess the sentiment and themes of comments, thereby gaining a more comprehensive understanding of audience reactions. Given the relatively short establishment period of the cultural centers, it is advisable to extend the research timeframe for long-term observation to evaluate the lasting effects of cultural exchange activities. Additionally, researchers should improve their data analysis skills or collaborate with data science experts to more effectively handle complex social media data. Expanding the geographical scope of research to include more countries and regions, as well as adopting interdisciplinary approaches that integrate theories from

sociology, communication studies, and international relations, will help deepen the understanding of the impact of cultural diplomacy strategies. This will provide richer strategic recommendations and more precise effectiveness evaluations for the practice of cultural diplomacy.

## VIII. Bibliography

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- 8.2 Magazines, online magazines, news releases, websites
- 8.3 Briefings, diplomatic cables, letters and memoranda
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## IX. Appendices

9.1 Table 1 - Timeline of Sino-Hungarian Cultural Diplomacy

Timeline of Sino-Hungarian Cultural Diplomacy		
Year	Event	Cultural Diplomacy
1949	Hungary announced the recognition of the People's Republic of China; both countries established diplomatic relations in the same year.	No
1997	Hungary and China signed an agreement on mutual recognition of academic degrees and diplomas.	Yes
2003	Hungary joined the European Union, further enhancing China-Hungary relations.	No
2004	China and Hungary signed the Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Hungary, agreeing to elevate bilateral relations to a friendly cooperative partnership.	No
2004	The Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school was established in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, the first public full-time school in Central and Eastern Europe to teach in Chinese and the local language.	Yes
2004	During Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to Hungary in June 2004, a joint statement on establishing a "friendly cooperative partnership" was signed.	No
2006	The first Confucius Institute in Hungary was established at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest.	Yes
2010	Heilongjiang University of Chinese Medicine in China and	Yes

	Semmelweis University in Hungary launched a cooperation program in traditional Chinese medicine, promoting and spreading TCM culture.	
2011	China and Hungary signed 12 bilateral cooperation documents covering investment, infrastructure, finance, logistics, and culture, with a total value of approximately \$1.8 billion.	Yes
2012	The overall plan for China-CEEC cooperation was first launched in Budapest in 2012.	No
2012	The second Confucius Institute in Hungary was established at the University of Szeged, in cooperation with Shanghai International Studies University.	Yes
2013	Hungary announced 200 government scholarship slots for China annually.	Yes
2013	The third Confucius Institute in Hungary was officially established at the University of Miskolc, supported by Beijing University of Chemical Technology and Wanhua Chemical Group based in Yantai, Shandong.	Yes
2013	The Liszt Institute Hungarian Cultural Center was established in Beijing, the only center among Hungarian cultural centers worldwide to introduce and promote the Kodály Method.	Yes
2013	The Budapest Chinese Cultural Center was officially inaugurated in Budapest, the capital of Hungary.	Yes
2014	The book "Hungarian Rhapsody in Beijing—65 Years of China-Hungary Relations" was published.	Yes
2015	The Hungarian central bank launched the "Central Bank RMB Project."	No
2015	The Hungarian Ministry of Culture and the Chinese Ministry of Culture signed the "2016-2019 Bilateral Cultural Cooperation Work Plan."	Yes
2015	The Hungarian National Gallery and the Beijing Academy	Yes

	of Fine Arts signed a cooperation agreement.	
2015	Hungary became the first European country to sign an intergovernmental cooperation document with China under the Belt and Road Initiative.	No
2015	The fourth Confucius Institute in Hungary was established at the University of Pécs, in cooperation with Hebei United University in China. This is a TCM-featured Confucius Institute, the first on the European continent and the seventh globally.	Yes
2016	Hungary became the first European country to legislate for traditional Chinese medicine, granting EU medical licenses to TCM practitioners and recognizing Chinese TCM university degrees.	Yes
2016	The Hungary Qihuang TCM Center was established in Budapest by the Hungarian Oriental Pharmaceutical Group and the Gansu Provincial Health and Family Planning Commission, providing TCM treatments, education, and activities, and producing TCM products for sale across Europe.	Yes
2016	The Hungarian central bank announced the direct exchange of RMB and HUF in the Chinese foreign exchange market.	No
2016	Within one month, the Hungarian Embassy in China and the Budapest Hungarian Cultural Center organized a series of cultural promotion activities under the theme "Hungarian Month."	Yes
2017	President Xi Jinping and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán jointly announced the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.	No
2017	Heilongjiang University of Chinese Medicine and Semmelweis University in Hungary signed a formal	Yes

	agreement with the support of both governments to jointly establish the China-CEEC TCM Center.	
2017	China provided 100 government scholarship slots to Hungary.	Yes
2019	The Confucius Institute at the University of Debrecen was officially inaugurated in Debrecen, Hungary's second-largest city.	Yes
2020	During the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, Hungary provided medical supplies to China as soon as possible.	No
2020	The Budapest Chinese Cultural Center was successfully registered in Hungary.	Yes
2022	The Hungarian government and China signed an agreement to establish an intergovernmental Belt and Road cooperation committee.	No
2023	The music master's program jointly organized by Zhejiang Conservatory of Music and Eötvös Loránd University was approved.	Yes
2024	Renmin University of China and Eötvös Loránd University jointly established the China-Hungary Civilization Exchange and Mutual Learning Cooperation Research Center in Budapest.	Yes

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## 9.2 Table 2 - Timeline of Sino-Moroccan Cultural Diplomacy

Timeline of Sino-Moroccan Cultural Diplomacy		
Year	Event	Events with cultural diplomacy
751-762	Tang Dynasty Chinese navigator Du Huan traveled in Central Asia, West Asia, and North Africa, and wrote "Jingxing Ji".	Yes
1346	Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta visited China and wrote "The Travels of Ibn Battuta".	Yes
1368	Yuan Dynasty traveler Wang Dayuan visited Morocco and wrote "Island Records".	Yes
1958	Morocco established diplomatic relations with the	No



	People's Republic of China and signed the first intergovernmental trade agreement.	
1963	Premier Zhou Enlai visited Morocco and met with King Hassan II.	No
1975	China sent its first medical team to Morocco, a practice that continues to this day.	No
1982	Signed a cultural cooperation agreement and several cultural cooperation implementation plans.	Yes
2000	The International Institute of Higher Education in Morocco and the International Business University of China signed an educational cooperation agreement in Beijing.	Yes
2008	The Confucius Institute Headquarters and Mohammed V University signed an agreement.	Yes
2009	The Confucius Institute at Mohammed V University was established in Rabat, the capital of Morocco.	Yes
2013	The second headquarters of the Confucius Institute at Hassan II University was established in Casablanca.	Yes
2013	Moroccan translations of Chinese literary works were published.	Yes
2014	During the first meeting of the Morocco-China Joint Cooperation Committee, a roadmap for cooperation in science and technology was signed in Rabat.	No
2016	King Mohammed VI of Morocco visited China, establishing a strategic partnership and granting visa-free entry to Chinese citizens.	No
2016	Morocco allowed Chinese citizens to enter Morocco visa-free for 90 days.	No
2017	The third Confucius Institute was established in Tangier, making Morocco the only Arab country with three Confucius Institutes.	Yes
2017	Morocco signed the "Belt and Road" cooperation	No

	agreement with China.	
2018	The sixth session of the China-Morocco Joint Economic and Trade Commission was held in Rabat.	No
2018	The China Cultural Center in Rabat was officially inaugurated.	Yes
2020-2021	During the COVID-19 pandemic, China provided medical supplies and shared prevention and control experience with Morocco.	No
2020	The heads of China and Morocco held a phone call, planning post-pandemic cultural exchanges.	No
2020	The "China-Morocco Tourism Forum" and "Retracing Ibn Battuta's Journey to China" promotional event were held online.	Yes
2021	China and Morocco co-hosted the eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).	No
2023	China signed a memorandum of understanding on the green hydrogen project in southern Morocco.	No
2023	China and Morocco signed a memorandum of understanding on agricultural cooperation.	No

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### 9.3 Table 3 - Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions for Morocco and Hungary

Hofstede Cultural Dimensions of Morocco and Hungary				
	Hungary	Explanation	Morocco	Explanation
Power Distance Index (PDI)	46	Hungary has a relatively low power distance, indicating a society that values equality and decentralization of power. Employees feel comfortable expressing opinions and questioning authority.	70	There is a high level of power distance in Moroccan society and a general acceptance of the existence of power inequalities and social hierarchies.
Individualism (IDV)	71	Hungary is a highly individualistic society where personal achievements and freedom are highly valued. Social relationships are more based on individual interests rather than collective ones.	24	Morocco is more collectivist and values group interests and the importance of the family.
Motivation towards Achievement	88	Hungary exhibits a high level of masculinity, with a strong emphasis on	53	Morocco has a moderate emphasis on achievement,

and Success (MAS)		competition, achievement, and material success. There is a strong motivation towards success.		competition, and success, which may be expressed in the active pursuit of career success and personal fulfillment.
Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)	82	Hungary has a high tendency to avoid uncertainty, showing a preference for clear rules and structures to minimize ambiguity and risk.	68	Morocco is more inclined to dislike uncertainty and risk and prefers an environment of rules, structure and certainty.
Long-Term Orientation (LTO)	45	Hungary has a medium score in long-term orientation, indicating a balance between valuing future planning and thrift, as well as respecting traditions and short-term results.	25	Moroccan culture is more inclined to short-term gain and instant gratification and values tradition, past values and social norms.
Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR)	31	Hungary scores low on indulgence, suggesting a society that is more restrained, with a tendency towards moderation and less emphasis on instant gratification.	25	Morocco tends to be restrained, focusing on self-control and self-discipline as opposed to indulgence and hedonism.

Data source:

<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=hungary%2Cmorocco>

## 9.4 Table 4 - Facebook Account Data of the China Cultural Center in Budapest

Table 4: Summary of the Facebook Account Data of the China Cultural Center in Budapest

Metric	Value
Total Records	698
Average Likes	60.86
Average Shares	1.46

The complete dataset can be found in the electronic attachment "Table 4 - Facebook Account Data of the China Cultural Center in Budapest" from link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UhiWRrqFzODEW8p1Az9Ha6lYlr\\_PPkA8/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UhiWRrqFzODEW8p1Az9Ha6lYlr_PPkA8/view?usp=sharing)

## 9.5 Table 5 - Facebook Account Data of the China Cultural Center in Rabat

Table 5: Summary of the Facebook Account Data of the China Cultural Center in Rabat

Metric	Value
Total Records	876
Average Likes	17.03
Average Shares	0.31

The complete dataset can be found in the electronic attachment "Table 5 - Facebook Account Data of the China Cultural Center in Rabat" from link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1H9CVBLAuuH24cvpzDKZY7t4UXeFWMga4/view?usp=sharing>

## 9.6 Appendix 6 - JavaScript Code for Form Validation and Data Submission

```
function sleep(ms) {  
    return new Promise(resolve => setTimeout(resolve, ms));  
}
```

```
function getText(node) {  
    let accumulator = [];  
    let nodes = [];  
  
    nodes.push(node);  
  
    while (nodes.length > 0) {  
        let node = nodes.shift();  
  
        if (node === undefined || node === null) {  
            continue;  
        }  
  
        if (node.nodeType === 3) { // 3 == text node  
            accumulator.push(node.nodeValue);  
            continue;  
        }  
  
        for (let child of node.childNodes) {  
            nodes.push(child);  
        }  
    }  
  
    return accumulator.join(' ');  
}
```

```

let entries = [];
let skip = 0;
let limit = 1000;

for (const child of document.querySelector('.test-2').children) {
  child.scrollIntoView();

  if (skip > 0) {
    skip -= 1;
    continue;
  }

  if (limit % 10 === 0) await sleep(3000);

  await sleep(1000);

  let entry = {};
  let entryRoot =
child.children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].childr
en[0].children[0].children[12].children[0].children[0];

  try {
    let textDiv = entryRoot.children[2].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0];
    entry.text = getText(textDiv).replace(";", ",").replace("\n", " ");

    let likesDiv =
entryRoot.children[3].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].c
hildren[1].children[0].children[0].children[1];
    entry.likes = Number(getText(likesDiv));

    try {
      let sharesDiv =
entryRoot.children[3].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[1];
      let raw = getText(sharesDiv);

```

```

    let shareMatches = /(\d+) shares/.exec(raw);
    entry.shares = shareMatches === null ? 0 : Number(shareMatches[1]);
    let commentMatches = /(\d+) comments/.exec(raw);
    entry.comments = commentMatches === null ? 0 : Number(commentMatches[1]);
  } catch {}

  try {
    let sharesDiv =
entryRoot.children[3].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[0].children[2];
    let raw = getText(sharesDiv);
    let shareMatches = /(\d+) shares/.exec(raw);
    entry.shares = shareMatches === null ? 0 : Number(shareMatches[1]);
    let commentMatches = /(\d+) comments/.exec(raw);
    entry.comments = commentMatches === null ? 0 : Number(commentMatches[1]);
  } catch {}
} catch {
  console.log("failed");
  console.log(child);
  console.log("");
}

console.log(entry);
entries.push(entry);

limit -= 1;

if (limit === 0) {
  break;
}
}

let result = 'text;likes;shares;comments\n';
for (entry of entries) result += `${entry.text};${entry.likes};${entry.shares};${entry.comments}\n`;
console.log(result);

```



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