UNDERSTANDING CANADIAN-CHINESE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH THE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE

by

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Abstract

There are currently over 300 Confucius Institutes in nearly 100 countries around the world. The fast rise of the Confucius Institute since its inception in 2004 has attracted attention from both political and academic arenas. Recent research on the Confucius Institute has focused on China’s goal to increase its soft power through this establishment. The objective of this Master’s thesis is to explore the nature of the partnership between Chinese and Canadian universities through the Confucius Institute. Specifically, three Canadian Confucius Institutes are selected for the case studies. This interdisciplinary research uses Constructivism from International Relations and Internationalization of Higher Education as the theoretical framework for analysis. Data collection involves interviewing key administrative staff from each site along with a review of secondary resources such as online and print literature. Significance of key findings and suggestions for future research are provided in the conclusion of this thesis.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

There are many reasons why people learn new languages. They may perceive the ability to speak another language can increase their employability or career mobility. Others may think they can become more sophisticated by being able to converse with people of different nationalities while being exposed to their cultures. On the other hand, entrepreneurs may wish to improve their business and negotiation skills by being able to communicate in the language of their trading partners. No matter what the reason is, people who want to learn a language will want to learn it from the official source. This may mean living temporarily in the country where the language is spoken, or taking private courses with a tutor. One of the places where these prospective students can take language courses with the confidence that the materials and instructors are accurate and appropriate is the cultural and language institute sponsored by the respective government. Places like The British Council, Alliance Française and Goethe Institut are popular choices to learn English, French and German respectively. Their popularity is due to easy accessibility for learners as they have many branches around the world. Instead of learners having to visit these countries, the language and culture are brought to the learners. In addition, the language courses offered are often certified and standardized, so the learners can rest assured that their skills will be recognized.

Although these cultural and language institutes may be seen as a place for language learning and culture awareness to the students, they serve a different purpose for the governments that provide funding and resources for them. These governments view such institutions as a conduit for cultural diplomacy with the general public of the countries where they are established. European nations have long used these institutions to improve their public relations around the world. In 2004, China established its own
language and cultural institute, The Confucius Institute. Since then, it has consistently received media attention, some of which has been controversial due to China’s internal political conditions and international status.

It is interesting, however, to note that China has tended to approach international relations differently than its Western counterparts. For example, China identifies its relations with African nations as a ‘win-win’ situation as it vouchsafes non-interference and south-south solidarity while maintaining its own national interests. The Confucius Institute also has a few distinct features when compared to the European language and cultural institutes. Essentially, China has taken a Western establishment and concept of international relations and modified them to suit its own needs.

1.1 Research Questions

The key research question for this thesis is as follows: What is the nature of the Chinese-Canadian university partnership as experienced through the Confucius Institute?

One of the distinct features of the Confucius Institute is the collaboration between a university in China and a foreign university. The foreign university acts as a host for the Confucius Institute with the support and resources coming from the Chinese counterpart. This is seldom seen in the European cultural and language establishments. Currently, there is little literature on the details of the partnership, such as its organizational and administrative structure, and how it facilitates cultural diplomacy in the host country. Therefore, the main focus of this research is to explore the host’s perspective on the operation of the university partnership and its desired goals in such a venture.
The sub-questions include:

- How is a Canadian Confucius Institute operated, from the perspective of the host university?
- How is cultural diplomacy conducted through the Chinese-Canadian university partnership at the Confucius Institute?
- What outcomes do Canadian universities expect to experience from hosting the Confucius Institute?
- What insights can be drawn from the Canadian experience of the Confucius Institute?

These questions will help further explore the nature of the Chinese-Canadian university partnership in a context that combines both the fields of international relations and higher education. The results of this research may allow other nations and higher education institutions to consider similar arrangements for collaboration.

1.2 Rationale and Current Context

China has emerged as a possible future superpower with the economic boom that began in the late 20th century. With increasing participation in global affairs, it became necessary for China to re-introduce itself to the world. Large-scale events such as the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics and the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai provided a one-time opportunity for China to display its best to the world. However, the worldwide attention China has received only lasted as long as the events themselves. Different strategies are needed if China wants to create a continuous exposure to a positive image of the nation abroad.
Cultural diplomacy uses arts, culture and language as a conduit for nations to make friendly relations with the mass public of other nations. As mentioned above, national language and cultural institutions fall in this category. In the post 9/11 world, countries have once again revisited these cultural diplomatic strategies to increase their soft power instead of using the more confrontational means of economic and military tactics. China is one of the latest countries that have joined this bandwagon. Cultural diplomacy is not a new strategy; in fact, it can be traced back to the ancient civilizations of Greece and Mesopotamia. But there is not much scholarly literature that explains the mechanism of how it works and the degree of its effectiveness. This master’s research thesis will hopefully begin to explore some of these topics and offer some insights into the operation of the Chinese language and cultural institution using Canadian case studies as context.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter two of this thesis provides a literature review of several topics pertinent to the research questions. First, a definition of public and cultural diplomacy will be provided, along with a brief historical overview of this phenomenon in the Western context and a description of the mode and mechanism under which it operates. Past and present examples of cultural diplomacy will also be provided. The second section of chapter two will focus on education as a diplomatic tool. Education may be seen as ideal diplomatic conduit because it can reach a wide audience and produce a long-lasting effect. The next section takes an in-depth look at the development of China’s views on international relations and diplomacy throughout its history. This information may provide a background for understanding the Confucius Institute, especially the way it is
organized and operated. This is followed by a formal introduction of the Confucius Institute, which includes background information and statistics provided by online and print sources. The last section of the literature review will give a brief overview of past Chinese-Canadian university partnerships, some of which can be considered as predecessors to the Canadian Confucius Institutes.

The two theoretical and conceptual frameworks used for the research will be laid out in chapter three of this thesis. First, the Constructivist paradigm in International Relations theory will be introduced and it will be used to explain the mechanism of cultural diplomacy and soft power. This will help readers understand the purpose of cultural and language institutions such as the Confucius Institute and the government’s hope of what they can achieve. The second framework is the internationalization of higher education and university-to-university partnerships. University partnerships are one of the features found in the Confucius Institute that are not found elsewhere. Therefore, by using the lens of internationalization of higher education and university partnerships, we may gain further insights into other motives for both foreign and Chinese universities to collaborate via the Confucius Institute.

The research methods used in this research will be described in chapter four. This is a qualitative piece of research where three case studies are used to explore Confucius Institutes in Canada. Interviews were conducted with directors and chairs of the steering committee of each Confucius Institute. The information obtained from the interviews was supplemented by secondary literature and online resources related to the Confucius Institute.
Chapters five and six consist of findings and an analysis of the research, and are organized based on the themes found in the interviews. The presentation of key findings begins with an overview of the three selected Confucius Institutes in Canada, their core goals and funding structures. Other themes include the issue of autonomy in relation to the Confucius Institute Headquarters and the special interests the Canadian Confucius Institutes have. The next two sections include examples of interactions from each Chinese-Canadian university partnership and the institutional benefits of hosting the Confucius Institute, as relayed by the participants. They are followed by themes such as student movement through exchange and factors that facilitate bilateral collaboration. The last two sections will focus on the future directions of these Canadian Confucius Institutes and improvements that could be made. Finally, there is a brief discussion of the political sensitivity of Canadian media depiction of Confucius Institutes, as seen by the participants. The data is examined under the theoretical frameworks of Constructivism and Internationalization of Higher Education with a focus on exploring the different themes presented in the literature review. Themes such as local research by the Canadian universities and inter-university communications are presented. The last section of the analysis concerns the issue of university autonomy in relation to the Confucius Institute partnership.

In the last chapter, a conclusion to this Master’s thesis is provided through a discussion of the key research question and its subquestions. Both the limitations and the significance of the research findings are discussed. This thesis ends with recommendations for further research on university partnerships as conducted through the Confucius Institute.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter two provides background information on the topics of diplomacy and higher education partnerships. It begins with the definition of diplomacy, its development and the many subtypes, which includes cultural diplomacy. The description of how education may serve as a diplomatic tool will follow. Since the dominant current model of diplomacy has originated in Europe, a section will be dedicated to a historical summary of China’s view of the world and the development of its own diplomatic system. Some examples of China-Canada university partnership are included in this section to provide a more complete context for this thesis. This chapter will end with the introduction to the Confucius Institute, which has been created on the basis of a Western concept of cultural diplomacy, but modified to suit China’s unique view of the world. It is seen in the context of a China-Canada university partnership.

2.1 Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the communication between sovereignties on issues ranging from trade and economics to security. It is conducted through the interactions of government representatives known as diplomats. Evidence of diplomatic work can be traced back to ancient civilizations, albeit in a primitive form, when messengers were sent from one kingdom to another for different purposes. This specialization of communication for interstate affairs has been developed primarily in a European context as the political landscape evolved from kingdoms and empires to nation states there first. In the 15th century, the concept of resident ambassadors emerged out of Italy, and later in the 18th century, French formalized how states interact with one another with the creation of official foreign ministries (Hamilton and Langhorne, 2011). Both of these became early
milestones for the development of modern diplomacy. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 introduced a new single political system where multiple states act independently and on equal terms with one another without a higher overarching authority above them (Gross, 1948). Thus, the need for a formal diplomacy structure within each nation state increased as the lateral interactions between these states also increased. Since then, diplomacy has diversified into various forms with different actors involved. One of the forms is public diplomacy where a nation directs its effort towards the mass public of another with the intention of influencing the actions of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens (Signitzer and Coombs, 1992).

A country may resort to arts and culture to make a positive impression upon the population as one of the public diplomacy strategies. Cull (2008) has defined cultural diplomacy as ‘an actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad’. Early examples of cultural diplomacy include the establishment of libraries in Ancient Greece for visiting scholars and the education of the sons of ‘friendly kings’ provided by the Romans. Artists and music troupes had also accompanied royals on their travels across Europe in the 19th century where they would participate in different activities conducive to diplomacy (Cavaliero, 1986). More recent examples include the film series offered by the Information Resource Centers and American Centers located within American embassies around the world. These American films not only ‘tell American’s story to the rest of the world’ but they are also ‘the best demonstrations of America’s values of freedom of expression’. (Kerry, 2009, p. 36) Each center selects films from the different thematic categories created by the State
Department. This not only helps the center staff to find appropriate sources but also resolves licensing issues with the motion picture companies. These thematic categories range from politics and the presidency, to women’s issues, the American Dream and the environment (ibid, p.42). Western governments have dedicated resources in their foreign affairs departments specifically to cultural relations. However, most governments preserve an arm’s length distance from these cultural agencies to prevent the perception of propaganda being imposed on foreign audiences and have their efforts thereby backfire. For example, BBC World Service is funded through the form of grant-in-aid by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), so that the BBC World Service maintains significant independence from the British government in its editorial, managerial and operational units. The BBC World Service offers news and other programmes in 32 languages through the radio, TV and online mediums with its latest additions being Arabic TV and Persian TV programs that cater to Middle Eastern populations (FCO, 2012).

Cultural diplomacy can be seen as a means rather than an end. The end would be an increase of soft power for the nation organizing these cultural activities abroad. Soft power is the ability to influence others through attraction, persuasion, and agenda-setting (Nye, 2011). Nye (2008) noted that not all cultural diplomacy can result in greater soft power. If a country’s culture, values and policies are not compatible with the ones of another nation, then the end result may be nil or in some cases, even backfire. This can be illustrated by the recent protests in the Middle East, sparked by an anti-Islam movie made by a U.S. citizen (Pomeroy, 2012). Therefore, the use of arts and culture does not
guarantee the creation of friendship; cultural diplomats must be careful of the contents and themes presented.

There is currently a renewed interest in cultural diplomacy since its peak during the Cold War as many have observed that military force and economic sanctions are not cost-effective ways to persuade a nation to cooperate, especially in face of the constant threat of terrorism since the 9/11 tragedy. Despite recommendations from cultural diplomacy proponents, it is not always the favored strategy of governments. For example, one scholar noted that the US government had decreased funding due to the long period of time required for cultural diplomacy to take effect and a ‘traditional lack of public support for the arts’ (DoS, 2005, p. 7).

How is cultural diplomacy different from propaganda? The ten characteristics of propaganda suggested by Walton (1997) will be used to answer this question. They are as follows:

1. A dialogue structure with a clear sender and receiver of the message.
2. Message content is expressed through verbal or non-verbal means.
3. A goal-directed structure with an end result of the receiver carrying out a particular action or support for a certain policy.
4. The receiver must involve a mass audience from social groups.
5. Since propaganda is goal-oriented, logical reasoning becomes irrelevant as long as the goal is achieved.
6. Propaganda uses one-sided argumentation with the lack of critical discussion of both sides of an issue.
7. The mass audience is persuaded to commit to a certain action through propaganda.
8. Use of propaganda is justified by the results.
9. Emotionally charged language and persuasive definitions are used.
10. Propaganda is used to perpetuate a dichotomy of good and evil, with the sender convincing the receiver to do good by committing to a particular agenda. Although cultural diplomacy fits some of the characteristics listed above, it cannot be considered as propaganda. Cultural diplomacy does have a sender, being the nation, and a receiver, being the mass public of the targeted foreign nations. The message is usually delivered through verbal and non-verbal media, such as lectures, films and arts exhibits. However, cultural diplomacy does not have a specific end goal which foreign populations must commit to and it does not use emotive language to persuade the audience. While a nation’s cultural diplomacy promotes its own values, it does not denounce the actions and values of other countries. Therefore, cultural diplomacy is not propaganda in the sense of the negative connotations that are attached to the term.

2.2 Education as a Diplomatic Tool

One of the public diplomacy strategies is the use of education, either through study abroad programs or the use of cultural centers in foreign countries, to bring awareness of a nation’s beliefs and values to the world. In addition to reaching a mass audience through these educational settings, governments and diplomats are also accessing a group of the population who have taken the initiative in participating in these programs. This can be advantageous since these participants may be especially receptive to different cultural norms and ideologies. As part of the long-term diplomatic investment, the end goal of these scholarly programs is to influence these citizens who may, later on, influence their own government’s policies in favour of the sender nation. These former students may later hold key positions in the administration that create these policies or may become lobbyists and activists who will exert external pressure on the
government. As Philip Coombs, a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs once said, educational exchanges are part of the ‘fourth dimension’ of foreign policy, also they are more people-oriented since they focus on people’s ideas and values, their understanding and attitudes, and their skills and knowledge (Bu, 1999).

Although travel for the purpose of study in foreign lands has existed since ancient times, the use of education specifically for building diplomatic relations has only occurred since the late 19th century. France began this diplomatic venture when it decided to spread the French language around the world to strengthen its global presence, while Italy followed suit soon after (Anderson, 1993). It began with the French government’s support for the work of different societies and religious missions. Later, secular organizations were put in place, with the Alliance Française being the first of its kind established in 1883 in Europe. France had also set up lycées in places like Cairo, Beirut, and Alexandria, and as far as New Orleans. Other European countries such as Germany and England followed suit with the launch of their own cultural and language institutions in 1923 and 1934 respectively.

Cultural diplomacy involving educational institutions can be broken down into two types, cultural and language institutions and academic exchange programs. Some of the well-known cultural and language institutions are the UK’s British Council, Germany’s Goethe Institut, the aforementioned Alliance Française of France and Italy’s Dante Alighieri. The primary purpose of these organizations is to teach the official national language to interested participants in their home countries. Each location offers accredited language courses and standardized testing for adults as well as language programs for children. The nation’s arts and cultural heritage are also showcased through
various events and activities such as music concerts and theatre performances. Even though each institution provides different language programs and events, these activities have become a site of competition between countries. For example, UK created the British Council when it realized it was falling behind France in gaining revenue from foreign students (Donaldson, 1984). The US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations has also commented that it was losing competition to the British Council when it interviewed Egyptians and Jordanians on choosing the best site for learning English (Kerry, 2009). Non-Western nations, such as Japan, have also begun using cultural and language institutions to promote themselves to a worldwide audience. The operations of these cultural and language institutions have facilitated the foreign policies of the sponsoring nations throughout their history. During the 19th and early 20th century, Germany and Italy reconnected with their expatriates in foreign communities, thereby increasing their citizens’ nationalism (Paschalidis, 2009). On the other hand, the US used their American Centers during the Cold War to introduce foreign citizens to the democratic values and freedoms valued in America and to counter Communist ideologies in areas of Africa and the Middle East.

Academic exchange programs have also played a significant role in cultural diplomacy among Western nations. As nations understand each other through knowledge, information and human contact, these programs provide intercultural and international interactions that can strengthen bonds in international cooperation (Lindsay, 1989). In the case of US exchange programs, they provide students, professionals and scholars the experience of living in American society as a way of fostering mutual understanding and long-term cooperation between the US and other foreign nations.
Therefore, these exchange programs are often targeted to specific groups in foreign populations, groups that can have influence on their own governments. An example of such programs is the Chevening Scholarship sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK. Accepted applicants are usually identified as potential ‘future leaders, decision-makers and opinion formers’ of their home country. Upon the completion of the one-year Masters’ degrees, the students must return to their home country and ‘contribute to its socioeconomic development, by implementing the new skills and knowledge acquired in the UK’ (FCO, 2012b). Another well-known exchange program, the Fulbright program, offers foreign scholars the opportunity to carry on their work in the US for a designated period of time. Scholars and intellectuals are ideal participants because their experiences and reflections of the time spent in the foreign country may be deemed more credible than the general marketing campaigns presented by the host countries (Efe Sevin, 2010). Nations do not only target these academic exchange programs with key influential adult figures, but they also invest in the future generation. By offering these programs to adolescents and young adults, these host nations hope to reap favourable influences in the long run. The Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program is an example of such an initiative that is funded by the US Department of State. This scholarship program specifically offers youths ‘from countries with significant Muslim populations’ to spend up to a maximum of one school year in the United States (YES, 2012). Not only are Muslim youth invited to live in the United States; American youth are also invited in the reverse YES Abroad Program in these selected countries.
2.3 A Historical Overview of Chinese International Relations and Diplomacy

The early dynasties and the Middle Kingdom

The ancient Chinese civilization began with the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties. Although once thought to be successive, it is now suggested that all three coexisted for a period of time and that the Shang had overthrown the Xia before its own demise (Roberts, 2011). These groups lived in the Northern Plain of China where they were inland and far from the threats of other civilizations (Stuart-Fox, 2003). This distinct geographical location has essentially formed the world view of the Middle Kingdom in these early Chinese people. The Shang believed in divination and cosmology, and also in Shang Di, the original ancestral ruler, with whom they communicated through consultations with oracles. The Zhou incorporated the Shang’s beliefs with their own when they came into power. The Zhou’s ancestral deity was called \textit{tian}, meaning Heaven, and the imperial rulers were called \textit{tian-zi}, sons of Heaven. Therefore, it was the duty of the \textit{tian-zi}, to connect the people living on Earth with Heaven (ibid, p. 10). The Zhou period was divided into Western Zhou and Eastern Zhou periods. The latter was then further split into the Autumn and Spring period and the Warring States period. Confucius emerged as a key philosophical figure in the Warring States period (481-221 CE) and his teachings and beliefs are still prominent today in China.

Confucius and the Confucian worldview

In this section, I will describe some of the key teachings of Confucius as they have shaped much of the Chinese society as well as other societies of East Asia, including Korea and Japan. Confucian philosophy, in essence, differentiates East Asian nations from the Western world. Confucius, or \textit{Kung Fuzi}, was born in 551 BCE and
died in 479 BCE. His distinct philosophical views may have been deeply affected by living in the Autumn and Spring period where wars between states were frequent and political allegiances were fleeting. Confucius’ primary concern was to restore moral and social order in a period of societal unrest. One of the central beliefs he put forward is the importance of harmony, *he* (和). It is important to note that Confucius is not the one who came up with the concept but it was first developed by a philosopher several hundred years before him, named Shi Bo, from the Western Zhou period (Li, 2008). From Shi Bo’s writing, harmony (*he*) occurs when a favourable relationship is formed among a diversity of things. Therefore, it is important to have diversity in order for a society to thrive, whereas too much sameness would lead to its demise (Li, 2006). To further elaborate on Shi Bo’s *he*, Confucius suggests that equilibrium, or *zhong* (中), is needed to act as a foundation for harmony, *he*, to occur (Li, 2008). Equilibrium is the ideal state of balance in people and in society, achieved through proper social order (Chan, 2012). This social order requires everyone to accept their place in the social and political hierarchy. Li (2006) has defined four features of the Confucian harmony:

1. Harmony describes how the world operates and how people ought to act.

2. Harmony is relational, people react to one another. For example, one person is not capable of harmonizing.

3. Harmony does not mean perfect agreement but rather, people getting along despite differences. This is seen in one of Confucius’s saying, ‘The *jun-zi* (gentleman) harmonizes but does not seek sameness, whereas the petty person seeks sameness but does not harmonize’ (君子和而不同, 小人同而不和). (Analects 13.23)
4. A harmonious relationship can mean mutual benefit and mutual constraint. No one party will win over the other. As mentioned above, harmony is one of the many key concepts in Confucian philosophy. It is also a concept that played a crucial role in forming the Chinese view of international relations and diplomacy as we will see later. I should state that the contribution and significance of Confucius and his teachings are so vast that it is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with them in detail.

**From Qin to Tang dynasty**

Warring between different states within Chinese civilization continued into the Qin period even though the Chinese were aware of the presence of other foreign tribes around them. The Qin emperor not only unified the Chinese states for the first time but solidified its territorial expansion with the building of the Great Wall. Such expansion reinforced the view of the world as ‘all under Heaven’, and the idea that the emperor as the son of Heaven was morally obligated not merely to his empire but to the entire world. This concept has helped foster a feeling of superiority in the Chinese people and affirmed their belief that China is indeed the Middle Kingdom with other smaller, more inferior foreign kingdoms in the periphery (Stuart-Fox, 2003, p. 20). In the case where conquest could not be accomplished, appeasements were used to entice other foreign groups into submission. For example, when the Han ruler was unable to defeat the Xiongnu people, he employed the diplomacy tool of ‘harmonious kinship’ by marrying off a Chinese princess to a Xiongnu leader along with the delivery of lavish gifts every year in order to keep the Xiongnu at a non-threatening distance (Roberts, 2011, p. 29). By the end of the Han period, the Chinese had come to view the world as five concentric circles in
hierarchical order with the emperor in the centre being in the highest position of power. Outside the innermost zone of the five circles lay two outer zones. The middle zone includes the foreign non-Chinese ‘barbarians’ who are controlled by China, and the outermost zone contains the foreigners that were beyond the control of the empire. This circular categorization of different populations not only reaffirmed the Chinese superiority but created the earliest form of the tributary system. This hierarchical structure dictated the amount and quality of tribute (in the form of local products and services) in descending degree (Ames, 1991).

Little had changed in the development of the Chinese worldview between the end of the Han dynasty and the beginning of the Tang dynasty. Trade and tributes continued between the centre and the peripheral groups. However, empires came and went as internal wars and conflicts broke out. China was without a single imperial ruler for a time and was split into several kingdoms. Before long, however, the Sui dynasty (589-618 CE) reunified China and built the foundation for China to flourish in the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE). The Sui continued to use inter-marriages as a form of diplomacy to facilitate friendly relationships and trade with neighbouring groups. In addition, they had reached out to initiate alliances with external groups to contain the Turks from invasion (Roberts, 2011, p.50).

In the Tang dynasty, the Chinese had successfully expanded into the western region which is modern-day Yunnan. With this expansion, they had gained the recognition of suzerainty from Tibet. The Uighurs in the north had also made an alliance with the Chinese following the retreat of the Turks in the area. To the northeast, both Korea and Japan became tributary units relating to China after each turned into a unified
Not only did the Chinese benefit from the increased trade privileges and tributes from these new peripheral additions, they were also able to exert vast cultural and political influence as these regions adopted many Chinese values in their institutions and practice. The biggest gain of all was the recognition of China as being the superior figure in the entire region.

The Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing Dynasties and the Tribute System

Shortly after the fall of the Tang dynasty, China once again was without a main ruler. Instead, it was divided into the five dynasties in the north and ten kingdoms in the south. China was reunited under one central emperor in the Song dynasty. During this period, Chinese civilization had undergone further developments in its economics, politics and culture with the continuation of trade with neighbouring states. The Mongols defeated the Song and became the Yuan dynasty. This reduced the feeling of superiority in the Chinese. The Mongols rejected much of Chinese culture and practices and brought in their own systems. It is also interesting to note that the first visit by a European occurred during the Yuan dynasty. A Franciscan monk by the name of John of Plano Carpini, was ordered to initiate contact with the Mongols with the goal of converting them to Christianity by Pope Innocent IV and the Holy Roman Empire. Internal rebellions in China and a weakening in the Mongolian army then caused the downfall of the Yuan dynasty.

The year 1368 marked the beginning of the Ming dynasty. A key development in foreign relations during this dynasty was the overseas explorations ordered by the Yongle emperor in 1405 and 1421. He appointed the grand eunuch, Zheng He, as the leader for these voyages which involved over 20 000 crew members and the use of massive ships.
At the end, Zheng He had reached thirty-seven countries from places like India and Sri Lanka, to as far as Somalia in Africa and Mecca in the Middle East. Historians have come up with different reasons for such large-scale expeditions. Some suggested the need to increase the number of different trade routes as one of the practical reasons. Others suggested that Yongle needed to seek out additional recognition from new peripheral states to solidify his place as the Son of Heaven. This is perhaps best explained by the tributary system that the first Ming emperor, Hongwu, had fully established in the beginning of the dynasty. Tributes, as noted before, are usually comprised of produce and artefacts that were local to the peripheral regions. They were delivered during special missions from the neighbouring regions far and wide. Official trade was accompanied by these missions and areas closer to China were required to present tributes every three years while areas further away were required to send tributes less frequently. It was emphasized that the quality needed not to be lavish, but they represented a state’s respect and submission to the Chinese emperor. Tributes were to be presented in a way directed by the Chinese court. First, foreign envoys were to arrive at one of the designated ports. They were then brought to the imperial court where they were given instructions on how to properly behave and kowtow (bow) in front of the emperor before the official banquet. These envoys were entertained with banquets until the end of the visit and they were accompanied by court officials upon departure. This was done with the expectation that the Chinese envoys would be treated with the same extravagance when received on foreign soil (Stuart-Fox, 2003, p. 76). All of this was done to restore and reinforce the view of Chinese superiority as the Middle Kingdom with the emperor having been given the mandate of Heaven.
The Qing dynasty lasted from 1644 to 1911; although it was one of the longest dynasties in China, it was also the last one. The tributary system continued to be followed in the imperial court as this was seen as a mutual benefit to both China and the contributing country since the sender would receive trading privileges from the mission and from their willingness to acknowledge China as the supreme Middle Kingdom. At this time, Europeans had reached Southeast Asia and had set up trading posts, but they were unable to penetrate into the Chinese network. The Chinese felt they needed to be cautious when dealing with foreign trading groups as much as they wanted to increase their trade network (Roberts, 2011, p. 152). Near the end of the Qing era, areas surrounding China had been colonized by powerful European nations such as the French taking over Vietnam and Burma submitting to British rule. As a result, tribute missions gradually ceased and the Middle Kingdom found itself becoming isolated and increasingly threatened. China’s sense of superiority began to crumble when it was defeated in the Opium Wars and was made to make unfair concessions to the Western nations.

After the First Opium War, China was made to sign the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. Initially, this Treaty did not signal defeat in the mind of the Chinese officials. Instead, they had viewed it as a way of ‘preventing further troubles from happening’ (Zhang, 1991). The opening of five specific ports and providing of further trading rights were seen as containing the ‘barbarians’. Most of these affairs were handled in Canton, where the Western diplomatic residences were located, far away from the capital of Beijing. Although the entire Chinese population might not have sensed the Western threat, the end of the First Opium War had signalled the beginning of a changed world
order for China. Following the Taiping rebellion and the Second Opium War, the imperial court was ready to restore China to its former glory. The road to restoration would be through self-strengthening strategies, as proposed in the documents submitted by Prince Gong in 1861 (Teng and Fairbank, 1953). The first such strategy was the establishment of the Zongli Yamen (總理衙門, office in general charge of foreign affairs), a governmental body that exclusively handled Western relations. Not only had China finally accepted foreign states as equal partners through the creation of the Zongli Yamen, but it had also allowed Western envoys to reside in the capital of Beijing and gradually, despite the hesitations of some Chinese officials, it signified that China had begun to adapt to the Western model of international relations (Zhang, 1991, p. 18).

**Rise of a nation-state: the Republic of China**

China’s attempt to adapt to the Western version of world order did not prevent further attacks from foreigners. The Chinese not only had to defend themselves against British and French imperialism, but they encountered an emerging imperial power, Japan. The Qing dynasty was further weakened by a series of wars, beginning with the Second Opium War with Britain and France (1856-1860), the Sino-French War (1883-1885), and followed by the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). The end of the 19th century was marked by the 100 Days’ reform and the Boxer uprising, events that led to further social unrest within China.

The year 1911 marked the beginning of the Republic of China following the demise of the Qing dynasty. Shortly before the establishment of the republic, considerable changes and reforms were made in Chinese society. First, the military, or the ‘New Army’ had been reformed according the Japanese and German models with a
redirected focus on national defence as opposed to handling internal conflicts (Zhang, 1991). Second, the establishment of different ministries in the central government, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to replace the Zongli Yamen, Ministries of Education and Commerce, had brought China closer to the Western form of political administration. Despite the heavy price that China had to pay under different concessions to the Western nations, it was able to participate in international affairs in a limited way. For example, China was invited to two Hague international peace conferences in 1899 and 1907, which it subsequently signed and ratified. No longer the Middle Kingdom it once was, China had adapted itself to being in the periphery of a European-dominated international system (ibid, p.37). Unhappy with China’s subservient position and subjection to unequal treaties imposed by Western nations, students increasingly turned to protest to reflect their dissatisfaction with the government.

The Revolution of 1911 saw the birth of the Guomindang (Chinese Nationalist Party) with key figures such as Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongsan) and Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) exercising leadership. For a short period of time, China was without a central government and it was divided up among warlords. At this time, the Guomindang had reached out to the Soviets for political and military assistance to strengthen their nationalist movement. This had caused further disapproval and isolation from the Western democratic nations. The May Fourth Movement and the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party both occurred during the Warlord Era. The May Fourth Movement was sparked by the decision of the Allies to reassign Shandong to Japan after it seized control from the Germans during World War I at the Treaty of Versailles.
Student demonstration turned to a national protest, and Chinese officials eventually rejected the Treaty.

During its rule, the Chinese Nationalists made several reforms in an attempt to re-establish China as a stronger nation. Key achievements include the introduction of the Chinese silver dollar, rescheduling of foreign debts and creation of a central bank, among other economic and financial restructurings. The Guomindang had also made reforms in education with compulsory education first coming into effect in 1940 and promoted mass literacy campaigns (Roberts, 2011). However, by the late 1930’s, the Guomindang’s power status was threatened by the increasingly popular Chinese Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong.

**Modern day China: A People’s Republic**

Both Nationalists and Communists worked together to fight against the Japanese during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). But as soon as the War ended, both parties fought against each other. This internal conflict lasted several years, with the Communists being the winner. The Nationalists were forced to retreat to Taiwan where they remain as a political party today. It was the beginning of the Cold War when the Communists took power in 1949. Given Moscow had provided assistance during the civil war, Mao decided to support the Soviets as a sign of loyalty to socialism (Mark, 2012). In 1954, Zhou Enlai, the premier and foreign minister at the time, established the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence for China’s foreign policy. They include ‘mutual respect’ for every nation’s sovereignty, ‘mutual non-aggression’, ‘mutual non-interference’ in others’ internal affairs, ‘equality and mutual benefit’ and ‘peaceful coexistence’ (ibid, p. 33). These Five Principles continue to be a key directive for
China’s diplomatic relations today, as they are mentioned in many foreign policies of the government. Although it was not formally recognized as such, cultural diplomacy was indirectly implemented beginning from the early 1950s when China offered scholarships for African students to study in China. Twenty-four students from Kenya, Egypt, Uganda and Cameroon participated in the first program. The number of African students has increased to the thousands in 2009 (Ferdjani, 2012).

In the second half of the 20th century, China has undergone rapid transformations, both internally and externally. Soon after the end of the civil war, China became a key Soviet ally in the beginning of the Cold War. Internally, it was striving to rebuild its economy through the Great Leap Forward of 1958 but with disastrous results. The nation needed better strategies to stimulate economic growth after the Sino-Soviet Split and the Cultural Revolution in the 1950s and 60s. However, during these tumultuous years, China never lost sight of re-establishing itself as a prominent nation-state after the ‘Century of Humiliation’ that saw the Middle Kingdom crumble in the face of unfair Western treaties and concessions. The momentum began to shift when China embraced an open market economy in the late 1970s. The rapid economic development finally gave China an opportunity to invest in formal cultural diplomacy campaigns.

2.4 Introduction to China’s Confucius Institutes

The first Confucius Institute opened in 2004 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Since then, over 353 Confucius Institutes and 473 Confucius Classrooms have been established in 104 countries around the world. The Confucius Institute is modelled after the European language institutions such as the British Council and Alliance Française. The creation of the Institute is not only the answer to the world’s increasing demand for
Chinese language learning, but it is also part of the Chinese government’s plan to use culture and language to develop friendly relations with other nations. As stated in the 16th National People’s Congress, China will help create a fair and rational international order by learning and accepting the cultures of different nations through conducting exchanges and cooperation based on the principles of independence, equality, mutual respect and non-interference (Xinhua, 2002). This is again reiterated in the 17th National Congress when current President Hu Jintao commented that culture plays a crucial role in the rise of the nation’s overall strength (Xinhua, 2007).

The Confucius Institutes are non-profit organizations that offer six essential services to foreign populations around the world. They are (Hanban, 2009):

1. Chinese language teaching
2. Training for Chinese language instructors
3. Delivering of Chinese language teaching resources
4. Administrating of the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (Chinese Proficiency Test)
5. Providing information and consultative services concerning China’s education, culture and other areas
6. Conducting language and cultural exchange activities between China and other countries.

The purpose of the Confucius Institute is to provide Chinese language education around the world, to help foreign citizens to understand the Chinese language and culture better, to create better educational and cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and other countries, while strengthening friendly relationships and promoting multiculturalism in hopes of building a harmonious world.
The Confucius Institute is a bilateral cooperative venture between China and foreign parties. The partnership can fall into one of the following categories (Hanban, 2010):

1. A partnership between a Chinese university and a foreign university
2. A partnership between a Chinese secondary school and a foreign secondary school (also known as the Confucius Classroom)
3. A partnership between a foreign nongovernmental organization and a Chinese university
4. A partnership between a foreign government and the Chinese government
5. A partnership between an enterprise and a university.

According to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Confucius Institutes (Confucius Institute Online, 2012), an interested foreign institute must first submit an application to the Confucius Institute Headquarters. The Confucius Institute Headquarters is affiliated with China’s Ministry of Education and is governed by the Council of the Confucius Institute Headquarters. The Council is composed of an executive body and general council members. Representatives from different state ministries and committees such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Commerce, are recommended by the Chinese State Council while general Council members are heads of the board of directors of the overseas Confucius Institutes. The interested institution must be able to demonstrate significant demands for Chinese language and culture learning at its location, that there is physical space, personnel and facilities available along with adequate funding for the establishment as part of the application package. Once the application has been approved, a cooperative agreement will be signed by both Chinese
and foreign parties. The Confucius Headquarters will provide a set amount of money to help with the initial setup of the Confucius Institute abroad and will match subsequent funding raised by the foreign Confucius Institute at a 1:1 ratio. The Confucius Institute Headquarters is also responsible for providing support and resources to each individual Confucius Institute. It will provide guidelines and assess the quality of the programs and activities carried out by each Confucius Institute. In addition, an annual conference is held by the Headquarters in Beijing for all the Institutes to come together to exchange ideas. In return, each Confucius Institute must submit an annual report to the Headquarters outlining the tasks achieved in the past year, the next year’s plan and the costs associated with it for approval.

As previously mentioned, the Confucius Institute can be seen as part of the Chinese government’s initiative to facilitate relations with other countries. This is evident in the ten General Principles that are listed in the first chapter of the Constitution and By-Laws. Both the first and fifth principles reiterate the goals set during the 16th and 17th National Congress in that

‘the Confucius Institutes devote themselves to satisfying the demands of people from different countries and regions in the world who learn the Chinese language, to enhancing understanding of the Chinese language and culture by these peoples, to strengthening educational and cultural exchange and cooperation, between China and other countries, to deepening friendly relationships with other nations, to promoting the development of multiculturalism, and to construct a harmonious world’, and ‘adhering to the principles of mutual respect, friendly negotiations, and mutual benefit, the Confucius Institutes shall develop and facilitate the teaching of the Chinese language overseas and promote educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other international communities’. (Hanban, 2012, p.1)

In addition, the Confucius Institutes will follow the principle of non-interference by abiding by the laws and regulations of the host countries and respecting local
traditions and customs while not interfering with and abiding by the laws and regulations of China.

2.5 China-Canada University Partnership

Many Western scholars have visited and taught in China since the first Jesuit mission came ashore in the 1500’s. The reverse can also be said for their Chinese counterparts. Some of the first records of Chinese students studying abroad include the Chinese Educational Mission in the late 1800’s, when China sent 120 young men to study in the United States as part of the self-strengthening strategies in response to the increasing Western threat (Desnoyers, 1992). After the Boxer uprising and subsequent defeat, the Chinese had used the indemnity fund to establish an American preparatory school, which has evolved into the present-day Tsinghua University. In addition, Empress Dowager Cixi had announced the granting of degrees for those who had studied in foreign countries (Roberts, p. 203). Other European countries had also set up colleges and universities in China for a variety of purposes in the 1900’s (Hayhoe, 1989).

Educational interactions between China and the West were largely suspended after the Communist Revolution of 1949, when China first leaned heavily on the Soviet Union, then attempted total self-sufficiency during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Formal educational interactions did not resume with Western countries until China opened up to the world in the late 1970’s.

Canada’s diplomatic relations with China resumed in 1970 amid the Cold War and the sovereignty issues between Taiwan, (formerly known as Formosa) and China. Among trade and political discussions between the two countries some partnerships between Canadian and Chinese education institutions gradually developed. The Canada-
China Scholars Exchange Program was established in 1974 to facilitate scholars from each country to visit the other. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) provided extra funding so that the program could be extended for research collaboration (Klabunde, 2009). In 1983, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) initiated the Canada-China Management Education Program, which ran until the mid-1990s and linked management schools in universities on both sides. In 1988, it funded the Canada-China University Linkage Program (CCULP). As a result, 31 institutional linkages were formed, which gained funding to work together on various projects. The Canadian government chose to focus on the education aspect of development assistance because it believed this could increase economic growth and improve trade between the two parties (Hayhoe, 1989, p. 130). To further the progress in human resources development, the Special University Linkage Consolidation Program (SULCP) was put in place in 1996 with funding provided by CIDA. Like CCULP, which it built upon, it was administered by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) along with the Chinese Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation. The program lasted five years with eleven projects that linked a Canadian university with one or more Chinese universities or institutes. One of the projects includes the training of Chinese nurses to improve healthcare in under-served regions of China through the Degree Program for Certificate Nurses in China project. Faculty from the School of Nursing at the University of Manitoba worked with counterparts at West China University of Medical Sciences on creating a five-year undergraduate degree
program for new students and a two-year nursing degree program for the nurses who already went through the three-year certificate program (Nassr and Tunney, 2000).

Between 1980 and 2000, approximately 37,000 Chinese scholars, researchers and students received training and became experts in their fields and institutions from participating in the Linkage programs. Many of the partnerships carried out in the 80s have led to more advanced collaboration in the fields of management, environment, health, engineering, agriculture, the sciences, energy and education in the 1990s (Jackson, 2003). In the 21st century, Canada-China education partnerships have included private-public ventures. For example, the Canadian Institute of Business and Technology Corporation (CBIT) collaborates with several Chinese universities in providing degree and certificate programs along with establishing satellite campuses in China. As it has flourished on the global stage with its increasing economic power, China has also taken the initiative to provide funding to send its students to Canada to further their studies (Klabunde, 2009, p. 7).

Since Canada resumed interactions with China 40 years ago, the nature of the Canada-China education partnership has evolved. In the beginning of the relationship, Canada was the donor of developmental aid and China was the beneficiary in areas such as medicine, agriculture and environment, fields that can be considered as fundamental to national survival needs. However, as China has become an increasingly influential world player, it has become more proactive in establishing collaborative linkages appropriate to its changing needs, and it no longer needs development assistance from CIDA.

This chapter has provided the background information pertinent to the thesis on the Canadian experience of Chinese-Canadian university partnerships, which may be
seen as the context into which Confucius Institutes were introduced in the early 21st century. The chapter began with a discussion of diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, their definitions and examples that are derived from the European literature. It was followed by the explanation of how education has become a diplomatic tool used by different nations. The third section of the chapter looked at the Chinese view of international relations and diplomacy and demonstrated how drastically different it is from the Western view. It is precisely this difference in worldview that has led to the creation of the Confucius Institute, a cultural and language institute built out of the European model but with significant modifications to suit China’s needs. The last section of this chapter provided a glimpse of educational partnerships that have been unique to the Canada-China context.

In the following chapter, two theoretical frameworks will be introduced. They are constructivism, a paradigm in international relations and internationalization of higher education. In addition to an in-depth description of each framework, an argument will be presented about why they are being used for this research thesis.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This chapter describes the theoretical framework used in this thesis. The first section will describe the Constructivist paradigm within International Relations theory while the second section will discuss the Internationalization of Higher Education. Each section begins with a description of the theory, followed by an explanation of how the theory is to be used to explore the Canadian-Chinese university partnerships through the Confucius Institute. Assumptions made and possible limitations of the two theories are also discussed at the end of the chapter.

3.1 Constructivism in International Relations

Constructivism has been a recent addition to the different paradigms in the field of international relations. It brought a new perspective to explain the interactions between nations and the nature of war and peace, among other political issues, in the world. Constructivists challenge the theories of realism and liberalism by injecting the notion of intersubjective meaning as playing a crucial role in nations’ decision-making processes. Instead of viewing the world as inherently anarchical with nations constantly vying for power, constructivists believe that groups behave the way they do based on their perceptions and interpretations of others’ actions. People’s interactions with each other and institutions are based on their collective understandings of how the world works. For example, U.S. military power has a different meaning for Cuba than for Canada despite the fact that they are both neighbouring countries of the U.S. (Wendt, 1992). These interactions can then form the social structures and the relationships between different state actors in different scenarios. These social relationships consist of shared knowledge, material resources, and practices (Wendt, 1995). First, state actors come into shared knowledge based on the situation they are placed in and the nature of
their relations. For example, when there is distrust between nations, each state begins to act in its own self-interest instead of cooperating. Material resources are also critical in that they are the objects to be interpreted by the state actors. For example, the sheer number of arms stocked by a country does not necessarily become a threat until other countries perceive that it is. Wendt (ibid, p.73) provides an example where the British may have more nuclear weapons than North Korea, but the U.S. still considers the British as friends and the North Koreans as foes. Lastly, social structures exist as long as there are interactions between actors and their material resources. Once the exchange stops or becomes something else, that same social structure also ceases. What drives the actors’ actions? Why do they act the way they do? It lies in the identities they associate themselves and others with. Identities are important as they provide a sense of predictability and order (Hopf, 1998). From an actor’s identity, we can expect what its preferences and interests are and other actors act upon them based on their interpretations of this identity. Therefore, an actor cannot control how others perceive its identity nor the longevity of this, as it depends on the historical, cultural, political, and social context (ibid, p.176). But how are these identities created? Identities are created in a feedback loop; Actor A behaves a certain way based on its understanding of the world, which elicits a response from Actor B based on its own interpretation of Actor A. At the end, Actor A reacts again based on Actor B’s action. Identities and interests are created and continually maintained under this interactive process (Zehfuss, 2006).

With the basic premises mentioned above, Constructivism is used to explain different world events, such as conflicts and wars, but also cooperation and peace. Constructivism emerged at the end of the Cold War, when scholars from realism and
critical theorists could not fully explain why the war ended peacefully (Phillips, 2007). Since then, the field has branched into four subgroups, each one focusing on a different methodological approach (Adler, 1997).

No International Relations theory is complete without discussing the element of power and the way it operates within that paradigm. In Constructivist terms, power is not limited to material resources in military and economic terms. As mentioned before, material power is often part of the social structure that is open to interpretation by the actors. However, power can also rest in ideas, knowledge, culture, ideology and language (Hopf, p. 177). These abstract elements are transmitted through social interactions and relations. As a result, power can be defined as the influence on actors and their capacity to act through social relations (Barnett and Duvall, 2005). The social relations and identities of the actors reproduce intersubjective meanings which can then influence the choices the receiving actor will make and its behaviour. This is when we know power has been successfully obtained and made use of.

According to Barnett and Duvall (ibid, p.48), power can further be divided into power through interaction and power through constitution. In power through interaction, power is executed as actors interact with one another. Through these interactions, actors can have either compulsory power or institutional power. In compulsory power, actors (governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations) can alter the outcome behaviour of others. For example, non-state organizations may use public shaming as a means of changing a government’s public policies. In institutional power, actors impose power indirectly through institutional arrangements such as rules and regulations. Next, there are two types of power achieved through constitution - structural
and productive power. Actors use existing social structures, for example, in capital-labour relations (ibid, p. 53), to exert structural power on others. The power differential in these scenarios is usually maintained because the actors act according to the intersubjective meanings they perceive from the existing social structures. By contrast, productive power operates under ‘the discursive production of the subjects, the fixings of meanings, and the terms of action, of world politics’ (ibid, p. 56). Under this concept, power differential is maintained through current discourse instead of actual policies. For example, the type of representations that are associated with terms like ‘Western’ and ‘Middle-East’ create, or at least uphold, existing stereotypes on the subjects.

The Constructivist paradigm is chosen as a theoretical framework for this research because it can explain the process whereby cultural diplomacy operates. As previously mentioned, cultural diplomacy is the use of arts, language and cultural transmission to facilitate communication and friendly relations between countries. Nations that employ cultural diplomacy often hope to create a positive impression on the public of other nations. Through art exhibits, musical concerts, and language classes, citizens of other countries are exposed to a more social and personable representation of the nation. In turn, these foreign citizens will make their own interpretations of these artefacts. According to the Constructivists, these interpretations are the intersubjective meanings that occur in social interactions. The intersubjective meanings held by the foreign audience will affect their actions, for example, supporting or opposing current trade policies, which then influence the directions the government will take. Therefore, if the intersubjective meanings produced through cultural diplomacy are advantageous to the sending nation, then it may reap the rewards through trade and policy negotiations.
It has been suggested that arts and cultural activities can be used to increase the soft power of a nation. Soft power, a term proposed by Realist scholars, describes a nation’s ability to influence others using non-confrontational resources such as mass media instead of economic and military resources. Despite its Realist beginning, the process whereby soft power achieves its goals can be explained using the elements of social structures suggested by Constructivists. Specifically, it resonates with the productive power proposed by Barnett and Duvall as described above. As a nation promotes its cultural activities worldwide, new meanings and new identities are formed by foreign citizens. The end goal is to create constitutive power so that the sending nation achieves a favourable position in facilitating negotiations with the receiving nation.

The Confucius Institute, a cultural diplomatic tool used by China, can be examined using Constructivism since it requires the participation of foreign citizens in its programs and activities in the hope that they will form favorable opinions of China. The Canadian-Chinese university partnership is one of the institutional sites for such interactions to occur. The use of Constructivism can be used to explain the reason why China has created and promoted the Confucius Institute. However, there are theoretical assumptions made when using Constructivism. First, the Confucius Institute is created for the sole purpose of facilitating cultural diplomacy from the Chinese perspective. However, other motives are possible in the arrangement of university linkages, for example, promoting international academic exchange. Second, it is assumed that the communication is unidirectional. This means that the Confucius Institute is transmitting ideas, knowledge and language to foreign hosts without reciprocity. The foreign hosts
are mere receivers of values and they are not provided with agency to make changes to the programs other than to interpret the messages sent.

3.2 Internationalization of Higher Education

The second theoretical framework selected for the data analysis of this thesis is the internationalization of higher education. Even though internationalization of higher education is more of a concept than a theory, it is placed here in this section because it will be used to analyze the Canadian perspective on Canadian-Chinese university partnership through the Confucius Institute.

Since the days of ancient civilizations, scholars have travelled outside their homeland to learn from others culturally and intellectually and to exchange information. The use of Latin as the language in universities facilitated widespread student mobility in medieval and Renaissance Europe. Interestingly, universities have always considered themselves international institutions as the knowledge they seek is believed to be universal despite the subsequent political and territorial barriers that have caused them to serve nationalist purposes (Edwards, 2004). In the modern era, this can be considered as a form of internationalism, although nation states did not exist in those times. Internationalism is the ‘exchange between nations...predicated on the existence of territoriality and the benefits of cross-border exchange, in both commerce and ideas’ (King, 2004). Since the rapid globalization of the world in the past two decades, universities have once again had to respond to the pressure of embracing internationalism. Globalization can be defined as ‘the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space’ (Steger, 2009). This expansion and intensification have been due to the rapid technological advances in
the developed nations to allow faster transport of both people and products across the globe. As a result, nations are able to connect with one another more efficiently and productively in their political, economic and cultural settings. In the context of globalization, universities of different nations are able to communicate with foreign scholars and students with significant ease and as a result, they are increasingly becoming internationalized.

Like globalization, different scholars have provided different definitions for the internationalization of higher education. It ranges from the overarching, general view such as the one offered by the European Association for International Education ‘the whole range of processes by which education becomes less national and more internationally oriented’, to the specific, such as the one by Arum and Van de Water, ‘the multiple activities, programmes and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation’ (Knight and de Wit, 1995). The definition that will be used for the purpose of this thesis is the one proposed by Knight (2008); it is ‘the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels’. This interpretation allows the term to be applied to multiple settings in different parts of the world at different levels and among different stakeholders of education.

Modern-day internationalization of higher education occurs due to different rationales and incentives from various stakeholders. Knight and de Wit (1995) have identified the following types of rationales.
1. **Economic and political rationales**: In both national and local government’s perspectives, internationalization has a bearing upon financial revenue and future economic growth while meeting the demands of the increasingly competitive labour market. In addition, it addresses the need of foreign policy by establishing diplomatic relations through international linkages.

2. **Cultural and educational rationales**: Internationalization carries a cultural function of introducing national values, morals and beliefs to foreign audiences. Within the nation, it can create more cosmopolitan citizens by exposing them to different cultures from around the globe. Lastly, development is not restricted at the individual level; institutions are also beneficiaries of this process. Higher education institutions are able to broaden the spectrum of their academic and research programs with the faculty and students able to work in an international and intercultural context. From the increase in diversity of programming, institutions can also gain prestige on the global ranking scale. As a result, the overall quality of education and research in these institutions is greatly improved.

Knight (2008) later categorized these rationales at the national level and the institutional level with some additions to each one.

Once institutions are committed to internationalization, they can approach the process from six different angles. They are (ibid, p.32):

1. **Activity**: Internationalization can be achieved through the different activities offered. Examples of such activities include study abroad programs, curriculum and academic programs, intake of international students and opening of branch campuses among others.
2. **Outcomes**: In an outcomes oriented approach, institutions focus on the achieving of desired goals, such as student competencies, increased profile and international agreements as part of internationalization.

3. **Rationales**: The process is driven by the rationales mentioned above.

4. **Process**: Internationalization is incorporated into the three primary functions of higher institutions, which are teaching and learning, research and service to society.

5. **Ethos**: The promotion of international and intercultural understanding as the reason for internationalization of the institution. Campus-based activities such as offering new international-themed courses, use of international scholars, and liaison with local cultural and ethnic groups are examples of such promotion.

6. **Cross-border**: Institutions offer programs via different venues, for example, e-learning, face-to-face or distance, in foreign countries as part of internationalization.

Institutions may use more than one approach in carrying out internationalization.

Next, the strategies and program policies for internationalization at the institutional level will be discussed. Once institutions have chosen their favoured approach towards internationalization, they may use different strategies and adopt different policies to realize their goals. Knight and de Wit (1995) have identified twelve types of strategies and policies which Knight (2008) has further categorized into academic strategies, organization strategies and programs and policies. Academic programs, scholarly research and collaboration, domestic and cross-border relations and extra-curricular activities such as campus events and community liaisons, fall under the
academic strategies category. The institution’s governance, operations, services, and human resources belong to organization strategies. Some examples of organization strategies are the inclusion of internationalization in planning and management documents, encouragement for faculty and staff to participate in transnational collaboration, and the allocation of funds for international programs. Programs and policies can be further divided into three levels, national, sectoral, and institutional. National policies may include specific policy documents on higher education with an international focus on cultural, scientific, trade and employment policies. At the sector level, programs can be offered by government agencies, private or public institutions while policies are specific to the functions, funding, and regulation of higher education. Programs and policies at the institutional level cater to individual institutions’ needs but they all contain an international aspect in their mission statements and guiding principles.

Lastly, different models have been established to describe the process of internationalization. The model chosen for this thesis is the Internationalization Cycle (Knight and de Wit, 1995), where the process is depicted as cyclic and not linear. The cycle contains six stages. It began with awareness of the need for internationalization, followed by an institutional commitment. Once the senior administration, Board of Governors and the rest of the institution have committed to the process, focus groups are in place to carry out the planning stage where needs and strategies are identified. The remaining three steps are operations of activities and services, review of initiatives and their progress, and the reinforcement of existing programs. Since this model is non-linear, the cycle is not unidirectional and the institution may move back and forth between the different steps.
By hosting the Confucius Institute, the Canadian university is able to bring Chinese language instruction and cultural awareness to its own students. With the unique feature of university linkage between Canadian and Chinese universities in the Confucius Institute, Canadian institutions can provide access points for cross-border collaboration and student exchange. It can then be hypothesized that Canadian universities may use the Confucius Institute as an internationalization strategy. Different elements of the internationalization concept will be used to analyze data findings in chapter five, where it may reveal whether the hypothesis holds true.

In this chapter, a theory and a concept have been identified as the framework for the study of Canadian-Chinese university partnership through the Confucius Institute. The International Relations theory of Constructivism will be used primarily for the analysis of the goals of the Confucius Institute as a cultural diplomacy tool. The concept of internationalization of higher education will be used for the analysis of the Canadian perspective on the university linkage through the Confucius Institute. However, the Canadian perspective is not restricted to the concept of internationalization and the theory of Constructivism may also be applied.

Chapter four will describe the method involved in gathering the data and a description will be provided for the rationale of using case studies as a method and for the three Canadian Confucius Institutes selected.
Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

In this chapter of the thesis, the methodology and methods used for data collection are discussed. It begins with a description of the selected research approach and the two methods used to support this approach. Justifications for these selections are given following the description. The steps taken during the research process are also reviewed. Chapter four ends with an evaluation of the methodology and methods used in this study, in particular, their strengths and weaknesses are examined.

4.1 Qualitative Case Study using Informant Interviews and Secondary Literature

For this research project, a qualitative case study is used to explore the Canadian-Chinese university partnership through the Confucius Institutes in Canada. It is a qualitative case study because the data collection focuses on a small sample that is not representative of all Canadian Confucius Institutes. In addition, it is intended to be an exploratory research and therefore open-ended questions are used for the interviews. Three Confucius Institutes were selected as the subject for the case study. Due to the confidentiality agreement, the locations of these Confucius Institutes cannot be disclosed. Informants were interviewed with a list of questions concerning the different aspects of the Confucius Institute at the respective site (see Appendix A for interview questions). These research participants are faculty and/or staff employed by the Canadian university who hold management or administrative positions within the Confucius Institute. All interviews were conducted in English, and some over the phone, as requested by the interviewees. To supplement the primary data collected from the participants, secondary literature related to the Confucius Institutes in Canada was also gathered for
analysis. Mostly retrieved online, this literature included but was not limited to academic writings, official documents, and newspaper articles.

### 4.2 Rationales for the Methodology and Methods Used

As mentioned in chapter one, the key question in this study is to explore the nature of the Canadian-Chinese university partnership as facilitated through the Confucius Institutes in Canada. Specifically, this research seeks the perspective of the Canadian faculty and staff on topics such as incentives, goals, successes and challenges in the operation of the Confucius Institute on their campus. It was anticipated that each site would offer responses that reflected the distinct beliefs and needs of the university. It must be taken into account that the comments provided by the informants may only apply to the time they were asked; and their perspectives may change later on. The Canadian Confucius Institutes are spread across the country and thus the location may provide a different context for each Institute and affect the way it is operated. Therefore, the information obtained through these interviews is not intended to be generalized or to represent the view of all Canadian Confucius Institutes.

Based on the aim of this study, a qualitative methodology is considered to be a suitable approach for collecting data. Qualitative research has four defining characteristics (Merriam, 2002) that have also matched the needs of this study. First, qualitative research allows the investigator to search for meaning and understanding of an issue or phenomenon. In this case, the main goal is to understand how university partnership is being facilitated through the Confucius Institute. Second, the investigator is the key instrument of data collection and analysis. For example, the researcher conducts interviews with informants from each Confucius Institute, and analyzes the
transcriptions along with secondary sources to reach a conclusion. Third, the researcher is able to explain certain phenomenon from their observations inductively as opposed to deductively testing theories to explain the phenomenon. From the data collection, the author hopes to reveal insights into the rapid growth of Confucius Institute by focusing on one of its unique features, the university partnership. Lastly, qualitative research provides a richly descriptive conclusion without the use of numbers. Although a few basic statistics related to the Confucius Institute will be used to demonstrate its increasing popularity around the globe, the main question and other sub-questions will be answered through the descriptions of the different aspects of the Canadian sites.

There are different designs of qualitative research and the case study is the one chosen for this study. Briefly, the case study can be defined as an ‘intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community’ (ibid, p. 8). Yin (2003) adds that a case study inquiry ‘investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context’ and it uses variety of sources as data for triangulation. Every case study needs to have five key components. They are the study questions, propositions, unit(s) of analysis, logic linking data to propositions, and criteria for interpreting findings (ibid, p.28). These five components can also be identified in the current study. First, the research questions of a case study tend to begin with ‘how’ or ‘why’. By exploring the nature of Canadian-Chinese university partnerships, the research is asking ‘how is the university partnership formed and facilitated via the Confucius Institute?’ and ‘why do Canadian universities engage in these partnerships?’. Second, by identifying the core question in a case study, the researcher can find the evidence in the appropriate places. The core question for this
study is the potential benefits that the Canadian universities can gain through such partnerships. This core question has led the researcher to seek the perspectives of the faculty and staff at the Canadian Confucius Institutes. The unit of analysis in this study is the individual Canadian Confucius Institute. Lastly the theoretical frameworks laid out in chapter three of this thesis act as the linkage from data to propositions, and they are also used as a framework for interpreting findings.

Once the methodology was determined, appropriate methods were then chosen for gathering the data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain information from the participants at each Confucius Institute. The open-ended questions used in these interviews provided greater flexibility for both researcher and respondents. Secondary online and paper literature were also used to supplement the primary data. They may provide additional findings that have not appeared in the interviews.

4.3 Methods: A Review

According to the original plan, three Confucius Institutes were to be used as case studies, and two faculty and/or staff members in key management positions were asked to participate. There are a total of thirteen Confucius Institutes currently in Canada and this number is expected to increase in the future. From the preliminary research, it was found that each Institute is not required to deliver the same courses and programs. Therefore, it was decided three sites would be sufficient to demonstrate how the Institutes can be different from one another. There was some initial confusion during the ethics approval process in regards to which specific parties were required to give consent for the interviews to take place. This issue was resolved after seeking clarifications from different universities and the individual Confucius Institute. Letters of consent were sent
to different Confucius Institutes and the first three available sites became subjects of the study. In the end, one to two faculty and/or staff were interviewed over the phone and all agreed to be recorded for transcription. The interviews took place between February and April 2012. Ten to fifteen questions were asked in the interviews. The participants were reached by phone or by email using the contact information found on the university website. Additional information was retrieved from academic journals, online documents, news articles and university websites to supplement the interview data.

4.4 Methodology and Methods: Strengths and Weaknesses

This section will describe the strengths and weaknesses of using the qualitative case study design for this research. Interestingly, the same strengths can also be deemed as weaknesses depending which paradigm is used to examine them. Qualitative research makes the world more visible by turning it into a ‘series of representations’ through interviews and conversations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This approach provides an holistic overview of how the Confucius Institute operates in the three different locations. This is contrary to quantitative research where focus is placed on certain aspects or variables as identified by the researcher while others may be ignored. Due to this naturalistic approach, this study is not intended to establish causal linkage between the success of each Institute and the factors that create this success. Another highlight of qualitative research is its emphasis on the subjective meanings that participants bring. This interpretive nature of the data can be beneficial to the study since the faculty and staffs were given the opportunity to express what they perceived as the goals and issues of the Institute. These participants hold key positions in the organization and their direct
experience may shed insight on why each Confucius Institute is distinct and they are
different from one another.

The benefits of using the case study design are similar to the ones of choosing
qualitative research over quantitative. The case study encompasses all aspects of the
Confucius Institute since it is taken as the unit of analysis. As such, no variables will be
overlooked. This is a multi-case study as three Institutes are selected. The responses
received from the representative(s) of each Institute are described in depth according to
the different categories generated by the researcher.

Some common criticisms of the case study include the inability to make
generalizations, that it only offers practical knowledge as opposed to theoretical, that it is
more useful for creating hypotheses rather than testing them, and that there may be
difficulty in summarizing specific cases (Flyvberg, 2006). It was nevertheless seen as the
best approach in this research.

The semi-structured interview is advantageous in the following ways. First, the
researcher can create a set of questions that are related to the topics being investigated.
At the same, there is flexibility for the researcher to move the order of the questions as
the need arises. In addition, the open-ended questions do not limit the participants’
responses. It is perceived that the researcher and the respondent contribute the same
amount in a semi-structured interview since the researcher may adjust the questions
asked based on the responses received (Ayres, 2008). This can also be seen as a
weakness, since the researcher may ask leading questions that can lead to bias in the
results.
Information from secondary sources provides common practical advantages such as time and cost reductions, and being a starting point for hypothesis formation and research formulations. It can also act as a comparative tool when primary data can be compared to the existing information (Stewart, 1984). The disadvantages of using secondary sources include the suitability of the information for the current study and the hidden bias that exist in the secondary data. Researchers thus need to be cautious when using secondary data to supplement their own results.

This chapter has described in detail the methodological approach and methods used for this study. Since this is an exploratory study on Canadian Confucius Institutes and the university partnerships that sponsor them, a qualitative multi-case study design was chosen. Within each case study, data was obtained through interviews and secondary sources such as websites, online documents and other academic articles. Although there are weaknesses associated with the research approach and methods, they are appropriate for the purpose and nature of this study. Key findings are presented and analyzed in the next chapter. Responses from all three Confucius Institutes are divided into subcategories to reflect different aspects of the organization.
Chapter 5: Key Findings of the Research

Key findings are categorized into sections and presented in the order that questions were asked during the interviews. This provides a comprehensive look at the three Canadian Confucius Institutes and how these different aspects facilitate the university partnerships. The categories include an operational overview of Canadian Confucius Institutes, core goals, financial support, and level of autonomy. In addition, examples of benefits of the university partnership, along with factors that facilitate the partnership are discussed by the participants. The chapter ends with the concerns and issues as perceived by the participants, the improvements and directions they seek in the future and comments with regards to the media attention on the Confucius Institutes in Canada. The three Confucius Institutes interviewed for this study are identified as CI1, CI2, and CI3. The three Canadian university hosts are identified as Canadian university A, B and C, while the three corresponding Chinese university partners are identified as Chinese university 1, 2, and 3. No preferences are intended in the order of the numbers assigned. In the case where two participants are interviewed from the same site, the letters A and B are added to the identification. It should also be noted that during the interviews, Hanban and Confucius Institute (CI) Headquarters have been used interchangeably by the respondents. CI Headquarters is the organization each Institute directly reports to, and is under the administration of the Hanban.

5.1 An Operational Overview of the Canadian Confucius Institutes

From a survey of the three Confucius Institutes websites, it is evident that they offer both credit and non-credit courses in Chinese language and culture. They all offer similar summer exchange programs and scholarships supported by the Hanban. Public
events such as art exhibitions and movie nights are held on a regular basis. One site also offers workshops related to economic development between China and Canada. These programs and activities reflect the clientele that is being targeted. The credit courses are specifically for students registered at the university, while non-credit courses are open to the general public.

CI1:

“Not limited to the university students and the business community but we characterize the business community because they have their specific needs. They want to learn some business culture for China. The general public, they want to understand (more) of the culture.” Another group identified are public servants, as they may interact with the Chinese government on a regular basis.

CI2A:

“The whole university community …students and faculty, the local communities as well”.

“We are not focussing on facilitating trade or economic (development), our focus is still academic”.

CI2B:

For the non-credit courses,

“we generally send notices to Canadian university B’s community, students, professors, and staff as well. But we also have some targeted population from the community at large…for example, (local) Chinese schools and the Chinese cultural association…we have connections to families with children from China”. They also carry outreach programs to groups outside of the university’s geographical area.

CI3:

“It would basically be the students at Canadian university C, and students from other universities.”
“It would be the school boards of both Catholic and public schools who are getting support through CI for teaching Chinese in their schools.”

“…other universities that CI provides support to …the business community or other groups wanting to conduct business or have other relationships with China and would like language training or coaching about Chinese culture.”

Individual Institutes must submit a report of the past year’s activities and budget to the Headquarters for review and archiving purpose. A Confucius Institute Conference is held every year for all Institutes to come together so they can exchange ideas and experience with one another. Therefore, each site communicates regularly with the Headquarters. However, it is not the contact with the Headquarters that each Institute values, but communication with its Chinese university partner and other Canadian CIs.

CI1:

“We work more with our partner university on the specific programming. We have some communication with them (Headquarters), but it’s on a very restricted level, and not on a day-to-day operational (basis).”

CI2A:

“One of our proposals is to bring together the directors of CI on an annual basis…so they can have conversations around what’s happening to the CI in Canada. We wanted to have more frequent meetings between the CI directors …in the (geographical) area”

“We had conversations with other CI directors in our initial setup process and are ongoing. I also had conversations with other senior administrations comparable to my position.”

CI2B added that there is frequent communications between the Canadian CIs. These interactions occur in a variety of settings such as the Chinese Bridge competition,
Chinese New Year celebration planning, and the official gathering for Chinese faculties in neighbouring regions.

“We exchange ideas, we exchange experiences. There are the more formal channels and also informal channels. I can call them or email them if I want some advice from them”.

CI3:
According to the participant from CI3, the director is asked to give advice whenever a new CI opens.

“The CIs are sort of on their own but they also recognize that they can support each other and help each other and learn from each other. So they are working very hard to share views, experiences and information. So I view all of that as very positive.”

Although the participants hold key administrative positions in the Confucius Institutes, their primary job positions are either academic faculty and/or senior academic administrator within each Canadian university. However, the language staff hired by the Canadian CIs can be Canadian or Chinese citizens.

CI2B:

“So far it has been the case (that instructors are from Chinese university 2). Theoretically they don’t have to be from your partner university in China.”

CI3:

“Most of the instructors teaching Chinese in CI are people who are residents of our province in Canada, but have the skills to teach the Chinese language.”

From the operational overview of the three Confucius Institutes, it can be seen that they follow a similar structure. The key administrators interviewed in this study, are primarily faculty members or senior administrators at the Canadian universities but are
given a secondary position with the Confucius Institute. Second, the key target groups for the Confucius Institute are mainly students registered at the Canadian university and people from the local communities. Therefore, the focus is still within an academic setting as opposed to fostering economic or cultural relations. The language instructors at each site are not necessarily from the Chinese university partner or from China. Although one of the respondents has said that the Confucius Institute is a “three party infrastructure” that involves the foreign university, the Chinese university and the Hanban, the CIs in this study have little communication with the Hanban in regards to their operations. Rather, they work within the Canadian universities and communicate frequently among each other.

5.2 Core Goals

The goals of the Confucius Institute as stated by the Hanban include the propagation of the Chinese language and culture and bilateral cooperation around the world. The following are the goals and missions as perceived by the respondents of the Confucius Institute on their campus.

CI1:

“The main goal is to provide a platform to explore the relations, especially the cultural side between Canada and China and the context for the global economy.”

“We work closely with the international relations department at Canadian university A because their directors are also on our steering committee”.

CI2A:

“To promote the study of the Chinese language, literature and culture, as part of the CI and that’s really what the goal of the CI is at Canadian university B. It fits in with our role for our part of the integrated strategic planning as well; we are increasing internationalization as part of the mission of the university.”
CI2B:

“The main goal is almost the same as the other CIs. The main goal is to promote understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture and language.”

CI3:

“First is to teach the Chinese language to Canadian university C students…Secondly, to help train teachers to teach Chinese language, (from) primary to secondary to college students”

“To sponsor academic activities and Chinese competitions, to have regular (programs) that show Chinese movies and TV programs. Another one is to provide reference materials, both educational and professional. To provide advice and consulting services to individuals or businesses wanting to study or conduct affairs with China.”

The participants reiterated the same goals provided by the Hanban but they had also mentioned the goal of internationalization for the Canadian universities, to act as a platform that promotes cultural and economic relations and to increase the capacity of Chinese language education at the Canadian university.

5.3 Funding and Other Financial Support

The Confucius Institute Headquarters has stated the specific funding structure in its Constitution and By-Laws. A more detailed funding protocol is provided under the Regulations for the Administration of Confucius Institute Headquarters Funds. According to both documents, the cost of initial operation including building repairs and equipment purchases is entirely covered by the Hanban. However, it is expected that the funding for subsequent annual projects will be jointly raised by the foreign host and the Headquarters in a 1 to 1 ratio (Hanban, 2012). According to the University of
Saskatchewan, the latest addition to the group of Canadian Confucius Institutes, Hanban has provided $150 000 for the initial set-up (U of S, 2011).

The same funding structure has been verified by the respondents. Although the Headquarters is a consistent source among the three case studies, each site has a different method of reaching the 1 to 1 funding ratio.

CI1:

Fundraising is done through the advancement department of the university, and it also looks to “local communities for contributions and support…and elsewhere for possibilities”.

“We also apply for scholarships for students go to China in the summer program, so it might be possible to cover the cost there”.

CI2A responds:

“…The initial startup funds received and in the annual operating funds directly from Hanban and Canadian university B has contributed in kind support to the Confucius Institute for the space for some of the physical resources”.

“It’s the funding directly from Hanban that allowed us to run the individual programming at Canadian university B for the last year and a bit since our grand opening ceremony”.

CI2B adds:

“This is a joint venture. Actually to me, Canadian university B provides a greater portion of funding for personnel support because we have two tenured members involved and …other in-kind support such as equipment, space and all kinds of other support”.

“Oh the other hand, we do (get) financial support from Hanban”.

CI3:
“It’s a five-year commitment, so they (Headquarters) have been providing money for each of the five years, in response to an annual workplan, and a submission of what was actually done in the year immediately past.”

“They (Headquarters) have a protocol and we are going through it right now, where they have what they call a self-assessment process…the kind you would expect from any grant agency toward the end of the period for which funding is provided”.

In response to additional funding required that is not provided by Hanban,

“We would have to go to individuals or businesses, people who might believe that there was value in the CI or value in having students able to learn Chinese. For example, we have some private sector supporters who have provided scholarships for students who wanted to study the Chinese language”.

In conclusion, all three CI sites follow the one to one ratio funding formula as stated by Hanban with the initial set up cost covered by Hanban. The respondents also provided information on how each site may use different channels, such as via the university’s advancement office or private donations, to fund their own portion of the formula.

5.4 Level of Autonomy

The level of autonomy for each Institute is measured by the amount of control exerted by the university over program planning and human resources management.

CI1:

“We have a steering committee and also an advisory board that (are) composed of senior Canadian administrators, faculty members and our communities.”

“Courses and programs do not need to be approved by Hanban, but they need to be approved by Canadian university A administration”.


“CI is part of Canadian university A, so it works within Canadian university A. We work with other faculties, departments from Canadian university A, in terms of programming and course development…we cover the areas of language and culture…we work with the School of Business, International Studies and Linguistics departments”.

CI2A:

“They (CI directors) have 100% autonomy over what they do from the university’s perspective”

The management group at CI2 consists of CI directors, associate directors from the Chinese university partner, and staff from the department of international relations. The group is responsible for the operations of the Institute and reports directly to the board of directors.

CI3:

“We initiate the process of what we want to do but then again submit to Hanban and they have the opportunity to review it and as in any operation, they may say ‘well, we are prepared to give you this much money and we strongly recommend you to focus on these or might go even further and say ‘we are not prepared to support x’”

“But they are not telling us what we need to do, but they might not give us funding for everything we want to do. So to that extent, do they have influence on what we do? Yes. They never said to us, but if you have the ability to get funding from somewhere else, we are not saying you can’t do it, we are just saying we are not going to pay for it. And I think that’s a huge distinction.”

In terms of the choice of resources being used at CI,
“It’s our choice, if we can get resources from elsewhere, then Hanban would never have a problem with that, in fact, Hanban has encouraged all the CIs to work systemically to get other support as well, so we always have that choice”.

This participant also commented on the Canadian university:

“There is always somebody from our university that is in senior management, who is very much involved…There has never been any formal guidance or interference, and they trust the judgment of the people who are responsible to provide oversight”.

According to the respondents, all three sites maintain ownership of their programs and activities and act autonomously from the Hanban. However, due to contractual agreement, the CI Headquarters must be made aware of the decisions made at each university. This provides some insight into the Canadian Confucius Institute phenomenon, where two different political and academic systems, Chinese and Western, come together.

5.5 Selection of the Chinese University as Official Partner

As mentioned in Chapter two, there are numerous cooperation patterns in Confucius Institutes around the world. This study focuses specifically on the university partnership between Chinese and foreign universities. It has been suggested that the Hanban may have preferences to support foreign universities that already have pre-existing collaboration with a Chinese university (Starr, 2009). In this section, the respondents explained how their CI was paired with a specific Chinese university.
CI1:

“The Canadian universities have many partnerships in China. In our case, we decided to work with *Chinese university 1* because we have worked with them before”.

CI2A:

“We looked at several Chinese institutions that we work with and have relationships with and what those levels of relationships were about. *Canadian university B* decided that at that point it was worth pursuing a CI with *Chinese university 2* because of things we have been doing prior to that, in terms of history, in terms of cooperation, between those various institutions in China.”

In response to whether Hanban recommends a Chinese institution, CI2A replied that Hanban did not give recommendations in their case. However, CI2A said it is possible that Hanban may not agree with a university’s choice of Chinese institution and could tell the university to look for another partner. In regards to previous history between the Canadian and Chinese universities, CI2A replied:

“We started that relationship in the 2004-2005 academic year…we had exchange of scholars and students between the universities before the development of CI”

“We had students coming from the *Chinese university 2* into our international student program at the graduate level.”

CI3:

“I assume in our case, they were very aware that there was a long relationship with *Chinese university 3* on a number of fronts, and it was *Chinese university 3* that was identified.”

The working relationship between Canadian university C and Chinese university 3 began as a CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) funded project almost two decades ago.
It is also interesting to note that the Chinese university partners of both CI1 and CI3 are each involved in multiple CI partnerships. Therefore, the pairing is not exclusive; one Chinese university can have multiple foreign university partnerships under the name of Confucius Institute.

5.6 Nature of the Chinese-Canadian University Partnership

This section reveals how the partnered universities interact with one another according to the respondents. It also provides some examples of these interactions that exist through the Canadian Confucius Institutes under study.

CI1:

“We interacted/communicated regularly last year, my colleague from the international relations department, school of linguistics, we worked with the professor and faculty from Chinese university 1 to discuss what will be the suitable courses or programs for the institute…we needed their resources to help us.”

“The research and knowledge from our partner university and we (borrow) from their network and make it very customized for us.”

CI2A:

“Resources, books, we are looking to offer non-credit courses for Chinese language for individuals within the university and the broader community…Those instructors are hosted by Canadian university B but provided by the Chinese university 2. They are part of the agreement with Hanban…they are recommended by the Chinese university 2 and sometimes are met by us before coming here”

“Chinese university 2 initially had interaction with the Faculty of Education back in 2004-2005…We also have folks in the Political Science department who have
visited the Chinese university 2, presented papers…given lectures…and we are looking at setting things up with the Faculty of Business”.

CI2B:

“Organizationally…two members from Chinese university 2 are on the CI board of directors…they send volunteer teachers, directors and Canadian university B has visited Chinese university 2 and has working relations there. Basically we meet two or three times a year for officials of the two universities…so it has been quite close”.

CI3:

“Chinese university 3 was very enthusiastic about Canadian university C sending Canadian students over to Chinese university 3 … to study Chinese and also maybe to take some other courses in English to learn more about China.”

On the goal of the interaction between CI3 and the Chinese university 3,

“The expectation on both sides is that CI3 helps Canadians to develop skills and languages, we would encourage Canadian students who would like to go to Chinese university 3 for a period of time to take Chinese language, at the introductory or intermediate levels before they go there.”

In addition, both CI1 and CI3 reported that they host visiting scholars from the Chinese university at their CI for a period of one to two years. The focus of these visiting scholars is to teach both credit and non-credit language courses. They may also be assigned administrative tasks at the CI.

5.7 Canadian-Chinese Student Exchange

The Confucius Institute Scholarships are offered by the CI Headquarters to all foreign CI sites. They provide financial aid for CI students and teachers to further pursue the study of the Chinese language in China (CIS, 2012). Some Confucius Institutes also participate in summer programs where interested students may spend a short period of time at the partner university in China to immerse themselves in Chinese language and
culture. Although participants were not specifically asked about student exchange, student movement between the two countries has been mentioned in all responses.

CI1:

“We have not started, we are working on (the student exchange) with the partner university…we have 800 students from China studying at Canadian university A…we are having students studying in China, not yet at Chinese university I.”

However, the respondent noted that there are business school students that are studying in other universities in China.

CI2B:

“…joining the training of teachers from Chinese university 2 and sending their volunteer teachers (to Canada)”

“also Canadian university B sending teachers over to Chinese province in summer for training…and they are asked to teach the Chinese students during the summer”

CI3 also had a program in place to send the Canadian students to the partner university; however, they decided to pass it on to another department within the university.

It appears that the three Canadian sites had some form of student exchange with Chinese universities before the establishment of their CI. The student exchange may even include the Chinese partner university. The scholarship and summer programs offered by the CI Headquarters may provide additional options for the students at these Canadian institutions to be involved in the exchange to China.

5.8 Institutional and Overall Benefits of the Partnerships

Previous literature has discussed the benefits of the CI establishment for China. These benefits include the projection of a positive image for China and an increased internationalization for China’s higher education institutions. In this study, the focus has
turned to the foreign host partners and their perceived benefits in hosting the CI on their campuses.

CI1:

“For one thing, it’s for our students on campus here, and this is a good opportunity to provide a whole new possibility for our students, to prepare them for future life or work in the new global economy”

“I think we are setting a very good example for our university, to provide an especially unique program, and also for our community...I think this is good for the university, for both universities to work with each other…that will eventually benefit teaching and research.”

CI2A:

“As part of the integrated strategic plan…this provides us an opportunity for continued internationalization of what we offered at Canadian university B”

“What we found is that from our CI, we get visitors coming from China, they know that we have a CI and they want to come and see the university. From that we build relationships with other institutions based on the fact we have a CI.”

“…a drawing card for those other institutions to come to Canadian university B if they are visiting Canada, they will try to fit us in their schedules as much as they can”.

CI2B:

“In fact, Canadian university B has cooperative relations with other universities, more than a dozen in China alone...so this is very relevant in development in terms of internationalization of the university”

The participant also commented that Canadian university B already has achieved a favourable image internationally with its outreach program and the Confucius Institute is one of the highlights in the outreach program. Not only does the CI partnership increase the reputation of Canadian university B, it acts as budget supplement to university departments who may otherwise have trouble running courses.
“Having a CI definitely helps facilitate these courses, especially during this era of budget cutting, of the economic crisis, financial tightening from the different levels of government…these universities that run Chinese courses especially need help from the CI”

CI3:

“There is an opportunity to increase Canadian university C’s capacity to teach the Chinese language through the CI, and that’s a huge advantage for our students. In addition, for our students to get the benefits of other courses that might be taught on China”

“We already have a relationship with Chinese university 3 and other universities, and the emphasis was primarily on research and scholarship…the CI created capacity to do something we weren’t doing…so it was perfectly complementary and a totally logical thing to have as part of a larger package of an institute on all things related to China.”

Interestingly, each site provided different responses on what the perceived benefits are of holding a CI on campus. The benefits include an increased capacity in Chinese language education, advancement of the university’s internationalization mandate, and enrichment of existing university partnership with institutions in China.

5.9 Factors that Facilitate the Bi-lateral University Partnership

Although all three Canadian universities have pre-existing relationships with Chinese institutions, the respondents may not have direct experience in working under those projects and initiatives. Therefore, the participants were asked to examine the current working relationship through the CI and reflect on the factors that facilitated the partnership between their university and its Chinese counterpart in this specific setting.
C11:

“Mutual understanding is very important because the two universities are very different…it’s about the communication, understanding, these are the important factors”

“Communication is important. You need to communicate regularly with your stakeholders, your potential audience and students.”

C2A:

“The fact that we have a pre-existing relationship with them, both faculty and senior administrators in the development of CI. There was an exchange of senior administrators and faculty with Chinese university 2 and Canadian university B.”

C13:

“The key has been the long term relationship between the people at Chinese university 3 and Canadian university C...over a long period of time...you build up mutual trust and respect on both sides…”

The participant from C13 believes that the mutual trust and respect that have been established from years of interactions have allowed both universities to be “open, candid and honest with each other”. As a result, both parties can work together to resolve problems and issues.

Mutual respect and understanding are a common theme for two of the sites’ participants. Previous experience working with the Chinese university is also identified as a preferred condition for facilitating the partnership in two of the three sites. One of the participants commented that previous collaborations created a comfort level between the two parties and it was important to “be absolutely confident that you have a partner that you can work with.”
5.10 Concerns and Issues from the Partnership

The CI provides a new form of Canadian-Chinese university partnership that is different from the previous collaborations that the three sites had with their Chinese university counterpart. Therefore, there is a possibility that the participants will encounter concerns and issues that may not have occurred before. This section reports on how the participants responded to the question of whether they were aware of the issues that their university had while working with the Chinese university partner or Hanban under the CI partnership.

CI1:

“So far it’s very smooth. They are very supportive, we passed the product identification stage we developed courses based on what we identified and we worked along with them to identify the researchers, scholars and the different subject areas”

The participant also noted some of the logistical problems such as working with different schedules of the faculties.

CI2A:

“Not at all, it has been a good relationship.”

It was noted that faculties from both universities visited each other during the development stages of the CI. These visits have continued into the operational stages of the CI.

CI2B:

“One of the issues for me is the budgeting process, seems to be complicated”

CI3:

“The biggest issue we are having at the moment is recruiting a credible pool of students for us to send over to Chinese university 3 (for the exchange).”
In regards to issues with CI and Hanban, the respondent said none had arisen since the funding has been approved and received.

Most of the Canadian Confucius Institutes have been in operation for less than five years. Therefore, the concerns and issues expressed by the participants may only reflect this short period of collaboration. None of the three sites’ participants had significant concerns. They felt the relationship had been going well so far.

5.11 Improvements and Future Directions

The Confucius Institute has existed for less than ten years and the first Canadian Confucius Institute was set up in 2007. Each Confucius Institute partnership operates by a five-year contractual agreement between the Hanban and the universities. Foreign universities need to submit an annual report to the Hanban, and they must also submit a proposal at the end of the fifth year for a contract renewal. With all the Canadian Confucius Institutes still under the first contract, the respondents were asked what they see as the improvements and future directions of their CI.

CI1:

“None so far, there will be some down the road, but so far, we work very well.”

CI2A:

“At this point, the improvements will be on the activities we offer”

CI2B:

“I’m not sure about improvements, but we have goals to reach. The goal is both to establish broader involvement from the community at Canadian university B…and to expand the functions and operations of CI.”

“We are looking for ways to increase enrollment numbers, credit courses is just one option, we are looking at other options to promote Chinese language and culture as much as possible.”
CI3:

“For us, the major opportunity and task is to complete the self-assessment so we can hopefully get funding for another cycle. If we are not successful, the CI would come to an end.”

The improvements and future directions stated by the participants are situated within the local site, for example, improving enrollments and the type of activities offered. Funding was also expressed as a concern as the 1 to 1 funding formula is crucial for the operation of the CI at each site.

5.12 Political Sensitivity and Related Issues

Since its inception, controversies have surrounded the Confucius Institute and its establishment in different institutions around the world. Within Canada, both University of British Columbia and University of Manitoba have publicly rejected the idea of hosting an Institute on their campus (Freeze, Bradshaw and MacKinnon, 2012). The respondents were asked what their views are on the negative media attention that the Confucius Institute has attracted and whether it affects the operation on their site.

CI2A:

“Canadian university B chose to form a partnership with Chinese university 2 and apply for CI…There was no coercion. There was no indication of ulterior motive for getting a CI from China to come here. We chose to partner, we went forward with the applications. We are happy with our partner, we are happy with the results of the relationship in the last year and even before that when we were developing with our application for the CI.”

CI2B:

“I think our CI has been dealing with the situation quite admirably because we always tell people that our mission is to promote Chinese culture and language so
the CI is a non-political, non-religious organization and as such we just want to stay within our mission and promote Chinese language and culture.”
“For more sensitive political and religious issues, we just tell people that it is not within the jurisdiction of the CI…we are aware of possible issues at other CIs”

CI3:
“I think this is more speculation than evidence-based allegations”
“I think we are trying to gain friends and influence hearts toward our country and I think they are doing the same thing by creating an institute where people can learn more about the Chinese language and learn about their country.”

The participants have maintained that they have autonomy in the program delivery at their CI site. One respondent indicates that it is acknowledged that CI is China’s soft power strategy but it is the equivalence of what the Canadian government has done in the past few decades with the work of CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) and IDRC (International Research Development Centre).

Focus of Analysis

All three Institutes have to follow similar operational procedure as outlined by the Hanban. This includes signing onto a five-year term with the possibility of contract renewal, submitting an annual report of past year’s activities and spending, and raising the equivalent amount of funds to cover operational cost as provided by Hanban. The three sites differ in their view of institutional benefits from hosting the Confucius Institute on the campus, the concerns and issues encountered and the future directions of the partnership.

The next chapter will provide an analysis of the key findings under the theoretical framework of Constructivism and the concept of internationalization of higher education. The analysis will also revisit the topics of diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, education
as a tool of diplomacy, the historical overview of China’s international relations and Chinese-Canadian university partnership. The key findings will be used to explore this study’s key focus, which is the nature of the partnership between Canadian and Chinese universities through the Confucius Institute.
Chapter 6: Analysis of the Experience of the three Canadian Confucius Institutes

This chapter provides an examination of the key findings about the three Canadian Confucius Institutes. The goal of the analysis is to answer the key question and related inquiries on the Chinese-Canadian university partnership through the Confucius Institute. The focus of the study is to explore the nature of the university partnership through the perspectives of the vital administrative and teaching staff at three Canadian Confucius Institutes. The data also addresses the related questions of how a Canadian Confucius Institute is operated based on the host’s account, how cultural diplomacy is conducted through the Confucius Institute, what the expected outcomes are for the Canadian universities from this venture, and what insights can be drawn from such experience.

6.1 Cultural Diplomacy through the Canadian Confucius Institutes

Cultural diplomacy, as previously mentioned in the literature review, is the transmission of a nation’s cultural resources and achievements in ways that can influence the global environment. China’s intentions to make friendly relations with other nations through the Confucius Institute are clearly stated in the General Principles of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Confucius Institute. The soft power strategy is also acknowledged by the respondents in the three case studies, as some of the core goals mentioned include ‘the understanding and appreciation of Chinese language and culture’ and a ‘platform for cultural and economic relations’. However, it is somewhat exceptional that these universities have welcomed the use of their campuses as a site of cultural diplomacy when universities have been traditionally viewed as promoting nationalism. This is seen in imperialist nations that exported their own academic model
into the universities of their colonies and used the national language of the colonizer in the teaching of the students (Altbach, 1991). Instead of only providing scholarships and exchange programs for foreigners to study in China, the foreign universities have allowed the Confucius Institute to bring the teaching and learning to their campuses. Since the onus is on the foreign university to submit an application for establishing a Confucius Institute on its campus, the three universities had taken the initiative to accept a form of Chinese cultural diplomacy on their campus. One respondent compared the actions of the Confucius Institute as equivalent to the developmental work of the Canadian government, in that they both try to ‘gain friends and influence hearts’ from one another.

Although one may assume cultural diplomacy operates unilaterally, the outcomes may benefit both the sender and the receiver. In this study, China is attempting to create a positive image of itself through the education in Chinese language and culture at the Confucius Institute. But the Canadian government and communities may also benefit from this establishment as one participant commented on the CI fulfilling needs of the business communities by introducing them to Chinese etiquette requirements which they may encounter during negotiations.

Cultural diplomacy is not a new phenomenon, but the Confucius Institute has brought a new dimension to it. Since it is situated in the local university, the Confucius Institute is able to combine two educational tools of cultural diplomacy, which are the cultural and language institutions and the academic exchange programs. In addition, the association with a local university gives the Confucius Institute a sense of prestige and authority for the teaching of the Chinese language and culture. It also gains access to specific groups of the population through the partnership, primarily the young and
educated adults and people engaged in international trade. Although the Chinese government is responsible for the initial cost of the site, the 1:1 funding formula relieves the government from being the sole provider of financial support. This is especially important when the global number of Confucius Institutes have increased dramatically. China can also avoid a funding gap in its diplomatic work as experienced by other nations such as the U.S.

6.2 The Chinese Worldview and the Confucius Institute

Central to the Chinese view of the world is the concept of the Middle Kingdom. The Middle Kingdom consists of an idea of China as the supreme kingdom at the centre of the universe with other groups in the periphery. This concept has lasted most of Chinese recorded history until the 19th century when it crumbled in the face of Western attacks, beginning with the First Opium War. One of the features of the ancient Chinese view of international relations is the tributary system. Neighbouring states, which were deemed inferior by the Chinese, regularly sent tributes to the Chinese imperial court as a sign of submission. The tribute system allowed the Chinese to maintain a sense of superiority while neighbouring states benefited from the protection of the Chinese. In the case of the Confucius Institute, it can be argued that China has reversed the direction of communication. Instead of different nations going to China to learn about its language and culture, China has reached out to its periphery and established Confucius Institutes.

Confucian teachings are also central to the Chinese view of the world. Confucius promoted the idea of harmony, and ways to achieve it so that social order can be maintained. Four features of harmony were discussed in chapter two. Although the Confucius Institute does not explicitly teach Confucian thought and ideals, it does
embody some of the features of Confucian harmony. First, harmony is interpersonal as it takes more than one person to establish harmony. The Confucius Institute is a partnership between institutions in China and a foreign country. A harmonious relation is hopefully achieved between the two nations through the Confucius Institute. Second, harmony does not represent perfect agreement; instead, it tolerates differences between the two sides. The three case studies offer different programs and activities according to the needs of the students and local communities. One site offers workshops that cater to the business community while others maintain their focus on the academic needs of their students. The Constitution and By-Laws of the Confucius Institute state that a Confucius Institute can be modified to accommodate the distinct conditions and needs of different countries. Lastly, a harmonious relationship exists when all parties receive mutual benefit and mutual constraint, and no one wins over the other. In this study, all participants have stated that the Confucius Institute has been beneficial to their institute. The reported benefits include an increased capacity for Chinese language education, an increased international exposure of the university, and subsidized funding for language education. The mutual constraint in this case would be the limits imposed on the university by the Hanban through the Constitution and By-Laws and the same for the Confucius Institute where it has to abide by the rules and regulations of the foreign university.

6.3 Chinese-Canadian University Partnerships and their Progression Over Time

Since the 1970’s, China and Canada have participated in numerous partnership programs that linked the two nations’ academic institutions together. It began as a Canadian developmental initiative in fields such as agriculture, engineering and
education, with the intention of increasing economic ties as China became modernized. (Hayhoe, Pan & Zha, 2013) Several decades later, not only has China become urbanized in the development of its major cities, it has also become the largest trading partner in the world. This evolution has changed the nature of academic exchanges between Canada and China. Instead of viewing education as a matter of developmental aid, both nations now use it to build research collaboration and to facilitate economic partnerships. Therefore, the Confucius Institute can be seen as a natural progression for the Chinese-Canadian university partnerships over time. It provides a permanent physical space for Chinese academic institutions to make possible education in Chinese language and culture as opposed to exchange programs where students and scholars are temporary visitors with temporary influence. In addition, it acts as an additional communication venue between different departments of partner universities, which can then lead to research collaboration. This is especially beneficial to departments in the humanities and social sciences where bilateral partnerships were not as common in the period of developmental aid. For example, the Confucius Institutes in the three cases were able to facilitate talks among departments of political science, linguistics, international relations and business.

All three Canadian universities in this study have previous working relationships with multiple Chinese universities. Over time, the Canadian universities have built a mutual understanding and respect with certain Chinese institutions based on the experience and outcomes from these partnerships. As a result, they have chosen the Chinese institution that they felt most comfortable with and most confident about as a Confucius Institute partner. When asked to give advice to other Canadian universities
interested in hosting a Confucius Institute, all participants suggested selecting a partner institution that they are familiar with. The participants have also commented that the Hanban looks at an application more favourably if the foreign university has prior connection with the Chinese partner. This demonstrates that the success of the Confucius Institute is based on previous partnerships between the Canadian and Chinese institutions.

6.4 Internationalization of Canadian Universities

Cross-border partnership, as shown in the Confucius Institute, is one of the characteristics of internationalization of higher education. From the findings, the benefits of hosting a Confucius Institute include the widening of resources for Chinese language education, fulfilling the internationalization mandate of the university and further enrichment to the pre-existing collaboration with the Chinese university. These perceived benefits fulfill the four rationales for internationalization as proposed by Knight and de Wit and mentioned in chapter three. First, the reason for hosting a Confucius Institute is an economic one. It is noted in one of the responses that the Canadian university is able to offer Chinese language courses because of the 1:1 funding provided by the Hanban. In the era of reduced government subsidy and budget cuts, universities have to find alternative ways to cover costs. A participant also noted that the Confucius Institute has provided a venue to host workshops for the business communities in the region. Therefore, not only does the Canadian university receive economic benefits but the country also benefits from support for the business community to become more successful in trade relations with China. Second, the Confucius Institute improves diplomatic relations between China and Canada. The Confucius Institute is often seen as
cultural diplomacy on China’s behalf, but Canada also gains further exposure with the Chinese people. One of the participants commented that people come to this particular Canadian university because they know it has a Confucius Institute. By hosting the Institute, the Chinese may perceive Canada more favourably as a nation that is willing to invest in bilateral relations. The last two incentives are cultural and educational, and participants have emphasized that the primary focus for the Confucius Institute is academic in nature. They want students to be able to learn about the Chinese language and culture; in addition, they want to promote communications between scholars in both nations. Beyond the benefits of the students and scholars, the institution also profits as well. This institutional gain comes in the form of higher international ranking and reputation. As mentioned before, one of the participants acknowledged that one of the reasons the Canadian university is recognized is due to the presence of the Confucius Institute. The improvement in terms of international ranking may also explain the observation that few world-renowned universities such as Harvard and Oxford have yet to host a Confucius Institute of their own because they are already established in their reputation.

The Canadian Confucius Institutes represent the different approaches an institution can take towards internationalization. The three sites have taken four of the six approaches identified by Knight and de Wit. First, the program delivered through the Confucius Institute represents the activity approach as the language and cultural courses offered increase the amount of knowledge and awareness in its students. Second, the Confucius partnership is clearly driven by the four rationales, as noted above. This could be seen, therefore, as taking the rationale approach to internationalization. Third, the
ethos approach involves the promotion of international and intercultural understanding and all three Confucius Institutes take part in activities and events related to it. For example, all three sites maintain communication with the public through the business and local school communities. Lastly, the Confucius Institutes offers scholarships and exchanges to Canadian students which represents the cross-border approach. One participant mentioned the collaboration between the Canadian and Chinese faculties of education, where Canadian student teachers can complete their practicum in China.

6.5 Local Outreach and Inter-University Communications

In addition to the topics discussed in the literature review, other themes can be observed from the findings, such as the local outreach from the Canadian universities and communication among these institutions. The participants from the three case study institutions have provided numerous examples of activities and events held by the Confucius Institutes that were open to the local communities. For example, one of the sites has provided resources and teacher training to Chinese language teachers in the Catholic and Public school boards. One other site maintains contact with non-Chinese families with adopted Chinese children in the local area while another hosts summer camps for elementary students. These events allow the universities to come in contact with different demographics in their area, mainly the Chinese diaspora but also non-Chinese groups who are interested in the language and culture. This is comparable to the local outreach that departments of science and engineering do in attracting interest in the subjects and eventually, interest in the academic programs offered by these departments. This can be considered a self-sustaining strategy for the Confucius Institute, as it will continue to receive funding from both the Hanban and the university as these programs
become better known in the region. In addition, the academic departments associated with the Institute also benefit as enrollment may increase or be sustained so that they will continue to receive financial support and other resources from the university.

There are both informal and formal communications that exist between key administrative staff of the Canadian Confucius Institutes. In addition to the annual Confucius Institute Conference held in Beijing every year, where representatives from around the world gather to exchange information and experiences, Canadian staff also maintain contact with one another. Participants have said they are often consulted by other Canadian existing and new Confucius Institutes. These communications occur during Confucius Institute events such as the Chinese Bridge contest and non-Institute events. These meetings become another venue for communication among Canadian universities since some of these Confucius Institute staff also holds faculty or administrative positions in other academic departments.

6.6 University Autonomy and the Confucius Institute

Academic freedom and autonomy have been a concern for some Western scholars, as reported by the media. This became a topic of interest in this study. Before addressing the responses from the participants, the definitions of academic freedom and autonomy need to be revisited. The concept of academic freedom in the Western world was established in the Middle Ages. It meant that professors can teach without outside control in their field of expertise and that students are also free to learn. Later in 19th century Germany, it was extended to the research areas that are protected from external influence. American scholars redefined the concept so that academic freedom protects scholars and their expressions beyond their expert areas (Altbach, 2001). Furthermore,
China has been identified as a nation that has ‘significant limitations’ on academic freedom especially during times of crisis (ibid, p. 211). However, Chinese scholars still have fairly high freedom of choice to choose different research endeavours compared to the situation in other nations.

Participants in this study have stated that they have full control of program planning and execution although there were some minor logistical and administrative issues when dealing with the Hanban. The smooth operation observed by the participants can be due to the previous partnerships that these Canadian institutions had with their Chinese partners. This working relationship allows both parties to have consensus on the areas to be pursued through the Confucius Institute. The Canadian universities are also better aware of the process when working with different government ministries. One participant has stressed that the Confucius Institute is a non-political and non-religious organization, which seems to abide to the by-laws established by the Hanban. Another participant has added that if the proposed plan is not deemed favourable by the Headquarters, then funding may be reduced or not given at all. But this does not mean it cannot be carried out as long as the Canadian university can cover the entire cost. In addition, the Canadian Confucius Institute essentially operates under the Canadian institution with the licensing and subsidy from the Hanban. Although one may suggest that concerns over academic freedom and autonomy have caused the number of Canadian Confucius Institute to remain so low, this does not seem to be the case in the United States where the number of universities involved in the partnership approaches 100. This is a drastic difference between the two industrialized nations that have a similar outlook on academic freedom and autonomy.
This analysis has provided a richer view of the university partnership between Canadian and Chinese universities through the Confucius Institute. Specifically, China is able to use this partnership to gain soft power and achieve cultural diplomacy in the 21st century as it develops into the next global superpower. The Confucius Institute can also be examined through the ancient Chinese world view of the Middle Kingdom and through the Confucian teaching of harmony. Other issues that are discussed in this section include the Confucius Institute being a natural progression in university partnerships between Canada and China, beginning with developmental aid in the 1980’s and now with cultural relations and diplomacy. Through the activities and workshops in the Confucius Institute, Canadian universities can increase their appeal to both international and local students. Lastly, the section has also addressed the perceived threat of the Confucius Institute and the potential of Chinese interference in the Canadian institutions. The following chapter will provide a conclusion which discusses the implications of this thesis and ideas for further research on this topic.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

The purpose of this Master’s research is to explore the Chinese-Canadian university partnership through the Confucius Institute. The Confucius Institute is an interdisciplinary phenomenon that facilitates bilateral relations between China and a foreign country using higher education as a conduit. Therefore, the literature review of this thesis has focused on areas such as diplomacy, the Chinese worldview, and Canadian-Chinese university partnerships. The findings are analyzed based on these topics while using the theoretical framework of constructivism from International Relations and the concept of internationalization of higher education. The data collection has involved creating case studies of three Canadian Confucius Institutes. They have been selected among the thirteen Institutes across the nation and participants hold administrative and/or managerial positions within the organization. As this study was exploratory in nature, the participants were asked about topics such as a general operational overview of the Institute, funding structure, nature of the university partnership and factors that facilitate the partnership. This last chapter will describe the limitations and significance of the research findings along with ideas for further research.

7.1 Limitations of Study

As previously mentioned, this research involves case studies of three Confucius Institutes in Canada. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other Canadian Confucius Institutes as they differ in geographical and institutional contexts. In addition, the data collection is of a qualitative nature where participants answer a set of open-ended questions. As such, responses may contain bias since participants may interpret
the questions differently than the researcher intended, and they may also feel the need to present a certain image of the Institute and the universities involved.

Furthermore, the use of Constructivism and Internationalization of Higher Education as theoretical frameworks may limit the scope of the research. These two concepts emphasize the end goal of the partnership as opposed to its process with the first defining the goal of the Chinese government and the latter defining the goal of the two partner universities.

### 7.2 Research Significance

Although the findings are not intended to be generalized, they have provided insights into how the local administrators of the Institutes view the partnership. It has been widely understood in both political and academic arenas that China aims to gain soft power and conduct cultural diplomacy through the Confucius Institute. However, very little literature has explored the perspectives of the foreign partners and whether they can benefit from the relationship. From the data analysis, the bilateral relationship can be identified as a symbiotic one where both parties benefit. The Confucius Institute may be an imitation of such European cultural and language institutions as the British Council and Alliance Française, but it has been modified to suit the needs of both China and its foreign partners. This mutual benefit may explain the rapid rise in the number of Confucius Institutes around the world. In addition, other nations that do not currently have their own cultural and language institutions may wish use this as a model when they decide to do so.

Research on cultural diplomacy mostly focuses on the outcome of whether the activities have produced the results that the sending nation has intended. This research
has instead focused on the people directly involved with the process of cultural relations. As a result, it has revealed the historical background of each university partnership involved in this study. The issues and concerns stated by the participants from the study may lead to further improvements in the operation and planning of the programs.

**7.3 Suggestions for Future Research**

Three general ideas are proposed for further research on the university partnership through the Confucius Institute. They include a quality analysis using a mixed methods approach, a comparative study on the Institutes in different nations and a longitudinal study on the sustainability of the university partnerships.

Further analysis on the quality of the university partnership using both qualitative and quantitative methods could be carried out in future research. The participants involved could be extended to the academic staff from different departments that became involved in bilateral collaborations through the Confucius Institute. Some of the departments listed by the participants from this study include departments of linguistics and political science, and faculties of education. Quantitative methods might allow for a bigger sample size and increased generalizability of the data.

Second, a comparative study of university partnerships with different nations might reveal the reason why some nations have a more prolific number of Confucius Institutes than others. For example, as mentioned in chapter six, the U.S. has nearly six times as many Confucius Institutes as Canada though both are industrialized Western nations with similar higher education systems. Of course this may simply reflect the difference in the population size in the two countries, but the perceived China threat has remained strong in the U.S. since the end of Cold War. In addition, it became clear in
this study that a Chinese university may partner with multiple foreign institutions. Therefore a comparison can also be done on whether the number of partnerships affects the quality of university partnerships, since resources and support may become depleted if a Chinese institution has to work with different partners.

Another area of focus in the future is the sustainability of the university partnership through the Confucius Institute. The Chinese cultural and language institution is a relatively new establishment when compared to its European counterparts. The Confucius Institute is not only new but it is also significantly different in the ways it operates and the various partnership models it offers. Therefore, it will be of interest to explore its adaptability to both macro and micro changes such as political breakdown between nations, economic downturns, and reduction in university enrollments. The partnership in the Confucius Institute may be more vulnerable to changes since it involves multiple stakeholders such as the Hanban and both Chinese and foreign institutions.
References


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Appendix A: Interview Questions for administrators and staff at the Canadian Confucius Institute:

1. In your own words, what do you see as the main goals of the Confucius Institute at <university name>?
2. What level of autonomy or independence does the Confucius Institute at <university name> have in operational and program planning?
3. Who decides which Chinese university becomes a partner to the Confucius Institute at <university name>?
4. Are you aware of the criteria for selecting <name of Chinese university> as the official partner to the Confucius Institute at <university name>?
5. Can you provide some examples of the interactions between <name of Chinese university> and the Confucius Institute at <university name>?
6. Does the <Chinese university> interact with any other departments of <university name> that you are aware of?
7. In your opinions, what are the benefits of having this distinct university partnership in a cultural and language institution such as the Confucius Institute at your university?
8. What are the factors that help facilitate the university partnership?
9. Has the Confucius Institute at <university name> experienced any issues or problems when interacting with Chinese university?
10. In your opinions, what areas of improvement are needed in this university partnership?
Appendix B: Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT, RESEARCH

PROTOCOL REFERENCE # 27252

February 1, 2012

Dr. Ruth Hayhoe
OISE/UT, DEPT. OF THEORY & POLICY STUDIES IN EDUC.
OISE/UT

Ms. Yuen Wai Covina Kwan
OISE/UT, DEPT. OF THEORY & POLICY STUDIES IN EDUC.
OISE/UT

Dear Dr. Hayhoe and Ms. Yuen Wai Covina Kwan,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, “Understanding Canadian-Chinese university partnerships through the Confucius Institute”

ETHICS APPROVAL

| Original Approval Date: February 1, 2012 |
| Expiry Date: January 31, 2013 |
| Continuing Review Level: 1 |

We are writing to advise you that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board (REB) has granted approval to the above-named research protocol under the REB’s delegated review process. Your protocol has been approved for a period of one year and ongoing research under this protocol must be reviewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that annual renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Schneider, Ph.D.,
C.Psych
REB Chair

Dean Sharpe, Ph.D.
REB Manager

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Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

**TO BE PUT ON OISE/UT LETTER HEAD**

Dear <Participant Name>,

I am a Master of Arts candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Currently, I am conducting research for my Master’s thesis on Canadian-Chinese university partnership through the Confucius Institute. **The study will be conducted under the supervision of Prof. Ruth Hayhoe.**

My study will explore the nature of the academic interaction that occurs between Canadian hosts of Confucius Institutes and their partner universities in China. Specifically, I will look at the Confucius Institutes in Ontario as case studies.

Your expertise and affiliation with <Insert Name of Organization> is of interest to me and my study. I am contacting people involved in the Canadian branches of the Confucius Institutes to gain further information on your local Institute’s initiatives and practices. Your participation in this study may provide you with the opportunity to reflect on the operations of the Confucius Institute, which might lead to further improvement or dialogue within the organization. In addition, the academic community may also benefit from the results of the study in terms of how university partnership may increase mutual understanding between different countries. **The Confucius Institute at <university name> has been chosen due to its well-established programs as seen from its official website.** Your role at the Confucius Institute at <university name> will provide insights on the nature of the university partnership between the Canadian and Chinese academic institutions from the Canadian perspective. **Your name and contact information were made available to me either through a public website or document.** Could I interview you <in person or over the phone> for 45 to 60 minutes during <suggested time> at a location convenient to you? Your voluntary participation would be greatly appreciated.

**You may have received this letter from a colleague to whom I have sent as an invitation for potential participants. If this is the case, please contact me via email or over the phone if you are interested in this study.**

Please see the attached consent form with information about the types of questions I will ask, how I will keep your participation confidential and private, and opportunities for debriefing the results of the study.

If you agree to an interview, I will ask you to sign this informed consent form before it begins and will give you a copy of it for your records.

Please contact me if you want further information about the study or if you have any questions.
Thank you for your consideration,
Covina Kwan
M.A. Candidate, Curriculum Studies and Teacher Development
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 11th Floor
University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street East, M5S 1V6
Canada
647-297-2186
covinayw.kwan@utoronto.ca
Appendix D: Individual Consent Form

TO BE PUT ON OISE/UT LETTERHEAD

Dear <Name of Staff of the Confucius Institute>,

I am writing to ask your consent to participate in a face-to-face interview for my research study as requested in the recruitment letter. The title of my study is "Understanding Canadian-Chinese university partnerships through the Confucius Institutes". This study is conducted under the supervision of Prof. Ruth Hayhoe.

As previously stated in the recruitment letter, this study will provide a comparative analysis of the three Confucius Institutes in Ontario with a focus on understanding the mechanisms, rationales, benefits and issues arising from the interaction between the Canadian host university and the partner Chinese university from a Canadian perspective. This research is exploratory in nature and it is not an evaluation of the Confucius Institute and the universities involved.

This interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes, and take place in your office, or at another location convenient to you. Participation is entirely voluntary; you may withdraw from the study or refuse to answer at any time without consequence. In addition, you may request that any information provided by you would be eliminated from the project. At no time will value judgments or evaluations be placed on your responses. It is the intention that each interview will be audio-taped with your permission and later transcribed to paper. You may request a summary of results or copy of the study. The information gathered from individual questionnaires will be kept in strict confidence and stored at a secure location (password-protected on researcher's computer). All information will be reported in such a way that individuals cannot be identified. All collected data will be used for the purpose of a Master's thesis and perhaps for subsequent research articles. All raw data will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. Only my supervisory and I will have access to the collected data.

My contact information as well as the contact information of my advisor and the ethical review board at the University of Toronto is as follows:

Covina Kwan, M.A. Candidate
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
OISE/UT,
647-297-2186
covinayw.kwan@utoronto.ca

Professor Ruth Hayhoe,
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education,
OISE/UT
561-265-0886
ruth-hayhoe@sympatico.ca

The study has been approved by the Research Ethics Boards of the University of Toronto. If you have any questions related to your rights as a participant in this study please contact the Ethics Review Office at the University of Toronto at 416 946 3272 or,

ethics.review@utoronto.ca
Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation.

Sincerely,

Covina Kwan

By signing below, you are indicating that you are voluntarily willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

Name: __________________________________________________________________

Signed: ___________________________ Date:_________________

Please initial if you agree to have your interview audio taped: _____
Please check if you want a summary of findings upon completion of the study : _____
Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.