

China's Soft Power in Global Policy: Vectors and the Azerbaijani Case

S.A. Hidayatova

*Department of International Relations and Economics, Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan
sevilhidayatova@bsu.edu.az*

Abstract: The article analyzes the trajectories of China's soft power in global foreign policy with an emphasis on Azerbaijan. Based on a qualitative review of official documents, academic publications, and open materials, key tools of China's cultural and public diplomacy are examined, including language and cultural promotion, media platforms, educational and humanitarian programs, as well as infrastructure and transport connectivity. It is shown that China's soft power in Azerbaijan is based on the activities of Confucius Institutes, the growth of academic exchanges and student mobility, the expansion of media presence, cooperation between scientific and management institutions, as well as the coupling of cultural initiatives with economic and logistical projects. There is a deepening of bilateral ties and an increase in tourist reciprocity against the background of visa liberalization. The analytical part reveals the limitations of the effectiveness of soft power in countries with developed civil societies and stable democratic norms, where caution remains towards China's political practices. It is concluded that soft power has ceased to be an auxiliary element and has become an important component of China's foreign policy, and further expansion of its impact requires more fine-tuning of communication and consideration of the value diversity of partners. The practical implications for Azerbaijani-Chinese cooperation in the fields of culture, education and humanitarian exchanges are discussed.

Keywords: China, Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Cultural Diplomacy, Azerbaijan, Confucius Institutes, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), People-to-people Ties

Introduction

Over the past couple of decades, China has demonstrated impressive annual economic growth—about 8 percent for most of the 2000s—and has achieved much more significant positions in such reputable international organizations as the G20, BRICS, and SCO (Brühl, 2024). This rise did not go unnoticed: a significant number of developing countries began to consider China as a model of successful economic development. Along with economic development, Beijing has purposefully developed and implemented soft power tools in order to positively influence the country's image abroad. The leadership sought to get rid of the label of a “closed” or “difficult” state to interact with, while promoting Chinese values, cultural symbols and ideals, focusing on humanitarian, educational and cultural programs in many regions. To this end, from the 1970s to the 1990s, China gradually began to resort to peaceful initiatives such as international educational programs, cultural festivals, scientific conferences, cooperation with UNESCO, and volunteer missions (Li & Worm, 2010).

Chinese scientists first turned to the concept of “soft power” in the early 1990s, when articles and analytical notes began to appear in local journals (Wang & Lu, 2008). In the following years, specialized periodicals appeared, which indicated an increased interest in this topic. Under Chinese President Hu Jintao in 2002-2007, soft power was elevated to the rank of a state strategy. Speaking at the 17th National Congress of the CPC in 2007, the Chinese leader said, “The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will definitely be accompanied by the thriving of Chinese culture... We must enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country... We will further publicize the fine traditions of Chinese culture and strengthen international cultural exchanges to enhance the influence of Chinese culture worldwide” (Xinhua, 2007). In 2011, the CPC Central Committee adopted a separate decision “On further

deepening the reform of the cultural system ...", where the goal of "strengthening cultural soft power" received detailed implementation mechanisms—that is, the strategy was institutionalized (China Copyright and Media, 2011). This concept found a positive response in part because it corresponded to Confucian ethics, which called for peaceful coexistence, respect and moderation, even dealing with potential opponents. The indirect connection between the concept of soft power and Confucian philosophy helped strengthen the ideological base of the country's foreign policy (Bell, 2009).

Culture remains the main instrument of "soft power" in the Chinese interpretation. Beijing views its more than 5,000-year-old heritage not as something static, but as an invaluable resource of international influence. Being one of the oldest in the world, the Chinese civilization is known to have spread elements of its belief system and aesthetics throughout South and East Asia, from Buddhist traditions in Korea to tea ceremonies in Japan. It was only during the reign of Mao Zedong that the centuries-old influence of Chinese culture was interrupted. This was due to the fact that in the post-revolutionary period it began to serve ideological purposes. The policy of isolationism and the Cultural Revolution that spanned an entire decade (1966-1976) led to the emptying of museums, unprecedented purges of libraries, and silenced artists and other cultural figures (Zhou, 2020).

It was due to Deng Xiaoping's reforms in the late 1970s and the policy of opening doors to the outside world that culture regained its "voice" in foreign policy. It is noteworthy that the events in Tiananmen Square in 1989 convinced the country's leadership of the need to create a more positive international image. Beijing needed to find nonviolent ways to neutralize criticism and restore trust, which led to a reassessment of government strategy and the implementation of appropriate policy actions in the 2000s and 2010s. Officials emphasized that Chinese culture can both strengthen national identity and attract the attention of the foreign public (Xu, 2017).

Various information platforms have gained great importance in promoting soft power policy. Today, China International Radio broadcasts in more than 40 languages, including French, Swahili and Arabic. In 2009, China launched the CCTV News channel (now CGTN), which broadcasts news in both Chinese and English to reach audiences in Europe, North America, Australia and Africa. The official news channel covers the country's internal issues, including those related to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Xinjiang, in a different way than the Western media, conveying the Chinese view of the situation to the world community (Alpermann & Malzer, 2023).

The expansion of educational channels in China for international students can be considered a strategic step in the implementation of the Beijing's course. According to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, almost half a million foreigners studied in China in 2018, many of whom came from Africa and Southeast Asia (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China [MOE], 2019). Due to government grants for education related to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), talented young people from the Silk Road partner countries enter Chinese universities, thus immersing themselves in the Chinese educational environment, culture and language, which further forms the future leaders of their countries have a positive attitude towards China (Sarwar-Aalam, Wang & Rafique, 2019). Confucius Institutes also play an outstanding role in promoting Chinese culture and language, and indirectly—Chinese influence. Numbering over 450 and operating in more than 150 countries around the world, they serve as centers for teaching Chinese and popularizing traditional Chinese culture through lectures, festivals and exhibitions (Wang, Uzodinma & Niu, 2021). The Confucius Institutes, which enjoy great political and economic support from the Chinese state, are designed to create a positive image of the PRC abroad. For example, in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and other post-Soviet states, they reinforce China's image as a peaceful and culturally rich civilization. During the COVID-19 epidemic, the centers did not stop working, but adapted their activities into the format of online courses and lectures on

language, traditional medicine, philosophy and poetry. Moreover, Beijing actively invites foreign diplomats, government officials, scientists, cultural figures, and influencers to undergo internships and trainings, which include field trips, meetings with officials, and discussions of international issues through the lens of the "Chinese worldview." These steps are designed to create a positive image of China among representatives of the foreign establishment and the public (Sun, Xu & Zhao, 2020).

An important area of Chinese public diplomacy is the organization of major international events, such as, for example, the 2006 Summit on the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the APEC Summit in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2008 and 2022 in Beijing, the Asian Summer Games in 2010 in Guangzhou, the G20 Summit in Hangzhou in 2016, etc. Cultural cooperation and exchanges have also become an integral part of China's soft power. Bilateral cultural events are actively held, such as the Week of Chinese Culture in Berlin in 2001, the Year of Chinese Culture in France in 2004, the Year of China in Russia in 2007, the Festival of Chinese Culture in the UK in 2010, the International Chinese Film Festival in Los Angeles in 2019, etc. Such events help attract tourists to the country and introduce foreigners to the Chinese way of life, mentality and culture. Delegations from China regularly and quite successfully participate in international fairs, film festivals and exhibitions. In 2010, Shanghai itself hosted the World Expo, which became the largest cultural event in the country's history, where China presented not only its own technological innovations, but also elements of intangible heritage, from Chinese opera to calligraphy (Winter, 2014).

All these numerous efforts are inextricably linked to Beijing's broader image strategy, namely, the desire to position itself not as a rival, but as a trustworthy partner who respects the traditions of other countries and uniquely combines antiquity and modernity. At the same time, China continues to promote so-called "socialism with Chinese characteristics" as an optimal alternative to liberal democracy. In his report to the 19th CPC National Congress in 2017, Xi Jinping argued that China's path "opens up new opportunities for other countries and nationalities that want to accelerate their development while maintaining independence," "It offers a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence; and it offers Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving the problems facing mankind." (Hu et al., 2020)

The country's leadership claims that it was the stable one-party system that allowed China to achieve unprecedented economic success, thus contrasting it with Western models and justifying its legitimacy as a model for other states. In the white paper titled "China: Democracy That Works" and released in 2021 by China's State Council Information Office, it was stated, that "China's whole-process people's democracy and the leadership of the Communist Party have proved to be effective in delivering continuous economic development, long-term social stability, and rapid improvement of people's lives." (State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China [SCIO], 2021). In turn, Western researchers and human rights organizations criticize China's political model of one-party rule, restrictions on freedom of expression, press and religion, as well as pressure on national and religious minorities. They argue that the significant gap between cultural attractiveness and these ambiguous aspects of China's political system significantly reduces the effectiveness of China's soft power. Reports by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International on the situation in Xinjiang speak of mass detentions and forced assimilation of the Muslim population, which undermines China's image as a "responsible world leader," especially in countries with an aggravated ethnopolitical situation and Muslim-majority population (Amnesty International, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Beijing is seeking to neutralize these concerns by stepping up diplomacy and positioning itself as an ardent advocate of "peaceful coexistence" and non-interference. This position resonates especially among developing countries, for which Western values are often

associated with the colonial past and imposed reforms. Moreover, the Chinese government invests heavily in the less developed regions of the world, including training specialists from developing countries, education grants for student and volunteer programs. The scale of China's disaster-relief efforts has increased significantly in recent times (Wong, 2021).

Africa is a prime example of this policy in practice. The development of strategic partnerships with African states has quickly become one of the main priorities within the framework of China's "soft power" strategy. There are at least two explanations for this: the importance of the African continent's richest resources for maintaining China's stable economic growth cannot be overestimated, while the continent itself provides Beijing with a wide political arena for diplomatic maneuvering.

Since 2000, China has organized nine Forums on Sino-African cooperation (FOCAC), where numerous joint projects in the fields of infrastructure, medicine, agriculture, energy, education and security were planned. At the 2018 summit, China promised to provide more than \$60 billion in aid and investment. Moreover, in 2024 during the ninth FOCAC Summit held in Beijing Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged \$50 billion in financial support to African states over the next three years (Bao, 2024). Consistent with its non-interference policy, Beijing, unlike many Western donors, generally provides loans and investment without demands for political reform. This makes Chinese aid particularly attractive to states with different regimes. For example, China has become the largest investor in infrastructure projects in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Sudan (Foster et al., 2009). Such tactics help China establish a reputation of a "friendly power" among these states, while the West is often perceived as a carrier of sanctions and criticism, imposing harsh conditions. Countries with a colonial past tend to share rather Chinese approach to sovereignty and non-interference in their internal affairs.

African governments, for their part, often support Beijing's position and initiatives in the UN system and facilitate its access to strategically important raw materials and energy. On this "fertile ground" of cooperation, the Chinese leadership has consistently promoted its own culture, political narratives, and diplomatic rhetoric as tools to strengthen its external positions. As part of the chosen strategy, China actively participates in the activities of regional and international organizations. Guided by the slogan of "building a harmonious world" based on the principles of justice and equality, Beijing is strengthening ties with both global actors and neighboring countries. Special attention is paid to those multilateral formats in which China can demonstrate its willingness to engage in dialogue and cooperation on an equal footing. Examples of such structures are the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, as well as the China-Africa Cooperation Forum.

At the same time, it is important to note that Chinese participation in these associations is far from formal. For example, within the framework of the SCO, China is actively investing in programs to combat terrorism and cross-border crime in Central Asia, and in the BRICS, it advocates reform of the global financial architecture to counterbalance the dominance of Western-centric institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank (Soong, 2021). In addition, China is demonstrating its openness and willingness to cooperate through the provision of humanitarian assistance. So, in 2020-2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Beijing sent millions of doses of the vaccine to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. For example, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, Serbia, Pakistan, and others were among the first to receive the Chinese Sinopharm vaccine, which caused a wave of gratitude and strengthened trust in China (Suzuki & Yang, 2022). This so-called "vaccine diplomacy" allowed the PRC to strengthen ties with a number of states that could not count on quick aid from Western countries, thus contributing to the strengthening of its soft power. In the context of implementation of the soft power strategy, the South Caucasus and, in particular, Azerbaijan occupy a special place in the foreign policy of the Chinese state. Despite the fact that Beijing's interest in the region is

relatively recent compared with Africa and Central Asian countries, Chinese-Azerbaijani relations have evolved markedly over the past two decades. They have outgrown the framework of formal interaction and reached the level of comprehensive strategic partnership (Khalilov, 2025). At the same time, bilateral cooperation is increasingly taking forms in which soft power—through culture, education, media, and humanitarian projects—plays an important role. Strategically located at the intersection of trade routes between East and West, Azerbaijan is perceived by China as an important connecting segment of the Belt and Road Initiative. Baku has become a key point of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR) linking China with Europe. Various infrastructure projects are being implemented with the participation of Chinese contractors and investors, including the development of the Alat port, the Baku—Tbilisi—Kars railway and logistics terminals (Nabiyev, 2023). In parallel with expanding economic cooperation and investments, cultural exchange between the two countries has also intensified.

In recent years, dozens of Chinese cultural events have been held in Azerbaijan, including exhibitions, tours of dance groups, and Chinese New Year celebrations in public and university spaces. One of the key initiators and organizers of these events was the Confucius Institute, which has been officially operating at Baku State University since 2011. He not only offers Chinese language courses, but also actively participates in the formation of a bilateral humanitarian dialogue. For example, in 2019, a Chinese culture festival was organized, which included workshops on calligraphy, tea ceremony, and martial arts. All this was accompanied by discussions on the philosophy of Confucius and the importance of cultural traditions in the modern world. Chinese language learning opportunities in Azerbaijan were expanded after the opening of the second Confucius Institute at the Azerbaijan University of Languages in 2016. He, in turn, also regularly organizes cultural events and lecture projects dedicated to China (Guliyev, 2023).

Cooperation in the field of education and between the academic structures of the two countries is also gaining momentum. Over the years, from several dozen to several hundred Chinese students have chosen Azerbaijani universities to receive higher education. The number of Azerbaijani students studying at leading universities in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou is growing, and some of them are receiving government scholarships. By 2023, analyses reported that the number of Azerbaijani students in Chinese universities exceeded 500 (You, 2025). Many of them subsequently serve as bridges between the two countries, working in business, science, logistics and translation. In December 2013, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Azerbaijan (APA/DIA) and the Chinese Academy of Governance, which provides for the exchange of experience, joint conferences, round tables and research on public administration, sustainable development, ecology and digitalization. China for Azerbaijanis and Azerbaijan for Chinese are becoming closer and more understandable thanks to mass media and the development of bilateral tourism. In recent years, a growing number of Chinese media and information platforms have become accessible in Azerbaijan, informing local audiences about cultural and economic programs and the everyday lives of Chinese citizens. Articles by Chinese analysts are published in the local press, and CGTN (the international version of Chinese television) is actively broadcasting in English and Russian, reaching the Azerbaijani audience as well.

Tourist flows in both directions have increased in recent years. The Chinese guests are particularly interested in the historical monuments of Azerbaijan, in particular, the architecture of the Old City in Baku, ecotourism and mountain routes, as well as the national cuisine. In turn, Azerbaijanis are increasingly visiting Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an and other cities, inspired by the ancient culture and modern achievements of China. In 2024, a memorandum on mutual recognition of travel agencies simplified visa acquisition. Subsequently, the bilateral mutual visa-exemption agreement was signed in April 2025 and

became effective on July 16, 2025. These steps are expected to boost tourism and foster new exchange programs between the two countries (Turksoy, 2025).

As mentioned earlier, the humanitarian component is an integral part of PRC's soft power strategy in building relationships, forming long-term trust, and strengthening China's image as a responsible international actor. Thus, Beijing's provision of COVID-19 vaccines and personal protective equipment to Baku during the COVID-19 pandemic was highly appreciated by the Azerbaijani government and was received as a striking example of friendship between the two countries.

Results and Discussions

Assessing the overall situation, it can be argued that the soft power strategy actively implemented by China over the past twenty years has become one of the key elements of its foreign policy doctrine. Beijing has demonstrated that global influence can be achieved not only through economic or military capabilities, but also through thoughtful, consistent and systematic cultural and humanitarian cooperation. In this way, China is forming a new type of international presence, characterized by openness, peacefulness and friendliness, rather than aggressiveness and obsession with ideology, as in the Cold War era. Unlike the United States and the European Union, China does not seek to present its principles as universal and applicable everywhere and for everyone, but offers a path combining ancient traditions, advanced technologies and pragmatic nationalism. It should be noted that the Chinese model is proving more attractive to a number of countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the former Soviet Union. This is confirmed by the growing number of long-term partner countries and international students studying Chinese, the recognition of Chinese humanitarian initiatives in international forums, and the growing trust in the Chinese model of governance in the face of global instability. All this has become possible to a large extent due to the consistent development of cultural diplomacy, educational programs, scientific contacts, media platforms and trade, carried out without strict conditions and requirements.

In Azerbaijan China promotes its comprehensive soft power strategy through language and people-to-people exchange, technology, education, the arts, humanitarian initiatives, and transport connectivity. At the same time, its model provides access to resources, culture, and knowledge on mutually beneficial terms without ideological requirements, which makes it appealing. However, it should be noted that the spread of Chinese soft power faces certain difficulties in countries with an active civil society and established democratic norms. This is due to distrust of the possible ulterior motives of the PRC's policy, as a state in which civil liberties are limited, democratic institutions are lacking, pressure is exerted on the media and human rights issues exist. In order to achieve truly broad impact in its public and cultural diplomacy, Beijing may need to reconsider some aspects of its approach to political rights and freedoms, subtly calibrating its policy to different ideologies. As global competition intensifies, China will also need to clearly demonstrate that its aims are not driven by expansion or dominance, that its assistance will not entail economic dependence, and cultural exchange is not imposed.

Conclusions

In conclusion, by successfully implementing a soft-power strategy, China has achieved significant results without entering into direct conflicts or relying on coercive tools. It has secured strategic partnerships, intensified humanitarian outreach, promoted its cultural heritage, and strengthened its image as a responsible international actor. Therefore, it appears that soft power is no longer simply supplementary to China's foreign policy but has become integral to it. But in order to become a truly sustainable actor in the global humanitarian space, Beijing will have to not only continue to focus on culture and education, but also develop political flexibility, openness to feedback, and respect for the variety of values around the world.

References

- Alpermann, B., & Malzer, M. (2023). "In other news": China's international media strategy on Xinjiang—CGTN and New China TV on YouTube. *Modern China*, 50(2), 135–178. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00977004231169008>
- Amnesty International. (2021, June 10). "Like we were enemies in a war": China's mass internment, torture and persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang (Report No. ASA 17/4137/2021). <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/4137/2021/en/>
- Bao, A. (2024, September 5). China's Xi pledges over \$50 billion in financial aid to Africa to deepen ties. *CNBC*. <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/09/05/chinas-xi-pledges-over-50-billion-in-financial-aid-to-africa-to-deepen-ties-.html>
- Bell, D. A. (2009). War, peace, and China's soft power: A Confucian approach. *Diogenes*, 56(1), 26–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0392192109102153>
- Brühl, V. (2024). The economic rise of China: An analysis of China's growth drivers. *International Economics and Economic Policy*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10368-024-00640-w>
- China Copyright and Media. (2011, October 18). *Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party decision concerning deepening cultural structural reform*. <https://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2011/10/18/central-committee-of-the-chinese-communist-party-decision-concerning-deepening-cultural-structural-reform/>
- Foster, V., Butterfield, W., Chen, C., & Pushak, N. (2009). *Building bridges: China's growing role as infrastructure financier for Sub-Saharan Africa* (Trends and Policy Options No. 5). World Bank. <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/2614> — <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-7554-9>
- Guliyev, V. (2023, April 30). *China's soft-power diplomacy in the South Caucasus*. Baku Research Institute. <https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/en/chinas-soft-power-diplomacy-in-the-south-caucasus/>
- Hu, A., et al. (2020). Modernization: China's worldwide influence and contribution. In *Understanding Xi Jinping's governance* (pp. 77–87). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-9833-3_6
- Human Rights Watch. (2021, April 19). "Break their lineage, break their roots": China's crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting>
- Khalilov, V. (2025, July 30). *Chinese envoy hails "new milestone" in Azerbaijan–China relations*. Caliber.Az. <https://caliber.az/en/post/chinese-envoy-hails-new-milestone-in-azerbaijan-china-relations>
- Li, X., & Worm, V. (2009). *Building China's soft power for a peaceful rise* (Copenhagen Discussion Papers No. 28). Asia Research Centre, Copenhagen Business School. https://research-api.cbs.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/58999132/CDP_2009_028.pdf
- Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2019, April 18). *Statistical report on international students in China for 2018*. Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/reports/201904/t20190418_378692.html
- Nabiyev, V. (2023, September 5). *Azerbaijan–China cooperation: Relations entered the path of development* [Analysis]. APA (Azerbaijan Press Agency). <https://en.apa.az/economy/azerbaijan-china-cooperation-relations-entered-path-of-development-analysis-411108>
- Sarwar-Aalam, M., Wang, D., & Rafique, K. (2019). Chinese One Belt–One Road scholarship initiative and its impact on sustainable development of the education industry. In *Proceedings of the 2019 3rd International Conference on Management Engineering, Software Engineering and Service Sciences* (pp. 263–267). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3312662.3312672>
- Soong, J. (2021). The political economy of China's rising role in regional international organizations: Are there strategies and policies of the Chinese way considered and applied? *The Chinese Economy*, 55(4), 243–254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10971475.2021.1972550>
- State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China. (2021, December 4). *China: Democracy that works*. Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America. http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202112/t20211204_10462468.htm
- Sun, S. B., Xu, X., & Zhao, X. (2020). China's foreign aid training: Targeting becoming an influential culture sharer. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 56(4), 851–871. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909620946351>
- Suzuki, M., & Yang, S. (2022). Political economy of vaccine diplomacy: Explaining varying strategies of China, India, and Russia's COVID-19 vaccine diplomacy. *Review of International Political Economy*, 30(3), 865–890. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2022.2074514>
- Turksoy, T. (2025, July 19). *Azerbaijan, China launch visa-free travel regime*. Caspian News. <https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/azerbaijan-china-launch-visa-free-travel-regime-2025-7-17-0/>
- Wang, H., & Lu, Y. (2008). The conception of soft power and its policy implications: A comparative study of China and Taiwan. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 17(56), 425–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670560802000191>

- Wang, Y., Uzodinma, C. G., & Niu, C. (2021). The path, value and limits of the Confucius Institute in carrying out public diplomacy. *Economic and Political Studies*, 9(2), 217–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20954816.2021.1914416>
- Winter, T. (2014). Cultural diplomacy, cosmopolitanism and global hierarchy at the Shanghai Expo. *Space and Culture*, 18(1), 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331214534057>
- Wong, K. C. (2021). The rise of China's developmental peace: Can an economic approach to peacebuilding create sustainable peace? *Global Society*, 35(4), 522–540. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2021.1942802>
- Xinhua. (2007, October 24). *Full text of Hu Jintao's report at the 17th Party Congress*. *China Daily*. https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-10/24/content_6204564_8.htm
- Xu, S. (2017). Cultivating national identity with traditional culture: China's experiences and paradoxes. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 39(4), 615–628. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2017.1302410>
- You, X. (2025). Research on Azerbaijan's higher education cooperation with China: Strengthening ties through academic exchange. *Journal of Awareness*, 10(1), e2779. <https://doi.org/10.26809/joa.2779>
- Zhou, Y. (2020). Anti-culture: Art of Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). In *Chinese Contemporary Art Series* (pp. 43–84). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-1141-7_2