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MASTERS DISSERTATION

Title: China's pursuit of Dominance; Sharp Power in Taiwan and Australia

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Introduction

This dissertation advances a novel epistemological, methodological, theoretical and empirical analysis for understanding China's sharp power toward Taiwan and Australia. The epistemological contribution is made through the development of a mixed (positivist, post-positivist) methodology for understanding not only China's engagement with Taiwan but also of Australia's strategic importance to Beijing. The theoretical contribution is manifested in the development of the mixed theoretical analysis of realist "stick" and the social constructivist "carrot" approach in understanding China's attitude towards Taiwan. Positivist and anti-positivistic theories are deployed to advance a critical appreciation of soft-hard power respectively, the thesis seeks to locate the notion of sharp power in epistemological terms. The empirical contribution to knowledge is achieved through the development of a novel framework from an empirical analysis of China's sharp power in Taiwan and Australia.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation follows a sequence of development as follows:

Chapter 1 advances an epistemologically theoretically and empirically informed analysis of hard, soft and sharp power through a novel framework that identifies sharp power as a new form of authoritarian Chinese neo-colonialism.

Chapter 2 advances a critical understanding of a framework in 4 countries and 2 continents which explains China's alternating use of power.

Chapter 3 provides the application of China's sharp power in Taiwan and Australia while focusing on the geo-strategic and economic salience of both Taipei and Canberra.

Research Questions

*Can a mixed political science methodology be advanced to understand China's sharp power in Taiwan and Australia?

*Could a new empirical framework of China 's sharp power in four countries and two continents contribute to a better explanation of its application in Taiwan and Australia?

*What are Taiwan's and Australia's strategic and economic attributes?

Hypothesis

The dissertation's hypothesis as follows: China has integrated sharp power in its foreign and domestic policy towards Taiwan and Australia as both a luring and retaliatory instrument to deter the validation of Taiwan as an independent country and concomitant to this factor seeks to infiltrate and influence Australia's foreign policy making. The underlying reason for China's pursuit of Taiwan is the integration of national sovereignty needs and irredentist conformity, its geostrategic importance for expansion and the solving of all territorial disputes.

Also, Beijing the reference commonly used as the marker for China's authority has long sought to bring Canberra closer into its politico-influence-orbit and thereby reduce the influence and effect of the US. Whether the efforts alluded to in the aforementioned are proving successful is debatable although foreign policy experts are in general agreement that accommodation of China by Australia is necessary for the continuation of bilateral ties.

Gaps in the literature

The focus will be on political and military sharp power aspects between Australia and Taiwan based on China's behavior. The utilization of sharp power, however, is a strategy that the Chinese government has stipulated. It has the right to use in order to bring Taiwan into the control of Beijing.

Taipei and Canberra geo-strategic importance will be the subject of consideration as well as Chinese perspective in this regard. Little if any systematic epistemologically, theoretically, or empirically informed academic research currently exists on this important but thus far under-researched geostrategic issue. The following paragraph offers insight into the geostrategic and geographic importance of Taiwan and Australia to China.

Geostrategic and Geographic Significance

China in contemporary times is a highly distinctive nation-state, having moved from isolationism to cosmopolitanism. It now possesses a resonating-unprecedented and comprehensive economic clout, however, its political and cultural influence, has been greatly scrutinized by western democracies, is of significance. Beijing will redraw the contemporary conceptions of the hierarchy, and the mainland's strategic rationale and geographical supremacy will be reasserted. China's route to growth and power is unrepeatably by other governments (Ramo 2004 p. 5).

The foreign acquisitions alluded to commentators such as Khurana (2008), have stated that the Chinese Naval Operations, have established in the Antarctic Ocean and along the strategic lines of communications a string of stations aimed at lending support to the Chinese maritime forces , connecting Beijing directly to the oil depots from the Gulf of Persia, called "string of pearls". Over two decades, the concept of the Chinese string of pearls has developed to integrate Beijing's sprawling economic and trade transformative growth. Generating the necessity for

safeguarding geostrategic maritime routes and breaking through choke points. On the coast of the Indian Ocean, every pearl denotes a unique port venture. Integrating these ports will implement a set of bases acting as a geo-economic and geo-strategic stronghold for the Chinese army. Kostecka (2011) and Erickson (2010) contend that PLA is following a stratagem of acquiring “places not bases”. Strategic interactions hold an economic underpinning for the host country which is often referred to as ‘dollar diplomacy’ and is also dually used to deny international recognition of the renegade province as an independent country but also to break through the defense lines of the blockade chains.

Broad augmentation of the navy not only allows China to regionally expand its sphere of influence, but it will also allow Beijing to possess geographic cum nautical military advantages aimed at counter-balancing the US military outposts in the Asia-Pacific. Rendering this region, the geopolitical pivot to compensate for China's weakness. Mostly through its strategic control over the major points along the line of the “String of Pearls” which ensures the continuous flow of oil and goods. The future of Taiwan has far-reaching strategic implications for Asia-Pacific. Any evidence of backing down in this matter threatens the National People's Congress legitimacy, and prolongation of the issue of Taiwan can only benefit the US and Japan, China's strategic competitors (Klintworth 2000). According to Kuntic (2015), it is Taiwan's geostrategic prominence (2018) that matters the most to China. Further attempts are made to include Taiwan as a “red herring” in bilateral and multilateral exchanges to expand its presence in the international community to offset Beijing's full-court pressure on Taipei's international space as well as suppress China's maritime ambitions and rise. Beijing's desire to be powerful is

completely understandable. This is the cruel fact of international politics as it is an opportunistic move.

Furthermore, and concomitant to China's regional strategic ambitions, Beijing is pursuing direct access to ports and airfields by exerting geo-economic leverage on Indonesia and other South Pacific countries. Dominance over the Nusantara is imperative to the Chinese geostrategic ambitions in Nanhai, as well as the Australian mainland. In the past, the South Pacific has witnessed occurrences like the 2006 deliberate destruction of Chinatown in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, which in turn sparked a Chinese as well as an Australian response (Atkinson 2009). However, any incident that infringes on Canberra's strategic space can prompt Australia to solicit United States of America (US) support. Consequently, Beijing's desires to infiltrate and influence Australia's policy making to sabotage Canberra's defence partnership with the US and draw the country in becoming more financially dependent on Beijing. The PRC feels hemmed-in by US strategic alliances with Asian and Pacific Rim nations, but Peng contends that the long shared financial reliance of Taiwan and Canberra will constrain both sides leaving an open channel for disputes to be resolved diplomatically(Peng 2002, P.6).

China's coastline and the islands neighboring to the East and South Seas represent the strategic geography of Beijing's ocean power and thus its maritime capabilities are relevant to China's ability to foster its national interests throughout the Asia-Pacific. Beijing's aggressive expansion and stance towards the South Sea islands demonstrates Beijing's recognition of this region as a strategic obstacle to China's access to the Pacific (Michael 2013). Chinese control of Taiwan

would thus be a primary step towards expanding China's navy throughout the Twentieth Century towards the so-called "second island chain" (VornDick:2018). The rhetoric of the Chinese government of taking the renegade island by force presented an immense risk of an all-out international condemnation followed by decoupling of the Chinese economy. Which illustrates Beijing's strategic patience of awaiting Taiwan's subduing to its advances. Australia is situated in the Pacific Ocean in a major geographical location. Ironically enough, in response to China's maritime ambitions, Australia and the US are more dedicated and giving greater credence to the importance and strategic value of the "Indo-Pacific"(Auslin 2010; Medcalf and Mohan 2014). Thus, the continuity of good political ties with Australia is progressively considered a significant component for Chinese overall maritime security within this complex and expansive geostrategic value of the region (Zhang and Huang 2007). The friendly relation with Canberra is potentially perceived as detrimental for analysts in China, who claim that Chinese stability is better safeguarded by creating a secure, harmonious, Asia-Pacific zone with the assistance of Australia (Ibid).

Situating the topic within the existing literature

Literature Review

The rise of China is not an ideological dilemma to Beijing's neighbors or the US but is a strategic threat. On land and at sea, guided by the advantageous position of China on the globe, Beijing's reach stretches from Central Asia to the Nanhai and from Asia-Pacific to the Arctic Ocean (Michael 2013b). Beijing's increasing presence in the Pacific Island countries has triggered Australia's mounting concerns regarding China's military ambitions in the region.

The appearance of Pacific islands in the PLA reports stand testament to their importance in breaking the defense lines of the three island chains through military strategies (Du 2017:70). In order for China to surpass the “lock” Taiwan and the “southern anchor” Australia and to be able to venture beyond the strategic island chain, the Belt and Road Initiative allows for bilateral ties to be established followed by the construction of strategic ports in Asia and South Pacific. In the

Eastern hemisphere, the pendulum of influence is swaying in China's favour through sustaining its growing demands. Beijing is not pursuing a colonial approach to world affairs, nor does it attempt to enforce a political agenda or its communist system. Liberal democratic world order is an American dream, not a Chinese one (Kaplan 2013). I argue accordingly that Beijing's expansive activities are motivated by its obligation to acquire oil and raw materials to boost its growth. China fundamentally shifts the balance of power in the Eastern Hemisphere by safeguarding its economic needs, which is of great concern to the US (DiCicco and Levy1999).

Michael Leifer (1999) the literature review examines the intertwining interaction between internal diplomacies and the multipolar rhetoric in the mainland. The review infers such a Chinese-style globalism is a potent strategy for the mainland to enhance its foreign presence thus circumventing disputes with the US or Asian countries such as India and Japan (Leifer 1999).

Nonetheless, Beijing's multilateralism relies heavily on a unified representation of state sovereignty and territorial integrity must be built on the sense of a nationalist front that cultivates regional peace by gathering public support on issues like Taiwan (Marquand 2004).

In the following literature review, co-option power is characterized with the aptitude to have governments incorporate one's agendas into their decision making (Nye 2017). However, the discussion on Chinese soft power seems to have missed this fundamental capability, instead it emphasizes China's "charm offensive," of Chinese cultural values. And yet, China is still able to set agendas, primarily in terms of excluding those issues involving Dalai Lama, Taiwan,

territorial disputes, and intervention from international bodies. Beijing seeks to weaken Australia's alliance with the US (Economist 2017). It is fully recognized that China's foreign policy is unpopular among both China's neighbors such as India and Vietnam, and major powers for being allegedly unilateral, uncooperative, unstable, trivial, and arrogant. The assumption that Beijing's has hegemonic pretensions is a product of American transference of its actions and goals and the assumption that China will transpose its internal operation mode internationally. Taiwan's future is momentous to the advent of an inclusive-united China. The Taiwan issue is frequently discussed in through the prism of morality, is an obligation towards the preservation of national identity and unite all ethnicities under one China. The real issue is something else, it lies in Taiwan geostrategic importance. Territorial communities like Taiwan have come to enjoy considerable international status which is recognized for its fragile political relationship with China.

A fresh look at the Taiwan-China relationship is offered from the perspective of nationalism and sharp power in international relations. Analysts Holmes and Yoshihara stress that through the presence of the US in Asia it can deny Beijing's opportunity of expansion beyond its coast. Through the return of Taiwan to the mainland bosom, the Chinese marine forces will strategically advance beyond the first island chain. It also allows for an advantageous position surpassing it. Subsequently, China's unification with Taipei marks the beginning of a Chinese sphere of influence in East Asia (Holmes and Yoshihara 2005).

CHAPTER 1

Methodological Justification and Objectives

Methodological considerations sat above are addressed in the following sections which address an analysis of hard(command), soft(co-option), and sharp power. It would be possible to know more about China's use of sharp power by debating not only between the three major ideological camps of realism, positivism and nationalism but also by expanding the contest within each camp. By utilizing soft and hard power to reflect a legitimate image of authoritarian China but also by strategically employing sharp power to guarantee that Taiwan cannot be monopolized to confine and contain China whilst influencing Australia's policies.

China had seized the opportunity to cultivate an appealing, soft-power image as the custodian of the legacy of Confucian principles viewed as a champion of education, meritocracy, family values, hard work, and ideals underlining the rise of "Confucian capitalism" in East Asia(Justin 2011). The Chinese Communist Party has used "sharp power" to infiltrate Western democracies political and information environments to exploit discourse and counter dissidents living both within and outside China aimed explicitly at Taiwan and Australia. The Chinese political system cannot be described as dictatorial and its political system is legitimate to the core. As a rising superpower and as a sovereign nation , Beijing is resolutely entitled to its commitment to pursue reunification with Taiwan not only to liberate the Mainland from the three island chains choke points but also to preserve China's special administrative regions and bring Taiwan under the rule of the Chinese Party.

Commentators echoed cries of warnings, on recognition of Beijing's soft power activities that are extremely advanced, and their pernicious influential presence can be branded as sharp power (Albert 2018). This chapter argues that China's alternate use between hard, soft and sharp is to maintain geo-economic engagement and show resolve in reunifying with Taiwan and using Australia to pierce into the defense lines of the first and second island chain, whilst securing its sovereign sea rights (Wenmu 2006). None of the theories has complete authority over China's pursuit of reunification with Taiwan and infiltrate the Australian political system: while securing a definitive conclusion, it is important to stress the need for a mixed methodological approach.

This chapter discusses the principles of command and co-option power by pointing to the integration of sharp power. These three notions effectualness is evaluated by highlighting various

examples of their application in Taiwan. This examination also incorporates Illustration of utilization of sharp power. The chapter contends that because of its resilience and durability, soft power is a more powerful and a productive term in contemporary global politics. Aside from soft power, sharp power tactics still dominate a contributing role in the international system. The stratagem of sharp power monopolies a significant position in mainstream international policy. This chapter argues that the reason behind China's use of sharp power in Taiwan and Australia is to amalgamate the constitutionality of the People's National Congress in its quest to reunify the renegade province and to solve its outstanding territorial conflicts in South sea, East sea and beyond the first island chain.

Hard Power: Positivism and Realism Methodology

The geopolitical and economic dual use of hard power is to regulate the actions or desires of those political institutions. Such political dominance is always powerful and more effective when wielded by one government entity or another with limited military or economic strength. Hrad power is distinct from Soft power emanating from policy, tradition and heritage. Consistent with Nye, Joseph "command power entails the capacity to permit the use of the "carrots" and "sticks" of financial and strategic power" (Nye 2004). The word "carrots" refers here to inducements like reducing or eliminating trade restrictions, engaging in a partnership to achieve mutual goals or

pledging military defense. (Nye 2004) On the opposite side, "sticks" are threats such as coercive negotiation, the spectra of foreign aggression or the imposition of international punitive measures. (Nye 1990)

Accordingly, Wilson, Ernest specifies command power as the aptitude to "compel someone to behave in a manner that the individual might not have behaved in such way "(Wilson 2008). A theoretical review reveals that militant realism, liberal economic interdependence and constructivist ideational views offer only a restricted framework for analyzing national reactions to China's rise. The above-mentioned theories must be backed by a variant realist theory that focuses on security maximization. Contextualizing hard power, while referring to the mixed methodological and theoretical approach of positivism and realism as an instructional and political concept.

May be, hard power is a really basic and straightforward form of control. It is certainly more sophisticated than soft power because, to a certain degree, it is reasonably exorbitant to bring it into action, but not in context of utilizing economic capital. Also concerning the benefit of realizing what the criteria of successful usage of hard power are. Traditionally, hard power is more used than soft power, as it expresses itself in a rather realistic and specific manner. In comparison, hard power is less difficult to infer, and the results are simpler to detect. Apart from soft power, hard power doesn't only adhere to its conceptual strategy, but it can also be used in a variety of ways.

China's statist economic growth creates a multi-dimensional reprise of an alternate state-capitalist paradigm, and economic integration is required to obtain an awareness of China's

promotion of reunification with Taiwan and the usage of hard power. China's economy has developed at an incredible rate, showing that expansion is needed for the creation of great riches. Moreover, once Beijing continues infiltrating and controlling nations, the societies that come under its influence are likely to run into intense opposition. Structural realists claimed that preponderance yields prosperity, and the emergence of China was ominous news.

Structural realists do not share a consensus about how China will rise peacefully. This divergence in opinions is not unexpected because the same realists argue in their midst about how much power states would want and what induces conflict. The only significant area of consensus between them is that the normative and analytical mechanisms of foreign affairs major powers to fight for influence among their midst (Morgenthau, 1985). The prevalence of authoritarianism with Chinese characters upsets Western democratic certainty and has proved difficult to democratize China. The remarkable rise in military spending in East Asia especially by Beijing is explained by the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait, a body of water that separates Taipei from Beijing, cross Strait incident and the century of humiliation. The historical economic growth in China is creating a reprise of an alternate neoliberal form of state. Because authoritarian China is averse to democratic nations, on the contrary, it does not stop supplying such countries with developmental, cultural, and military assistance. Traditionally, command-control is the earliest existing focus of power. It refers to the idea of a nihilistic environment in which governments do not recognize any central power but rather depend on the control of military challenges or financial leverage. In international affairs, hard power is defined as the capacity to attain one's goals by coercive acts of intimidation, nominally known as 'carrots' and 'sticks.' Classically, hard power has been assessed according to measurements such as population size, location,

environment, mineral resources, military strength and economic development. The source of control can be found in Carr Writings (1946: p 108) as it classified power into three categories: military authority, economic force and influence over perception. The attributes of hard power are military and economic capacity.

Observers also suggested that hard power must be interlaced alongside the skillful application of persuasion to resolve issues about validity and authority; a more complex method to legitimize the usage of power.

The empirical evidence examines the economic sanctions and coercive diplomacy which measures the intensity of Chinese hard power towards Taiwan. First, Military power is not the only tool in the arsenal of a political body; it is necessary to exert economic coercion for specific purposes. Taiwan's internal political powers are being divided up by the People's National Congress. Beijing has persuaded Taiwan's political allies to sever diplomatic ties thus further limiting Taiwan's international domain by securing five countries (Burkina Faso, the Republic of Dominica, San Salvador, Panama City, and Sao Tome). Furthermore, Taipei was not invited anymore as a delegate to the WHA and ICAO after 2016. The PRC has unilaterally expanded flight route M503 in the Taiwan Strait and has also taken steps to discourage group tourism from Mainland China to Taiwan, resulting in a dramatic decline in the number of Chinese tourists visiting Taiwan and applied pressure on multinationals to list Taiwan as a part of China. Beijing has also stepped up pressure against Tsai by staging several war games around Taiwan and purloining five of the island's allies. In 2003, Chinese hackers allegedly affiliated with the Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) infiltrated a major Taiwanese telecommunications company's

network along with several government websites, Chinese cyber intruders influenced Taiwan's cybersecurity policymaking. The People's Liberation Army could sever Taiwan's ties with the outside world by destroying the cables linking the island to various of stations (Hsu 2018).

Second, this tactic, also referred to as coercive diplomacy, it includes an agency that reinforces the requirement to an opposing force with a disciplinary request that is perceived to be legitimate and effective enough to make enforcement unpredictable. Researchers claim that China is seeking to control Taiwan, a self-governing island that it wants to bring under its domain. Simultaneously, the military pressure on Taiwan has risen by China.

Examples of economic diplomacy can be seen at play. The Communist Government in Mainland China has released an incentive list to gain the interest of the Taiwanese citizens under the rubric of "talent exchange." They provide ways to invest, operate and study in the Mainland. To separate the renegade province on the global stage, China is expanding its current diplomatic attack on Taiwan. Beijing was suspected of using cash diplomacy to sever Tsai's foreign ties with other nations. China's Communist system is strongly hostile to Taiwan government's democratically constituted sovereignty statements. Any action that can be perceived as detrimentally damaging to the Taiwanese Government and the bilateral ties with Taiwan which serves as an indicator of its independence is regarded as a concern to China. Henceforth, Beijing's employment of dollar diplomacy as a hard power tool to deny international recognition of Taiwan as independent. For instances, countries including the Dominican Republic, Solomon Islands, Skopje (2001), Monrovia (2003), Roseau (2004), Port Vila (2004), Saint George's (2005), Dakar (2005), N'Djamena (2006), Lilongwe (2008), Sao Tome (2016), Panama City

(2017), Santo Domingo (2018), and Ouagadougou (2018) have severed ties with Taiwan (Nguyen 2018).

In conclusion, while the overarching purpose of any action taken by China in terms of cross-strait ties is to deter and push Taiwan in the future for reunification, the hard and soft-power tactics of China tend to be aimed at specific audiences. On the one side, hard power was primarily employed within the domestic sense to manipulate the Taiwanese government's policies employing a mixture of diplomatic strangulation and democratic grasping. On the other side, soft power has concentrated on preserving a reasonable image of China among the Taiwanese people. This differentiation between China's hard and soft power policies represents the Taiwanese opinion that China's aggression is relatively weak, 'people-driven' and comparatively higher.

Soft Power: Nationalism and Constructivism Methodology

This chapter will adopt nationalism as a theoretical approach best explains the mainland's adoption of co-option power abroad through the promotion of cultural events and people to people exchanges. The word 'nationalism' is generally used to define two phenomena: (1) the behavior of national leaders as they think of the political heritage and (2) the behavior of representatives of a country in the search of self-determination. The first poses concern about the definition of a country, which is sometimes described as national, racial, or cultural heritage. Whilst Taiwan's "Chinese essence" is an ever-changing matter, Taiwan in essence is Chinese and in specific aspects, surpassing the mainland, too, as the renegade province is an inheritor to a culture with many affinities towards soft power. As researchers, opponents and supporters of the concepts or philosophy of soft power more generally have found out, they are the most significant cultural non-Chinese stakeholder in cross-Strait relations. A balanced analytical and theoretical approach between nationalism and constructivism allows for a comprehensive understanding of Chinese ideals and principles utilizing soft power to reach Taiwanese young people. At the same time endorsing conclusions by empirical data, to achieve a holistic comprehension of Beijing's application of soft power in Taiwan. To obtain a better comprehension of nationalism and soft power, post-positivism is required to link between the above mentioned. Post positivism is a social science theory and generally adopt an empiricist epistemology. As an epistemological approach, the empiricist theory of acquiring information is focused on the assumption of "soft power" based on "facts" experienced by epistemological, empirical findings. Post-positivism is posited in repudiating the positivist theory has been predominant in international relations and in promoting a better understanding of doctrines and

dogmas, and national affinity, which coincide with nationalism in terms of focus on soft power principles and ideals including modern and conventional historical elements.

Soft power, like cross-Strait relations between Taipei and mainland, possess asymmetrical implications for US politics and ties for the Chinese mainland. *"Soft power is the aptitude to influence governments to perform according to your agenda "* (Wilson, 2008, p. 114). Concurring with Nye, compelling strength is built on desire and imitation and is connected to *"impalpable bases of influence, including history, philosophy and organizations"* (Nye 2009, p. 163). Cooper stresses on the detrimental- legitimate invalidation for the notion of soft power (Cooper 2004, p. 173). In order to boost soft power, governments actions will be viewed as verifiable. However, Heng describes the essence of soft-power capabilities while, *ibid* suggests that the quality and efficacy of soft-power defines the soft-power capacity of a state such as its historical history and society structure. Heng's words are validated by Zhang's Chinese sense of exceptionalism. China takes pride in its historical and cultural exceptionalism, promoting a nationalistic sentiment (Zhang 2013). Beijing's influential clout has fortified its standing in international debates. President Xi Jinping (2015) flaunts the five thousand years of Chinese cultural history to clarify current cultural ideals and the national sense of purpose. The pivotal elicitation of Chinese traditional heritage and cultures serves the strategic purpose of portraying a legitimate and favorable image of China abroad (Albert 2018b).

These less often stressed soft power aspects are essential to Beijing and Taiwan. First was more important to Taiwan, which is looking for ways of coping with a powerful PRC which seeks to at least prevent Taiwan from obtaining an independent sovereignty, and to pursue resolutely the

structured political incorporation of Taiwan into a new united China (Kissinger 2012 P:140). The second is more relevant for the mainland, particularly as China's economic growth and sharp power generally has yielded resources for military modernization that surpasses Taipei, transcending Asian countries while shedding light on America's long-term presence in the regional, unequivocally shifting the balance of power.

China's mainstream culture has always been appealing due to its Confucius culture, but it now often joins the domain of global common culture (Nye, 2008). While the economic performance of China has had quite a deleterious influence on hard power of America, Beijing is also starting to obstruct US influence recently in the development of soft power. In the developed world mostly because of Chinese reliable economic results, the "Chinese comprehensive trade deal," that further promotes the creation of a free and open market economy with an autocratic regime has appeared to be continually popular (Nye 2010 P:144). Ramo 2004 points out that Beijing's strategy on financial growth grants a unique potential for expansion and prosperity in developing nations.

China's reliance on soft power has undermined Washington's capacity to firmly control and manipulate the majority of the world with its liberal civilization to its advantage in modern times. (Ramo 2004 p. 4). Soft power often strives or serves China to mitigate alertness, amidst the countries dealing with China's newly found hard power, or even more accurately, the hard power of China's economic development clout. To sum up, the notion value of co-option power and the

superior ability of hard power has achieved its peak in the Chinese Taoism. The necessity of soft power to China is anticipated to remain for a prolonged time. However, its ultimate commitment to reducing the ability of other nations reacting to China's rising hard power can be perceived as potentially threatening and undermining of China's interests.

Sharp power: Positivistic-Anti-Positivistic-Neo-Colonialist Methodology

In recent decades, China has grown much faster than anticipated in both hard and soft power sources. As an Authoritarian hegemony China has maintained its Party-State structure intact. Beijing is now an international influencer that threatens the US and other liberal democracies given its dependence on raw materials and resources from abroad, it would look far less threatening, but this debility and the desire to overcome it by creating resource trade routes and agreements leads to friction over areas of influence and hegemonic suspicions and accusations by global and regional, powers. Subsequently, resource dependence is the Achilles heel of contemporary China, which has pressured Beijing to entrust its fate to access resources and oil to others. It is therefore detrimental that Beijing, as a country, to focus on upholding its territorial security and acquire the measures to retain its objectives through naval power (Wenmu 2006 p. 20).

This chapter examines several of the numerous perspectives of western academics in China in recent decades regarding its growth and usage of sharp power. While some academics have found China's soft power to be benevolent in technology and lagging behind the US, other analysts have raised an alarm reflecting the strong complexity of Chinese soft power activities, the chapter suggests China's sharp power activities are partially drawn from the Communist Party . The long-term thinking of re-organizing operations that have been utilized by the Chinese government, emphasizes how its malignant effect can be named sharp power. This section reflects on the intensified efforts under President Xi Jinping, and addresses the danger presented by such efforts for Taiwan.

The chapter combines positivistic insights with realist explanations of hard power and post-positivistic insights and related theorizing into aspects of Beijing's contemporary utilization of soft power and, in the final analysis, its sharp power engagement with Taiwan. This dissertation contends that a mixed methodological approach allows for the development of a necessary and sufficient positivistic realist, as well as an anti-positivistic neo-colonialist comprehension of China's core interest as an authoritarian regime toward Taiwan. The mixed methodological approach supports the contention that sharp power is made up of elements of both hard and soft power but crucially that authoritarian regimes use of sharp power can be distinguished from hard and soft approaches. Owing to Jessica Ludwig and Christopher Walker (2017), the purpose of the newly labelled term sharp power is to "puncture, invade, or alter" the ideological or intelligence climate of the host nations. Instead of connecting or drawing people in respects that soft power

behaves, the idea of so-called sharp power is firstly introduced by the International Platform for Democratic Studies that allows for the comprehension of foreign policy strategy that according to commentators comes with malign intent (Walker and Ludwig 2017).

In this regard, it alludes and applies to a leader's power to manipulate the views of people in the target nation to alter their attitudes, actions, and disrupt the democratic structure thereby creating a positive preponderance of perceptions through deceptive usage of intelligence. However, this dissertation contends that sharp power signifies continuity in the relations and practices of classical colonialism. Sharp power help in understanding the underlying core values that drive China to reunify with Taiwan and erase its century of humiliation whilst employing sharp power to prevent Taiwan's independence.

Sharp power presents itself in the light of cyber warfare; assertions regarding Beijing's increasing its activities to manipulate Taipei's electoral outcome are made to stymie the potential for a fledged separation from the mainland. Beijing's dollar diplomacy is an integral pattern of sharp power for instance, China encourages countries to normalize bilateral relationships with Beijing over Taiwan. Beijing had, by saying the island belongs to China, pressured the world for example Marriott international to change Taiwan's title on their websites to "Taiwan, China" or "Taiwan province of China". Through various incentives and threats, China has publicly or privately exerted its sharp power with Chinese characteristics to pressure and affect the economic and trade benefits, work rights, and even the survival of all parties by the means of coercion, persuasion, incitement, false information; thus achieving the result of manipulating and influencing public opinion. Given the openness in Taiwan, the penetration, coercion, and buy-off

by China's sharp power will certainly affect Taiwanese people's national identity and their feelings about China (Wang 2013).

Conclusion

This chapter discusses the principles of sharp power as a culmination of command and co-option power. Then, by analyzing various instances of their usage in Taiwan, the usefulness of both principles is measured. There are also instances of sharp power in the discussions. This chapter states that sharp power is more efficacious and accurate due to its evolving and adaptable concept in coeval global politics. Sharp power tactics perform a crucial position in the current global environment as well as soft power. Sharp power's versatile aspects render it an aptitude framework that transcends soft and hard power while integrating effortlessly into the realm of international relations. Realistically speaking, sharp power is considered a mixture of financial,

economic, technological, political, military and cultural instruments. Hard and soft power hazy continuum renders sharp power a nebulous and obscure notion, which incorporates aspects of both hard and soft but is difficult to classify as belonging to either field. To sum up, acceptance also begs the question of the methodological and empirical rigor that has resulted in commentators using the term to describe China's foreign policy toward Taiwan.

CHAPTER 2

Could a new empirical framework of China's sharp power in four countries and two continents contribute to a better explanation of its application in Taiwan and Australia?

Introduction

The conclusion of the Cold War, and the previous decades stood testament to an unprecedented economic growth of the international community. China's deepening comprehensive economic relationships with Latin American and Eastern European countries are characterized as engaging and ever evolving. The developing bilateral ties between the above-mentioned countries with China has proven to be increasingly complex to document, proposing critical inquiries about Beijing's authority over the countries social and legislative development.

The raised logical assumption asserts that the current Chinese economic dimension and integration projects a significant impact on incentivizing decent economic and governmental choices in Latin America, Eastern Europe and Australia. Accordingly, these investments have not transpired into a disproportionate impact on the country's internal procedures.

During the past decade, a global political pendulum has swung towards authoritarian regimes that form the international climate that was deemed unthinkable a few years ago. The Chinese authorities have developed and extended their instruments of control and have therefore been able to exploit the countries international climate beyond their borders. China's economic and strategic rise has globally positioned Beijing's prolific role to actively participate within national

and international borders (Sutter 2010: 103). China has asserted a greater position on the international stage in this new period of conflict and has sought to impose its favored theories, standards and governance strategy. The unprecedented willingness of Beijing to carry out internet surveillance, using economic power to shape opinions in democracies. This chapter defines the world's authoritarian power through the use of concepts such as "hard, soft and sharp"

A recent article from the *Economist* (2017) attributes sharp power to insurrection, compulsion, and menace that allows for the accretion of governmental suppression. On the other hand, soft power employs charm offensives of tradition and heritage to propagate a positive impact of the country. Whilst sharp power encourages oppressive governments to enforce domestic actions and manipulate international opinion. Many in Latin America and Central Europe are perceived as appealing mark thanks to their geographic location and strategic advantage to North America and Western European markets. Allies serve as an extension of Chinese sharp power. Beijing would place a priority on gaining support from Latin America and Eastern Europe with further dogmatic support in the non-recognition of Taipei or Lhasa (Huang 2017).

In the light of their position as emerging democracies, four case countries Peru, Argentina, Poland, and Slovakia were chosen for being rated as free in compliance with the World Ranking Scale of Freedom House. This chapter discusses and then describes the actions of China in the sense of hard, soft and sharp power towards four countries and two continents. This chapter locates epistemologically and empirically China's hard, soft and sharp power. Throughout this chapter, there are many examples of prominent activities that utilize the wide array of China's

assortment to include ostensibly hard, soft and sharp power operations. It covers Beijing's approach government in five different areas: (1) media, (2) academia, (3) Confucius Institute, (4) Malicious Finance, (5) publishing and (6) The China-Taiwan Factor. Authoritarian regimes utilize conventional "soft power" tools for corrosive "sharp power." This chapter argues that Beijing's assertive use of sharp power diplomacy is aimed at protecting its foreign investments and non-infringements on its core interests (Wang 2011). The following chapter will highlight Taiwan's and Australia's geo-strategic importance to Beijing, hence the justified use of sharp power to guarantee that the renegade province is not exploited to neutralize and cripple Beijing and to weaken Canberra's alliance with the US (Gilley 2010).

The leadership of China places enhanced emphasis on shaping the international operating climate overseas, through the BRI and other modes of manipulation. To that end, Beijing has invested several billion dollars in the last decade shaping popular sentiment and attitudes across the world in domains traditionally-directly correlated to soft power, a notion developed by foreign policy analyst Nye, Joseph that is interpreted as "the willingness, through persuasion and commitment, to influence others (Nye, 2004b) and to promote a positive picture of a nation (Nye, 1990b).

In the case of Beijing, this initiative involved thousands of exchanges of individuals, comprehensive cultural events, educational initiatives, including Confucius Institute's ever-growing network, and the growth of global media and technology enterprises. The economic growth of China, albeit under constraints has created sharp and soft influence. The BRI might include a friendly and enticing economic assistance program from China, but not if the conditions change somewhat, as in a Sri Lankan port project. Similarly, Beijing's soft power was

compromised by certain experiments of economic might. China, for example, also denounced Oslo for awarding Liu Xiaobo a Nobel Peace Prize (Mandip 2018). If the word "sharp power" was used as a jargon for a political strategy, it stands in a stark contrast with soft power.

Sharp power is used to simplify information control, the difference is obvious from soft power. Sharp power is a form of hard power; it manipulates material knowledge, but the indistinctive attribute of soft power is intangibility. For example, verbal threats are both immaterial and coercive. The state holds a strong grasp on the media climate in China, and Beijing officials utilize new infrastructure to take advantage of it both at home and abroad more frequently. Between undemocratic and capitalist cultures, China has developed foreign forums for schooling, culture, and other modes of power. In the past, it has been clearer that these efforts *"There is an authoritarian willingness to monopolize information, censor dissenting views and manage collaborators organizations"* (Walker and Ludwig 2017b). This entails "sharp power," an approach that usually requires attempts to regulate and exploit, which undermines the reputation of autonomous organizations. This method concerns foreign relations. As the phrase originated in the December 2017 study of NED'S International Forum for Political Analysis, sharp power projects the impact of curtailing freedom of speech and distorting the democratic climate. The authorities in Beijing have developed economic power to compel others to conform to their laws. The policy of Beijing aims at neutralizing and avoiding all threats to the legitimate portrayal of the government. China's hard, soft, and sharp power tools will be examined in Argentina, Peru, Slovakia and Poland, Australia and Africa.

Academia

In almost all spheres of life, China has developed a presence in Latin American countries and other continents. The political aim was to manage the ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese overseas and consequently diminish diplomatic support for Taiwan.

"There is no distinction between diplomacy and what societal changes are in modern China," states China's specialist John Fitzgerald (2019). The Cultural Revolution 1966 – 1976 was not a so-called "economic" revolt, but a brutal revolutionary uprising that broke China apart in the late 60s. Beijing places great importance on young scientists and postgraduate students who earn scholarships from China. Upon their return to their countries their mission is that they deliver Chinese courses, and training for audiences in Argentina, Peru, Slovakia, Africa and Poland including members of the provincial and academic institutions, while spreading a benevolent image of China. There is a rather asymmetrical partnership between Beijing and Latin America. To achieve a balanced relationship, future leaders need to possess a stronger understanding of

China (Ramo 2004). Through people to people strategy the National People's Congress gains legitimization while sensitive issues like Taiwan and Tibet are left out.

Publishing

The Publishing sector is a platform for China to project favorable sentiments towards the country's culture and norms while silencing cries of criticism. Cambridge University Press in August 2017 took a contentious decision to delete three hundred posts from a Chinese platform published by the Chinese quarterly (Walker 2019b). The move came in response to the PRC's General Press and Publishing Administration decided to isolate all CUP journals from China. Notwithstanding, in 2017, Springer Nature, a pioneer of one access scholarly journal, reported that it has blocked the links to hundreds of posts, mostly covering the elite affairs, human rights, Taiwan and Tibet on its Chinese language website under pressure from the PRC. (Shepherd

2017). It also threatened an Australian publisher which criticized China while restricting the book's access to the Chinese market.

External investigations noticed that hundreds of publications going back to the 1950s were removed from Chinese censors (Nye 2013). Sociologist Glenn Tiffert heeded that the government inspectors or programmers can forthwith generate a variation of a documented chronological narrative which is tailored to alter Chinese Communist Party ideology or political requirements and that a skillful authoritarian government may export its domestic censorship system through regulated repositories to shape an international favorable sentiment utilizing digital information (Tiffert 2017). The speed and comprehensiveness at which the Chinese Government modernize censorship is expected to grow as machine learning and other technical advancements intensify.

Media

Autocrats now turn to globalization to manipulate policymaking decisions inside governments, taking advantage of the open space created by democracies international discourse. A big part is played by large developments in overseas media networks. Beijing has increased its attempts to form and shape the domain of ideas. Authoritarians seek 'informational supremacy' within their boundaries, thus viewing anything outside their own as a fair game. Authoritarian government is

central to state control over freedom of speech. Such influence allows preferred agendas to spread across mainstream outlets as well as public leaders and surrogates. In an age of global proliferation of intelligence, the authorities in Beijing recognize "discourse power" is the expression of power and China's national strength through a concentrated and extensively financed effort in providing knowledge (Meng and Wang 2015). Africa is one of those locations. Beijing spent extensively on media outlets and is employing methods of censorship on issues that Beijing deems sensitive and critical. Chinese media companies have two groups of editors in sub-Saharan Africa: African editors are among the recipients of local recompense, while African journalists might be sent to report local news but, if Chinese interests are concerned, they may find Beijing resisting, censoring or modifying the content, meaning that China remains continually in "good" or "constructive" light (Kaiman 2017). Journalists are educated by the Chinese government and sent to Beijing and trained on how to convey the Chinese government viewpoint (Zhou and Zhihao 2016).

Moreover, Chinese milestones such as cultural heritage sites, large infrastructure projects are covered. This is a part of Latin America's regional trend as well. The Chinese President Xi Jinping announced by 2020, he plans to introduce China to ten thousand leaders, scholars, writers, officials and former diplomats. Through its proliferating global media network, Beijing delivers international messages, through different methods, about alternative frameworks as government structures, on how to regulate media and objective roles in discourses such as internet government and foreign development assistance where Beijing is not in favor of

endorsing independent media development. Governmental subjugation over ideological expression and communication is an integral part of autocratic leadership. These behaviors enable recommended narratives to be implemented through news organizations, as well as through government officials and alternative channels.

As a form of delivering China amicable communications and statements to international viewers, for example, Beijing uses a co-production model. China analyst David Bandurski explains that Discovery Channel produced an international coproduction project named "China: Period of Xi" that was broadcasted to several million audiences around 37 countries in Asia to find agreement with China's affiliated States partners (Discovery Channel 2017). The film was an international collaboration. This initiative was classified "as individual TV production," albeit according to Bandurski and although the initiative gave the impression of independence," in reality the show was co-produced in March 2015, by China Intercontinental Communications Center (CICC) and Networks Asia-Pacific, the Chinese government department, which shares the address of the Central Propaganda Agency, and the project was underwritten by a three-year production agreement negotiated by the State Council Informational Office (Bandurski 2018).

Confucius Institutes

Confucius Institutes are rendered contentious due to the absence of transparency and openness where they serve across colleges and universities. With the conclusion of 2005, the Chinese

Ministry of Education had constructed thirty-two Confucius Institutes (Hanban) in twenty-three countries to promote and teach Chinese linguistics and social facilities in sponsoring nations. The aggregated system of Hanban has a fundamental-underpinning narrative: to demonstrate a genuine and more attractive perception of Beijing abroad. Through the propagation of a designed iteration of Chinese language in Beijing, and promulgating the Chinese insight, not the classical Chinese characters that are commonly practiced in Taipei and countering the Taiwanese perspective. In addition, the institutes reflect the advancement of China's national objective of marginalizing Taiwan's authority. Although some researchers note that several programs of the Confucius Institute promote Chinese language teaching and cultural events including film festivals, many aspects of the programming of the Confucius Institute including regulation of personnel and curricula by the Chinese Government means that courses and programs implicitly promote the National People's Congress views on issues that Chinese authorities deem as salient, such as territorial disputes or promote the Chinese dogma over the claims of religious minorities. Confucius Institutes were described by Chinese officials as equivalent to the Alliance Française in Paris or the Goethe Institute in Berlin, with government support to provide courses in learning new languages and cultural traditions (Churchman 2011).

Nevertheless, with exception of private bodies, the Confucius Institutes are integrated into academic entities (Palit and Palit 2011), several of which are devoted to the purpose of a free research analysis that the Hanban cannot pursue. Additionally, it is claimed by some that Confucius Institutes hire workers who at times sought to discourage host university conversations on sensitive topics like Taiwan and Tibet. Nothing is clear regarding these institutions, for example, the Chinese government support for specific host universities is hard to

know. The degree of transparency between universities and the institutes is often uncertain, as the arrangements between the groups are also secretive.

The China-Taiwan Factor

China places great emphasis on its ties with Latin America, Africa, Australia and Eastern Europe according to their political stance towards Taiwan. After the United Nations, transfer of acknowledgement from Taipei to the Chinese mainland resulted in Taipei seeking international recognition as an independent country. The international community witnessed an intensifying rivalry between China and Taiwan over sovereignty, the reverberation of this rivalry was felt in Latin America, Africa and Eastern European region. The mounting clout of Beijing's economic development is seriously debilitating Taipei's diminishing power in these regions. Taiwan was highly active in the abovementioned countries through economic and financial aid. But now the tide has shifted to Beijing's side. Numerous Latin America and African countries have normalized ties with Beijing and lend their support to China's position on Taiwan. Unifying the renegade province with the Mainland is a national quest carried by the Chinese government. Beijing's representation of the Security Council was the driving force behind the four case countries aspirations to act as a notable player in the UN which in turn call for China's backing. Throughout the 1906s, Taipei prioritized its bilateral ties with Africa but over time these ties were diminishing. Taiwan's financial assistance did not culminate into diplomatic support which resulted in its dismissal from the UN. The 1971 decision by the United Nations, General Assembly asserted Beijing's position by repudiating Taipei's place in the UN.

Majority of African countries vetoed in favor of the resolution succeeding in denying the legitimacy of Taipei's sovereign independence. On the other hand, a handful of African countries along with the US choose to reject the UN Resolution. Subsequently, Taipei's road towards full recognition has proven arduous thanks to the UN and other countries support for China. African and other countries prioritize their agenda on establishing comprehensive cooperation with China while playing a detrimental role in alienating Taipei. The National People's Congress stands firmly in restraining the renegade's province quest for independence. Particularly in regions like Africa and Central Europe, these regions act as a major supporter of Taiwan. As a superpower, China will continue to rise provided that it remains politically integrated and united.

Moreover, China's rising clout greatly impacts Taiwan's place in the international community since Beijing's encourages other countries to sever ties with the renegade province and recognize it as part of China. The world has witnessed mounting economic cooperation with China following president Xi shared economic revitalization. In 2020, China has established itself by surpassing the US in surpassing the triple mark in trade with the world. Further asserting its global stance as the second-largest economy.

With the rising of Beijing's developmental clout, Beijing endeavors to serve three objectives: establishing a made in China brand, becoming an indispensable nation to the world. Acquiring raw materials while minimizing the country's rising dependence. Securing market access to serve the growing appetite for Chinese products.

Accordingly, Eastern Europe and Latin America economically meet Beijing's requirements for gradually diminishing its reliance on raw materials. Latin America ties with China holds a strategic aspect that complements China's economic needs.

These continents possess numerous traits that sustain China's economic needs: the four countries and two continents hold a surplus of oil, minerals, metals and strategic reach, their attractive location presents China with the opportunity to expand its strategic influence, sustain its economic needs and curb Taiwan's international recognition. African, Eastern European and Latin American markets reflect a major appetite for Chinese made products which represents a great opportunity for Chinese companies. Chinese nationalistic goal is the containment of Taiwan's international recognition and acquisition of raw material to sustain its growth. Prospering economic ties and diplomacy translates into military prowess, granting China the opportunity to engage countries economically in Beijing's rejuvenation era under the banner of a shared harmonious future.

Malicious Finance

Most developing countries encounter challenges in handling Chinese investment, including poor oversight for public expenditure, and inadequate implementation of anti-corruption policies.

Beijing's strategy of using corporate financial capital for purposes other than growth or economic gains effectively undermines such hurdles, resulting in potentially disastrous consequences for open democracies.

If funding and international aid are part of wider dialogues affecting civil society in developed countries, the impact may be used to enhance political governance, such as people's engagement and speech, openness and media freedom and accountability. Arising democracies is indicative of the circumstances in the Western Balkans, Latin America, Africa and Australia. China's miraculous economic clout is the underlying aspect responsible for Australia, Latin America and Africa fascination and dependence on Beijing. China's opportunistic rise to the challenge aimed at dominating the vacuum created by the US limited presence in the regions to provide infrastructure projects and economic revitalization packages. Beijing's primary goal for its growing presence in these regions lies in its dual use of economic incentives to drive these countries away from the US.

Beijing's multilateralism is evident in its economic initiatives represented in 6+1 talks. Since Beijing prefers a joint collaboration with Eastern European countries (Corre 2018). To achieve a shared economically integrated network with Chinese characters, President Xi proposed the BRI aimed at establishing the mainland's position as an indispensable partner to the world. America's outcries have shed light on China's geo-economic projects that called for more scrutiny and transparency on Beijing's port projects. Argentina's economy was in a dire state due to Kirchner's economic policies. Argentina and the West were locked in a stalemate over debt repayment which subsequently led to the curtailment of international aid.

The Cristina Kirchner administration, in Argentina, wanted to establish a space observation station but due to shortage of financing from Argentina's side, the People's Liberation Army was granted legal rights for fifty years (Patey 2017).

The disclosure of reports highlights the fact that Argentina's government holds no legal rights to oversee the establishment and management of the space observation station which led the national congress to launch an investigation (Rabanal2017).

Similar activities were found in Africa. Sharp power now transcends the borders of China. The prevailing use of sharp power in sectors such as publishing, culture, academia, and media are detrimental to how upcoming democracies view the liberal world. Reports from the International Forum suggest that China's sharp power serves to silence criticism of its socialist rule and its role as a well-established superpower (Walker 2109).

China uses sharp power to silence international criticism about issues such as territorial sovereignty and ethnic minorities. Beijing has asserted its stance as a responsible active member on the world stage while maintaining its unity and socialist rule. China's influential use of internet surveillance coupled with economic incentives is effectively used to silence criticism and influence policymaking. When it comes to securing its economic needs, China does not discriminate between democratic and non-democratic countries.

The core reason behind economic and cultural initiatives is propelled by China's ambition to counter malicious propaganda about its communist rule, territorial sovereignty and national interests. While countering western dogma (Pu and Chen 2013). China's rising clout abroad It was the guiding factor behind the underpinning of a term that describes its infiltrating and influencing power over other countries.

Chinese investments and cooperation in Africa and Latin America under the rubric of hard and sharp power it covers areas of geo-strategic and defense activities. Military engagement between China and Latin America falls under two categories, First, small purchases of items such as aircraft and tanks from (1990-2000). Second, a yearly weapon sale with Argentina surpassing \$100 million of enhanced Chinese cyber weaponry such as radars and missiles (Wilson 2012).

China's primary focus in trading ties with Latin America, Africa, Western Europe and Australia is safeguarding its citizens, properties and investments in these regions. Any transgression on Chinese national core interests abroad calls for a definite response.

Conclusion

A larger network of friendly relations with Beijing tends to be part of its soft and sharp influential campaign. Additionally, the projection of soft power serves China's diplomatic objectives, such as curbing the international significance of the Dalai Lama and Taiwan. China views Confucianism as a pattern of ethics that competes directly with its Western perceptions. The negative features of the Chinese paradigm are easier to mask while this argument is influenced. The benevolent image of Confucianism thus helps significantly to legitimize the authoritarian Chinese concept.

In a nutshell, the diminishing interest of the US in Latin America, Australia, Africa and Eastern European countries have assisted these countries to engage economically with China which

increased its presence in the region. Several Latin American states have expressed their support in questioning the US vision of a free democratic world. Beijing posits itself to use sharp power on Latin American countries, in case of infringement on its sovereignty and core interests.

China's call for non-interference and safeguarding territorial sovereignty, found great resonance in Latin America and Eastern European countries, highly commended by sovereign states (Piccone 2016). Beijing's contemporary lack of geostrategic ambitions in Latin America and Eastern European countries highlights China's presence in the regions would not lead a confrontation with the US.

CHAPTER 3

What are Taiwan's and Australia's strategic and economic attributes?

Introduction

There is an increasing perception that Beijing's new foreign policy has been more assertive in recent years (Jerden 2014). This chapter highlights why Taiwan's strategic location and

economic integration are important to China hence the use of sharp power. This chapter demonstrates that Chinese foreign policy is conjectured through sharp power exercised in Taiwan. This policy is complemented by alternating use of command and co-option power strategy.

Sharp power is the pinnacle of hard, soft wheedling. One is command power, a stronger and more uncompromising solution to problems China finds to be relevant to its core interests. The other is soft power which is a more versatile and cooperative stance against concerns which are of secondary significance, albeit being significant. The humiliation of China in the last century by Western powers and Taiwan gave birth to a strong inferiority complex (Camilleri 1985 P: 3).

Now that China has grown powerful this sensation of inferiority has developed into an excessively elevated sense that contributes to a desire for a grand Chinese rejuvenation. Together with nationalism as China Dream and the Chinese Communist Party's iron-fist rule, it has given rise to the modern communist empire in China. Taiwan, which is Beijing's neighbor and under its political and economic control, is managed by Beijing's political manipulations to penetrate the country and drive forward its policy of eventual reunification. The significance of core interests first emerged in China's political dialogue during the 2003-2004 era as an indication and reaction to China's fears regarding the increasing independence movement in Taiwan (Campbell 2013). This policy is believed to be a successful tactic as it rightly creates a differentiation between pro-China and pro-independence party, enabling Beijing to simultaneously counter the secessionist movement and specifically present the Taiwanese with a favorable image of China (He 2008). More specifically, Boon's 2018 strategy of hard and soft approach highlights evident progress in

handling the Taiwan problem which has contributed to a growing array of solutions (Boon 2018). Two areas of notable importance are Beijing's deterrence of Taiwan's independence. The Second illustrates China's need for Taiwan's strategic location to solve its outstanding terrestrial disputes. The past few years stood testament to a substantial methodological advance in both proprietary and explicit forms that merit an objective assessment of Beijing's foreign policy. Moreover, it will generate insights into the indications of this strategy, both in terms of how China will utilize it as leverage as its capability and strength expand. The Mainland's core aspirations towards Taiwan, is fundamental to the strategic sharp power strategy that particularly recognizes the circumstances in which Chinese assertiveness is more apparent. The strategic ambitions of China's PLA coupled with its objective to surpass the second island chain through Canberra: Beijing endeavors to Broaden the scope of dominance via strategic augmentation.

Epistemological analytical methodology is backed by empirical research discerning the introduction of sharp power by Beijing to highlight the obstruction and containment faced by China's location by island chains stretching from southward of Okinawa through Malaysia, Philippine, Nansei Islands and Australia. The new paradigm indicates that China's sharp power only functions when economy and politics collide, and trade becomes subject to a political

agenda. Sharp power allows the authoritarian regime to exploit the cultural structure, exacerbate and strengthen internal divisions. Beijing has maximized pressure against Taipei on all sides. It has postured security powers, speculated its political partners, forced air carriers and hotel chains to refer to Taiwan as Chinese Taipei, drastically halted the island's touristic travel, and slashed agricultural shipments from the stronghold of Democratic Progressive Party. The empirical evidence of sharp power manifested in Taiwan through the economic and military incentives are highlighted through hardening the hard and softening the soft strategy. This term was chosen for its effectiveness in shedding light on the "sharp" elements of Beijing's security policy, and therefore better serves the goals of this thesis. This chapter formation is as follows: the first sections discuss Taipei's economic importance to China. The second part highlights Taiwan's geo-strategic importance. Finally, the third part examines the Chinese implementation of sharp power and Sino-Australian relations while highlighting Beijing's underlying interests towards Australia and its key goal in weakening the country's alliance with Washington to expand beyond the second island chain.

Taiwan's importance to China

The island of Taiwan possesses a strong symbolic and geopolitical significance for China. The lack of reunification of Taiwan with the mainland presents an existential threat to the Chinese Communist Party's legitimacy. Chinese leaders have made it clear that reunification of "Taiwan

province” with the Motherland is not a question of if, but when. Under Xi Jinping “when” is fast becoming “sooner” rather than “later”. Beijing's congress has adhered to its political basis and has attached its weight on holding China united. Thus, propagating China as a threat, therefore, is an attempt to contain and block Beijing’s expansion through hindering the reunification and reunify with Taiwan to the motherland (Tucker and Glaser 2011 P: 23).

It is noteworthy that China's development has generally been peaceful and cooperative in its approach, many main actors are now responding to the emerging realities, illustrating the effects of Chinese economic development, the accelerated modernization of the PLA, and Beijing's active role in foreign relations. (Kang 2007). In this sense, Taiwanese de facto or de jure independence will undermine Xi’s stated endeavor of the "reinvigoration of the Greater Chinese civilization" as reunification is an integral element of Xi’s “Chinese Dream”. Moreover, Beijing’s inability to achieve reunification would ensue a serious damage to China's image and have extremely serious negative consequences for handling secession movements in Lhasa and Xinjian (Tian 2006 P: 2). Therefore, the Beijing government is relying on the sentiment of nationalism to reinforce the Party and the Government (Westad 2012 P: 448). If Taiwan declares independence, a troubling example may be set. Therefore, ethnic Chinese dilemmas are likely to worsen, because they will also endorse secessionist forces, as in Lhasa and Urumqi (Ross 2002 P: 55). Henceforth, a sovereign Taipei could cause a significant divide in the mainland’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. The basic political priorities of China are political stability (regime stability) and territorial integrity (Ekman 2012).

Economy

Inclusive economic cooperation has played a crucial stance in the mainland strategic approach towards Taipei. Beijing is the primary foreign investor of Taipei, and still ranking number one in foreign direct investment destination on the island. Beijing believes that the advantages of economic integration would contribute to talks with Taipei on Taiwan's potential position as a special region, and finally conclude with reunification. Employment of Taiwanese businessmen to accomplish their diplomatic aim of unification is the primary objective for the central Chinese government (Chun-Yi Lee 2012: 118). Through comprehensive economic ties, the mainland endeavors to enhance the atmosphere of reunification and that Taiwanese investment in China will act as a disincentive for political freedom (Bush in Shambaugh 2005 P, 172).

Chinese lawmakers foster the spirit of reconciliation and reintegration based on one country, two systems distinctive method of governance (MOF of the PRC, 2000). The primary aspect of China is to discourage independence and encourage reunification (Roy 2004 p.1). Incorporating economic incentives to draw in Taiwanese investors henceforth promoting broad talk between officials and the spirit of unity (Chun-Yi Lee 2012 P:118b). Taiwanese investors are receiving open access to Chinese market resulting in Taipei's dependency on Beijing and enhancing mutual trade benefits. The People's National Congress propagate compressive economic initiatives aimed at undermining Taiwan's spirit of independence and call for reunification. However,

Beijing's bottom line in this current generation of leadership, reunification will always trump trade or economic considerations.

Geo-strategic Importance

Taiwan's importance to the PLA lies in its geo-strategic role. Any force that endeavors to gain a strategic boost in the area, Taiwan is a major strategic advantage (Lu 2012). Taiwan's geo-strategic value lies Taiwan is an integral part of the "first island chain," an arch ranging from the Northern Aleut Islands to South Greater Sunda Islands clasping the Bohai Sea, the South and East Sea (Kaplan 2010). The first island chain is no longer viable since the mainland has integrated Taipei in comprehensive economic ties and the military gap between the two is rapidly decreasing rendering Taiwan in a disadvantage. The US sees Chinese expansion as dangerous to its strategic interests in the region, exploiting the arc implies the prevention of China's future augmentation from its coasts to the Pacific. Taiwan's east-coast facilities will offer significant positive and advantageous impacts to China's submarines. (Cooper 2011).

Conclusively, the issue of the geo-strategic position of Taiwan is always of extreme importance comes up. If it were to unite the Mainland with Taipei, the PLA's control over the islands of the

southern flank of Okinawa and the Luzon Strait, a body of water that connects Nanhai with the Natuna Sea is deemed detrimental. Through the North and South seas, Beijing would have the strategic advantage of concluding unresolved territorial conflicts with Tokyo, Manila and other Southeast Asian countries on its own terms. Along with de jure sovereignty over Taiwan, China would acquire rich fishing grounds and access to natural resources such as oil, gas and mineral reserves.

Beijing clearly has concluded that it must have a strategic advantage over any nation, near or far, that might aspire to expand its influence in the region. As a rising power, Beijing asserts the need to maintain its strategic and geographic control over foreign powers trying to operate near its shores. Therefore, Taipei's geostrategic location will definitely lend detrimental support to the Chinese armed forces with adequate strategic outposts while providing a critically strategic element to compensate for the PLA paucity.

Eventually, this would encourage China to project influence on the world's overall trading passes through this main trading routes. Augmented geostrategic presence in the region will encourage Beijing to expand its area of control and strengthen its geographic stance in the Asian continent. China is using Taiwan's a far-reaching significance as a guiding policy for its strategic rationale

in shattering the beleaguerment of foreign powers against Beijing's naval expansion. Upon cracking the barrier will we think about the growth of China. To grow abruptly, in its future extension, China will traverse and dominate the oceans (See Dillon 2007: 2).

According to certain terms, the mainland is ready to show concessions in reuniting with the renegade province. Therefore, it pursued a strategy of balancing offensive actions with overtures of reconciliation. He Bao gang claims Beijing's sovereignty activity has gone beyond its rigid commitment to the discourse on the sacredness of sovereignty. He describes the changes seen in China-Taiwan relations as proof of his "*learning*" regarding the possibilities of a pragmatic solution to the sovereignty notion (Baogang 2015). But China is aware that military intervention would cause response from other nations, especially the US, and prefers peaceful reunification. The rhetoric of the Chinese government of taking the renegade island by force presents an immense risk of an all-out international condemnation followed by decoupling of the Chinese economy. Henceforth, illustrating Beijing's strategic patience in weakening Taiwan before it's infiltrating advances. In Asia, Chinese attempts in shifting this essentially stable order to improve its control aptitudes, while establishing a Monroe doctrine with Chinese characteristics ushers in the commencement of an Asian century. Therefore, water has become highly politicized while dominating the security arena in East Asia.

Sino-Australian Relations

The economic prosperity of Australia is highly based on strong ties with Beijing. A conceptual debate is rocking Canberra geo-strategic debates on Beijing's advances and Asia-Pacific security. With its back to Antarctica, two shoulders in the Indian and Pacific, and northern accessions impeded by a vast archipelago, historically Australia's geographic location has been more perceptual than material. Stressing on trade and diplomacy but otherwise ignored the changing strategic environment attendant on the rise of China (Turnball government white paper 2017). Beijing's stance and intentions in the region and its use of sharp power in Australia. This section offers an overview of China's hidden hand in Australian politics by addressing the under-researched literature. This chapter proves through empirical epistemological evidence that China is involved in Australia's politics and use of sharp power. Economic interests are sustained and integrated with financial and social growth which holds a notable share of the mainland's agenda for promoting sustainable development. China's robust economic approach to Australia has played a significant role in cementing bilateral relations (Peixin 2007). As Canberra holds a more benign view of China. Australia is where forty per cent of the global reserves of uranium are located. The bilateral agreement allows China to import uranium from Australia speaks volumes regarding the two countries deep bilateral ties (The Bilateral Relationship Joint Report 2012). Commonwealth of Australia and other Asia-Pacific countries are benefiting from Beijing's increasing demand for energy, natural resources and minerals propelling an unprecedented

economic growth (Peixin 2007 P.4). Canberra hold different views regarding the status of Taipei but wishes for the uninterrupted continuation of economic ties.

The rise of China coupled with the military's ambitions to expand its geographic reach complements its endeavors to delve deeper into Canberra's mainland (Robinson 2007). Regarding the procurement of posts, commentators like Khurana 2008 have asserted that Beijing is implementing a set of depots in the Arctic Ocean to enhance PLAN operational activities adjacent to the strategic lines of communications, connecting Beijing to the oil fields in the Gulf of Persia, known as the string of pearls. (Khurana 2008b). China's use of strategic places under the banner of shared economic revitalization is fueled by the century of humiliation and the ultimate goal of Beijing's business ties up explain China's continuation to secure the second island chain, these islands have established bilateral ties with Taiwan but Palau is the most important one which allows China to launch an attack from behind. The greatest threat to the augmentation of Chinese national ambitions falls from the Island Chains devised by the US in the 1950s.

Several military analysts stress that for Beijing to move beyond the Pacific Ocean, Chinese naval warships must travel across one of these islands numerous choke points. This will change if Australia won't constrain Chinese freedom of navigation. China realizes its dream of expanding into the Pacific through the Belt and Road initiative, which crowns its strategic patience by forging strategic ports. Through the replacement and usage of Australia as the backdoor, Beijing gains an entry point to the Pacific treasure's islands. Vanuatu and Bougainville are strategically important to China in terms of access to mineral resources and in securing a backdoor into the

Pacific (Wroe 2018). By no means, China's naval forces will be hemmed in. A blockade of chains is no longer viable stretching from Hagåtña, Saipan and South Pacific strategic islands (Cooper, 2011b). So, Australia's alliance with the US practically obstruct China at its door. Chinese dominance over Taiwan and Australia will be a key base pertaining to the maritime geographic operations in East Asia and beyond, this might support its Asia-Pacific objectives. At the same time, as the southern anchor; Australia is economically dependent as Beijing uses business ties up with companies to influence governmental activities and the Mainland's strategic patience and rational is paying off in its infiltration of the Australian government and in weakening Canberra's Five Eyes alliance with the US.

Territorial deterrence and expansion, nevertheless, became the biggest geopolitical basis for China's presence in Australia. The scope of Beijing's naval activities and geostrategic intentions has now spread to the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Canberra and the US have been confronted with an emerging superpower now encroaching on US strategic interests in Asia and Australia (Lockyer 2015).

Clive Hamilton argues that Beijing's key goal in Canberra is to debilitate the country's security agreement with the US (Hamilton 2018). Beijing's economic and military clout gives rise to the possibility, after the end Second World War, of a significant driver commanding East Asia and Australia's geographic reaches. Canberra and the US are now seeking to control the stability of these areas by sending military power (Lockyer 2015b).

As a countermeasure and in response to Beijing's expansion in the Indo-Pacific, Canberra has termed the Indo-Pacific as its zone of strategic interest (2013 Australian Defense White Paper).

The term complements Australia uses its distinct location surrounded by two-ocean and growing relations in Asia, as well as Mumbai, Japan, and Indonesia, to counterbalance China. The Indo-West Pacific stratagem is partially characterized with the frequently evolving aspirations, resources of China and the US continuing geopolitical involvement in the Pacific and Indian Oceans (Lieberthal and Wang 2012).

Consequently, such relations arise as a consequence of China's emergence as an augmented financial and strategic force, the extension of its global ambitions, and the political and diplomatic context of what Beijing considers to be its core maritime field of interest (Mohan 2012). This reflects the continuum of trading lines, oil transfers, political relations and military links between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans deemed vital for Beijing's growth and sustainability? China's counter move for Australia is seen as successful in its attempts in drawing Canberra in to become economically dependent on the Mainland, is a result of Canberra's growing economic dependence on China to strategically influence the country's policymaking and weaken its alliance with the US (Economist 2017). If China could distance Australia from the intelligence-sharing agreement referred to as Five Eyes, Beijing could significantly enhance its strategic position in the Pacific at the expense of the US while Australia's proximity to Vanuatu and Palau has reached its prominence to offset the shortage of supply stations for China's marines (Denghua 2020). The Oxford Dictionary terms this as *"the process by which a country is led, despite not being politically associated with it, to favor or refrain from opposing the interests of a more powerful country"* (Fallon 2020). To conquer the three island chains, Beijing must acquire a blue water navy with the capability of exercising sea control at broad ranges, an "archipelago" of naval bases scattered across the Pacific Ocean (Ji and Xu 1991).

Canberra's geographically strategic position has been specifically important to the US security role in Asia as the foremost event following 1942, as a location of comparative protection against the mainland's projectile launchers and as a platform for military and maritime long reach activities. Beijing is cautious about territorial infringement and intensification against the strategic advantage, of impediment and crisis management, coming from US missiles and marines deployed from Australian bases (Frühling 2018).

Henceforth, Beijing attempts to infiltrate Australia's political system to offset Canberra's solitudes pertaining to China's strategic objectives in the Pacific to break through the three island chains.

Empirical data shows how China's sharp power silences skepticism internationally and stealthily attempts to form global sentiment in its favor. Australia has been swept up in a story of mistrust, subversion and spooks (Shen 2018). In Australia, the National People's Congress is actively silencing rivals and co-opting Chinese-language media to portray positive opinions abroad. The government is orchestrating mass political campaigns portraying an appearance of enthusiasm for Beijing's policies and Communist Party members among the mainland diaspora, thus muting critics (Mantesso and Zhou 2019). The possibility of a security crisis in the area is growing less distant (Taylor 2020). Empirical data show that China would use penetrating power against Australia by utilizing overseas Chinese to dissuade the public from endorsing Taiwan. The previously stated framework generated empirical evidence that suggests a similar pattern of sharp power in both Taiwan and Australia. Chinese officials are concerned that groups in the overseas diaspora, many of whom have historical relations with Taiwan, might be helping to foment resistance to the Chinese Communist Party. The primary objective is to prevent Chinese overseas from siding with Taiwan (Hamilton 2018b). The National People's Congress has previously tried to control and split Taiwanese citizens through "sharp power" and evidence exposes that Australia is struggling with similar practices. However, the tide has changed and now China is using overseas Chinese to project a favorable image of Beijing abroad to silence and marginalize the Taiwanese diaspora (Mantesso and Zhou 2019b).

Beijing makes use of the Taiwan problem to manipulate the will of governments and private businesses. The Chinese State can and will use economic threats to direct Australian foreign policy from the Zhongnanhai corridors in pursuit of its interests. Chinese political intervention and strong influence in Australia (Edwards 2018b). Beijing's political weight influences Australia's foreign policy decisions. Sharp power was easily visible where Qantas was pressured to refrain from referring to Taiwan as a separate nation in its marketing content. Many multinational airlines claim Beijing threatened to halt their economic access and expansion to China. Investment in Australia enabled Beijing to use the familiar instruments of censorship and manipulation to promote its interests. Loose controls on foreign policy financing allowed quick exposure to Australian politics (Cave and Tarabay 2019). Donations poured by individuals welcoming Australia's politicians were linked to the Communist Party of China. On the day Robb negotiated the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, then Liberal Party Trade Minister Andrew Robb got a political contribution from Huang (Zhou2020). Months later, Robb became the economic adviser to Land Bridge Group, a Chinese-linked company that was granted a 99-year contract to operate the Australian Port of Darwin (Economist 2017).

In Australia, Chinese students at Sydney University showed indignation at a chart presented by a lecturer who displayed three contested areas as Indian territory between Mumbai and China (Needham 2017). In a comment, the professor was compelled to apologize: *'I used an 18 months old chart, downlinked from the web, I did not realize that the chart was incomplete and obsolete.'* *"A huge error, I repent any harm this might have ensued"* (Promrose 2017). The Global Times said promptly: 'The boundary war between China and India has broken out in Australia, and China has prevailed! (Reynolds 2017). Finally, from Australia's perspective,

China is progressing from soft power to hard power in Taiwan, and eventually towards sharp power. And it grows more blatant every day this cycle starts with Confucius Institute, scholarships, grants, then self-censor discussions that China finds sensitive and critical to its sovereignty. In the face of this totalitarian assault of China's deception, cyber hacking, corruption, economic manipulation, technological theft, and interference into internal politics; Taiwan is crucial (Varrall 2017).

Conclusion

As a national force, though, it needs to prove that it is worthy of protecting its authority and territorial integrity. By doing so, the vestige of its "century of shame" must be washed away, namely, to reunify Taiwan with the "motherland" (Bergsten 2006: 118-119). Beijing is positive that the US is preventing its reunification with the renegade province to encircle and cease China from crossing the first island chain and solely expand in the Indian- Pacific Ocean. Beijing's

strategic rationale is visible in its calculated policies and in seeking to expand beyond Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific choke points (Medcalf 2014).

As the chapter states, there has been an increasing perception of the effectiveness of China's sharp approach, backed by relevant discourse of a more pragmatic sharp power of Chinese foreign policy. It is shown that the strategic sharp power strategy is successful in handling Australia and Taiwan's territorial problem. Thomas J. Christensen summed up China's geopolitical priorities, generally agreed by many experts and analysts, to include protection of the government, protecting territorial sovereignty, increasing foreign recognition, influence and appreciation (Christensen in Sutter 2010: 7). While China sees the continuing independence of Taiwan as a relic of its shame and humiliation, Taipei's reunification with the mainland is vital to the mainland dignity, wealth, and reputation (Bergsten 2006: p118-119).

The resolute position of China against Taipei is clear in its repeated argument that it will utilize coercion in order to maintain the renegade province Chinese identity. Regardless of the common perception in China that America aimed to promote Taiwanese democracy, Beijing's aggressive stance against Taiwan has delivered a strong warning to the White House to curtail the nationalist ambitions of Taipei. The Mainland's PLA is realistic in its pursuit of fragmenting the defense lines of the island chains which creates a natural military advantage critical to China's strategic ambitions.

Such problems are important for the backdrop of Australia's ties with China. As a core factor of Australia's economic and geopolitical climate, in the future, China will retain an increasingly central part of Australia's foreign relations debate (Nicholson 2015). Beijing maintains the use of

strategic sharp power strategy to enervate Canberra's security partnership with the US and make use of its strategic location to freely expand beyond the second island chain. Therefore, Taiwan was cautious not to ignore its tacit US relationship as a guarantor of its security. Thus, to counter Chinese influence, Taiwan and Australia rely entirely upon the US (AIT 2012).

CONCLUSION

The strategic triangle of China-Taiwan and Australia is under-researched in the area of geo-strategic importance of the "hook" and the "southern anchor" to China. Reflecting the resolve of the Mainland towards its quest to expand beyond the first and second island chains, hence the profound geostrategic geography of Taipei and Canberra to China. Beijing stands as a successful model of a rising economic communist superpower, notwithstanding numerous attempts to decouple China's economy from the world. Beijing continues to become an indispensable nation despite Western cries to isolate China for its assertive ambition in Asia-Pacific (Alastair 2013).

China has integrated sharp power in its foreign and domestic policy towards Taiwan and Australia as both a luring and retaliatory instrument to deter the acknowledgement of Taiwan as an independent democratic nation and infiltrate and influence Australia's policymaking. The underlying reason for China's pursuit of maritime ambition lies in its geo-strategic importance for solving all outstanding territorial disputes. When Taiwan comes under the Chinese sphere of influence, it will offset the US plans to bolster the liberal world order, allowing Beijing to establish a Monroe doctrine in Asia. All the above illustrates that China is pursuing a legitimate

expansion which collides with Washington's interests in Asia-Pacific, highlighting all the countermoves to box-in China and slow its ambition down. Beijing's emergence is riddled with ambiguities, yet it warrants China's successful attempts to escape from the Thucydides trap created by Washington's two island chains and Beijing may prove an exception by escaping it. Washington describes the chain of islands formulated by the Chinese navy in the Pacific comparatively, as a countermeasure to develop a maritime power and solve its territorial disputes (Erickson and Wuthnow 2016). The scanty research accessible on this topic is worthy of further research. Observation about the methodological framework applied to the Asia-Pacific region explains Beijing's sharp power. It involves the rising significance of safeguarding sea lanes of communication (Fravel 2011). China is certain that the US is aware of Taiwan's geostrategic importance in Asia and Australia in the Pacific. Hence Taiwan and Australia both enable the US to block China virtually at its gates. That is why China employs sharp power to weaken both Canberra and the renegade province alliance with the US and deter Taiwan's de jure independence (Economist 2017). At present China is "constrained" through a demarcated chain of islands from southward of Okinawa to the Nansei Islands, Kinmen, Emerald Islands, strait of Malacca, Solomon Islands and Canberra. China's PLA naval will have to pass beyond the islands multiple choke points to get into the Pacific Ocean. This would change if Taiwan became part of Beijing. The Chinese navy would not be contained and could expand into Guam, the Marianas, beyond the 'second island chain' and other Pacific islands like Ngerulmud do not pose as an obstacle (Cooper 2011). President Xi Jinping has also referred to Taiwan symbolically, rendering it the core interest of his Chinese dream in its integration with the Mainland. If the Taiwan

problem was mismanaged, the legislative power of the National People's Congress may be threatened.

Losing Taiwan means a direct loss of Nanshan and Diaoyu islands. Sacrificing these geo-strategic territories ensures that China would lack the requisite reach to maintain national, political and economic stability that would be critical to China's growth as a global authority. China cannot maintain border sovereignty and security for commercial hubs such as Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, without Taiwan and other strategic islands under its direct control (Wenmu 2006 p.25).

China uses sharp power to deter Taiwan's independence by mobilizing its military aircraft across the median line of the Strait of Taiwan, and by persuading allies to sever ties with Taipei's only remaining political partners and by shifting its attention from the all-out goal of reconciliation to an enhancement of people's lives on both sides of the Strait. The working hypothesis of the thesis is that a novel mixed political science methodology can inform the design of a novel empirical framework that facilitated necessary and sufficient understanding of distinctions between Chinese hard, soft and sharp power in both Taiwan and Australia that allows for the comprehension of both current and future geostrategic significance of Taiwan. The thesis aim was to answer the following questions:

*Can a mixed political science methodology be advanced to understand Beijing's sharp power in Taipei and Australia?

*Could a new empirical framework of Beijing 's sharp power in four countries and two continents contribute to a better explanation of its application in Taiwan and Australia?

*What are Taiwan's and Australia's strategic and economic attributes?

In summary, this dissertation confirms the existence of Chinese sharp power in Taiwan and Australia. The three island chains have played a significant role as a strategic rear door for Chinese maritime ambitions to expand beyond Asia-Pacific. Gaining access to Taiwan, Palau and Australia will enable China to fragment the choke points that can cripple its economy and neutralize its navy. Economic incentives reflected through the BRI act like a tactical door for Beijing to access countries in the Pacific including Australia, Palau and Vanuatu to access their mineral resources and establish strategic pivot ports that enable PLAN to circumvent the Pacific with ease and secure the sea lines of communication. Taiwan on the other hand through economic engagement and sharp power has stabilized the cross-strait ties since Beijing's sovereign activities have gone beyond its rigid commitment to the discourse on the sacredness of territorial integrity. The changes were seen in China-Taiwan relations act as proof of China's learning, regarding the possibilities of a pragmatic solution to the notion of sovereignty. The rhetoric of the Chinese government of taking the renegade island by force presented an immense risk of an all-out international condemnation followed by decoupling of the Chinese economy. Which illustrates Taiwan subduing to Chinese advances. Whilst winning over the hearts and minds of the Taiwanese through talent exchange programs and work incentives.

The West Philippine Sea is the point of entry that provides the Chinese navy with the required freedom of navigation and sustains the country's economic interests in the Pacific since it connects the sought after three island chains. Safeguarding China's expanding national interests require substantial access to resources. Soft power theorists would add the massive increase in

Chinese economic capability, most notably the offers made possible through the BRI and established bilateral ties with Palau, Vanuatu and Bougainville to ensure secure access to the island's resources and strategic ports. China's meteoric trade growth in Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe could be observed as soft balancing against a hegemon. Securing reunification with Taiwan consolidates the ruling status of the Communist Party, maintaining ties with Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe maintains Chinese national development, while slowly influencing Pacific islands and Australia's ensure China's sovereignty, territorial integrity.

The novel framework of four countries and two continents offered insight into the underlying reason behind Beijing's comprehensive ties with these nations concerning the application of sharp power. Thanks to their central position in influencing attitudes and shaping public sentiment in democratic societies, these areas (1) media, (2) academia, (3) publishing, (4) malicious finance and (5) The China-Taiwan factor and Confucius institute were chosen for review. Given their position as young democracies, and according to the world ranking of Freedom House (1 to 2.5 on a scale of 1 to 7) four countries have been designated as free, Peru, Argentina, Poland and Slovakia. This framework examined four countries and two continents; Australia and Africa, but equivalent methods of sharp power activities with Chinese characteristics are noticeable in all countries due to their EU strategic position, and the presence of Taiwanese diaspora. The abovementioned countries aspire to have a voice and presence in the UN as well as the UN Security Council acting as allies of Beijing. The four countries and the two continents chosen in this framework supply China with the needed natural resources, minerals to sustain the country's growth. The framework infers this is probably the result of Warsaw and Bratislava, admiration with China's rapid-unprecedented economic growth, as a desired module

for the countries. As for China's keen interest in Australia came in response to the US ramping up of allies in the Pacific to counter Beijing's maritime expansion as well as contain the Chinese PLAN (Donnelly in Burchill and Linklater 2013: 38). Beijing's strategic rationale is evident in the normalization of bilateral ties with strategically located islands in the Pacific like Palau, Vanuatu and Bougainville these islands provide China with access to their mineral resources needed to propel the superpower economic growth (Wroe2018). Whilst the building of strategic ports described as a string of pearls which in turn enables the PLA navy to launch a rear attack in time of crisis and act as a back door to access the Pacific Ocean. Finally, China's naval aspirations, regional sovereignty and procurement of mineral resources warrant the use of sharp power. Securing territorial sovereignty and expansion is the leading strategic importance of Beijing's interest in Australia and South-Pacific. The reach of Beijing's military geostrategic ambitions has extended further into Asia- Pacific.

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