

## **China's Stadium Diplomacy and its Determinants: A Typological Investigation of Soft Power**

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### **Abstract**

Since 1958, China has constructed over 140 sports facilities around the world. Previous research into stadium diplomacy lacks definitional clarity, has not systematically investigated the phenomenon, and crucially, has failed to explain why China employs stadium diplomacy where it does. This article defines the phenomenon and locates all known cases without temporal or geographic restrictions. We create a classification system and typology, permitting a comparison of theoretically-like types to develop and test a multi-determinant theory. We find empirical evidence that China employs stadium diplomacy to secure natural resources and to secure diplomatic recognition in line with the One-China policy. These findings have important implications for scholarship into the use of soft power within interstate rivalry, and the methodology demonstrates that a clear typology of soft power which is mutually exclusive and logically exhaustive can be created and is informative.

**Keywords:** China, stadium diplomacy, soft power, interstate rivalry

### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

Several dozen photographers and reporters hurried into position while onlookers jostled for view, dodging the earthmovers and dust of the construction site. The President's limousine was pulling up, but no one had come to see him. Lionel Messi was here! The best player of the world's most popular game was in Port-Gentil, Gabon, a world away from his home in Barcelona, to lay the cornerstone of China's newest stadium (Djellit, 2015). Just the latest example of China's stadium diplomacy, a soft-power push dating back to 1958, reaching from Antigua, to Vanuatu, to Dar es Salaam.

Stadium diplomacy is a form of check book diplomacy invented by and almost entirely unique to China, whereby the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) funds the construction of sports facilities as one option among many on a menu from which recipient states select their

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preferred infrastructure projects. Other projects on offer include roads, bridges, and even government buildings (Brautigam, 2009). This phenomenon has never been systematically investigated nor convincingly explained with sufficient scholarly rigour, leaving unanswered why China employs stadium diplomacy where it does, and which determinants guide its use. This analysis, for the first time, operationally defines stadium diplomacy in order to determine whether soft power is or is not in play; locates 142 cases in 61 countries to identify and measure soft power. It classifies all observed cases within a typology with clearly defined domains and criteria for failure. And it identifies patterns between typological groups to develop and test an issue-based, multi-determinant theoretical explanation that China employs stadium diplomacy to secure friends and resources. Additionally, by delineating mutually exclusive typological groups capable of guiding future case selection, this methodological approach offers international relations scholars a generalizable framework to operationalize and investigate other forms and uses of soft power.

This empirical investigation into the determinants of China's stadium diplomacy is particularly timely. China's rise and its disruptive potential is often considered in terms of China's material capacity. Yet, China's soft power, the ability to get other countries to want what it wants through attraction as opposed to coercion (Nye, 1990), is perceived as ineffective: coming last in a ranking of thirty states, behind minor-powers such as New Zealand and the Czech Republic (McClory, 2015: 25). As a rising superpower, China actively seeks to increase its soft power (Li, 2009: 1), and anecdotal evidence suggests stadium diplomacy may be an effective, scalable form of soft power for China.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Scholars' understanding of power's sources, its scope, and its use has progressed beyond Dahl's (1957: 201) A making B do what B would otherwise not. One of the most significant theoretical advances has been the identification of an alternative, an attractive, form of power (Nye, 1990). To wield soft power is to "achieve desired outcomes because others want what you want," (Nye, 1999) with a state's culture, ideology, and values attracting others to follow it; to borrow its techniques and experiences; to emulate its example; to admire its values and traditions; to seek to achieve its level of development and prosperity (Nye, 2002: 8-11; Vuving, 2009: 8-12). States seeking major-power or great-power status must be able to use both hard and soft power in the international system, much as a three-dimensional chess player's success depends on her ability to simultaneously play both horizontally and vertically (Nye, 2004: 72).

Within traditional soft power scholarship, however, there exists both a conceptual and a logical hurdle which together hold back theoretical progression. In conceiving soft power, Nye makes a clear distinction between soft power and economic power, which he considers coercive (Nye, 2002: 8-11); though whether this distinction between economic and soft power even exists, and if it does where that dividing line is, remains unspecified (Li, 2009). Indeed, the US does not wield hegemonic power through “guns and Hollywood alone” (Mead, 2009). Rather it uses economic power in ways other states find attractive, not coercive (e.g. humanitarian disaster assistance). Secondly, it is logically unclear why culture, ideology, and values must be the source(s) of attractive power, as Nye (1990: 11) insists. Indeed, certain cultures, ideologies, and values may be repulsive, depending upon the audience.

The deficiencies of traditional soft power research suggest a deeper definitional problem. If soft power really is “like love, easy to feel but hard to define,” (Nye, 1990: 11) that is problematic. Without defining the phenomenon under investigation, how can scholars 1) know whether soft power is in play, 2) measure soft power, and 3) recognize if soft power translates into policy outcomes (Li, 2009: 4)? Without these basic data, generalizable scholarship is impossible. Li (2009: 7) succinctly sums up the problem and the path forward. Instead of classifying power by its source, scholars ought to instead classify it by how it is wielded: whether power is used to attract or to coerce (Li, 2009: 7). This simple but radical rethink of ‘power-used-softly’ makes conceptual sense and offers the greatest analytical clarity and power, because it permits a broader range of interstate behaviour to be placed and studied within the framework of soft power.

Soft power translated into practice on-the-ground may be the best way to conceive of public diplomacy, where states promote positive and attractive images to those outside its borders by building relations and influencing foreign publics’ perceptions (Melissen, 2013: 1). Culture, especially, offers an effective medium for presenting an appealing image and attracting others’ admiration (Nye, 2002: 8-11), because “it is [through] cultural activities that a nation’s idea of itself is best represented” to the world (US Department of State, 2005: 1). Government sponsored institutions such as the Cervantes [Spain], Goethe [Germany], or Confucius [China] Institutes of Language & Culture are perhaps the most well-known examples, but movies & television (Otmazgin, 2008; Thussu, 2013), food (Reynolds, 2012), clothing (Macleod, 2013; Ramzy, 2014), and art can also be powerful tools of value transmission and cultural attraction. When Tutankhamun’s mask toured America in 1976, visitors waited in line for hours, even bringing sleeping bags, to catch sight of it (Burghart, 2006). The tour sparked ‘tut-mania’ in America, and everything from Egyptian hair and

makeup styles to ‘tut-inspired’ dances became part of the zeitgeist (Kamp, 2013). The attractive power of Egyptian culture is evident still, and it gives the regime political leeway. Internationally, Egypt is known as the land of the Nile, King Tut, and the Pyramids, not Tahrir Square or the violence following the Revolution.

The political value of cultural attraction is not lost on China’s leaders. Its public diplomacy has become increasingly sophisticated over the last twenty years (Zhu, 2013: 6,16,29). China has created its own version of the American Peace Corps and brought thousands of students a year to China on university scholarships (Brautigam, 2009: 123-124). But China’s most famous ambassadors, cultural or otherwise, are its pandas loaned to zoos around the world as ‘panda diplomacy’ (Hartig, 2013). China has proven to be pragmatic with its use of public diplomacy, and its willingness to experiment has led to novel methods of wielding soft power, including the use of sport and its facilities as public diplomacy.

The effectiveness of sports diplomacy as public diplomacy stems from sport’s salience to participants and its capacity to shape public opinion (Jennings, 2011: 7). Billions participate,<sup>2</sup> and it bypasses verbal or written communication, making it suitable for friendship-building (Maguire, 2005: 1). However, international relations scholarship into sports diplomacy has been limited to a set of theoretically similar dyads<sup>3</sup> (Murray, 2013: 12), where sport plays a de-escalatory role within enduring rivalries (Diehl & Goertz, 2000: 143), especially those born feuding in which bellicose rivalrous behaviour is particularly intense (Wayman, 2000). Repeatedly selecting theoretically similar cases for investigation results in a narrow understanding of sports diplomacy. The lens of power-used-softly permits scholars to broaden the study of sports diplomacy by identifying sports facilities, beyond sport itself, as attractive forces. This creates a new theoretical intersection between sports and soft power: stadium diplomacy whose effectiveness, just as any other form of public diplomacy, depends upon engaging and attracting a broad audience (Melissen, 2013). These modern stadiums are highly visible, tangible symbols of China to even the most marginal members of society in a way that traditional (western) and more anonymous forms of assistance are not (Pazzanita, 1996: 47).

Existing theoretical explanations of China’s stadium diplomacy differ on which issues-at-stake shape China’s policy preferences. The dominant research programme posits that

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<sup>2</sup> Football alone claims more adherents than the Catholic Church (Kunz, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Wrestling [Iran-USA](Chehabi, 2001; Marks, 1999); Ping pong [USA-China](Griffin, 2014); Football [Turkey-Armenia](Gunter & Rohtus, 2010); Cricket [India-Pakistan](Næss-holm, 2007); Baseball [USA-Cuba](National Security Archive at the George Washington University); Chess [USA-USSR](Edelman, 2006); 1980-84 Olympic Boycotts [USA-USSR](Goldberg, 2000).

China's engagement with the global south, and Africa in particular, is driven by pursuit of the mineral and energy resources required to maintain domestic economic growth and by extension, regime stability (The Economist, 2008a; The Economist, 2008c; Alm, 2012; Barranguet, 2010; Blenford, 2007; Ferdinand, 2012; Guest, 2009; Hawksley, 2010; Ross, 2014; Will, 2012). This resource-seeking foreign policy is informed by and contributes to Mearsheimer's (2006) China-threat theory scholarship, whose advocates explain Chinese engagement by observing that the global south is home to two thirds of the world's natural resources (Winter, 2010). The alternative research programme contends the issue-at-stake for China is diplomatic recognition in line with the One-China policy. The few states which diplomatically recognize Taiwan are disproportionately located in the comparatively resource-poor Caribbean and Oceania, and anecdotal evidence points towards a concentrated use of stadium diplomacy in these regions. For these scholars (Erikson & Chen, 2007; McElroy & Bai, 2008), the PRC's enduring rivalry with the ROC on Taiwan is key to understanding its soft-power push, and the otherwise unusual behaviour of stadium construction in minor-power states is a tool to diplomatically isolate a rival (Kurlantzick, 2007; Sheringham, 2007; Zhu, 2013).

These competing research programs identify separate issues-at-stake for China and delineate foreign policy goals which it pursues using stadium diplomacy. However, the existing scholarship has two primary shortcomings. It fails to develop explicit operational definitions of the phenomenon under investigation, and its hypotheses are developed deductively from limited geographic or temporal domains. This fragmented approach results in case-specific explanations which offer no generalizable insight into either China's use of soft power or the policy goals which guide it.

### **Inventory of Stadium Diplomacy and Initial Observations**

This inventory represents the first attempt to identify all cases of stadium diplomacy regardless of where or when they were constructed, a necessary step for generalizable, empirical study. In order to distinguish between cases which are and are not available for investigation, China's stadium diplomacy is operationally defined as:

*The construction or renovation of sporting facilities, funded by China, outside its borders.*

If China consciously employs this soft power tool in pursuit of particular policy goals as Will (2012: 38) predicts, there should be identifiable patterns between recipient states. We use these characteristic patterns to develop a new, multi-determinant, explanatory theory of

stadium diplomacy. We employ an *ex ante* theoretical classification scheme to create a mutually exclusive and logically exhaustive scientific typology with clearly defined explanatory domains (Baily, 1994: 3), allowing us to differentiate between types (George & Bennett, 2005: 234). The classification scheme delineates and operationalizes the typological criteria (Vasquez & Valeriano, 2010: 293), permitting the typology to be tested against data and potentially falsified – crucial to any theory-building exercise (Popper, 1959: Chapter 1, section 6). Any new theory of stadium diplomacy, in order to be considered progressive, must be capable of providing domain-specific explanations of the phenomenon and guiding future empirical research (Lakatos, 1970:182-191). The methodology employed in this analysis delivers on both counts. It offers novel insight and can serve as a template for future empirical enquiry into other forms of soft power. Table 1 reports all observed cases of stadium diplomacy grouped by the recipient state.

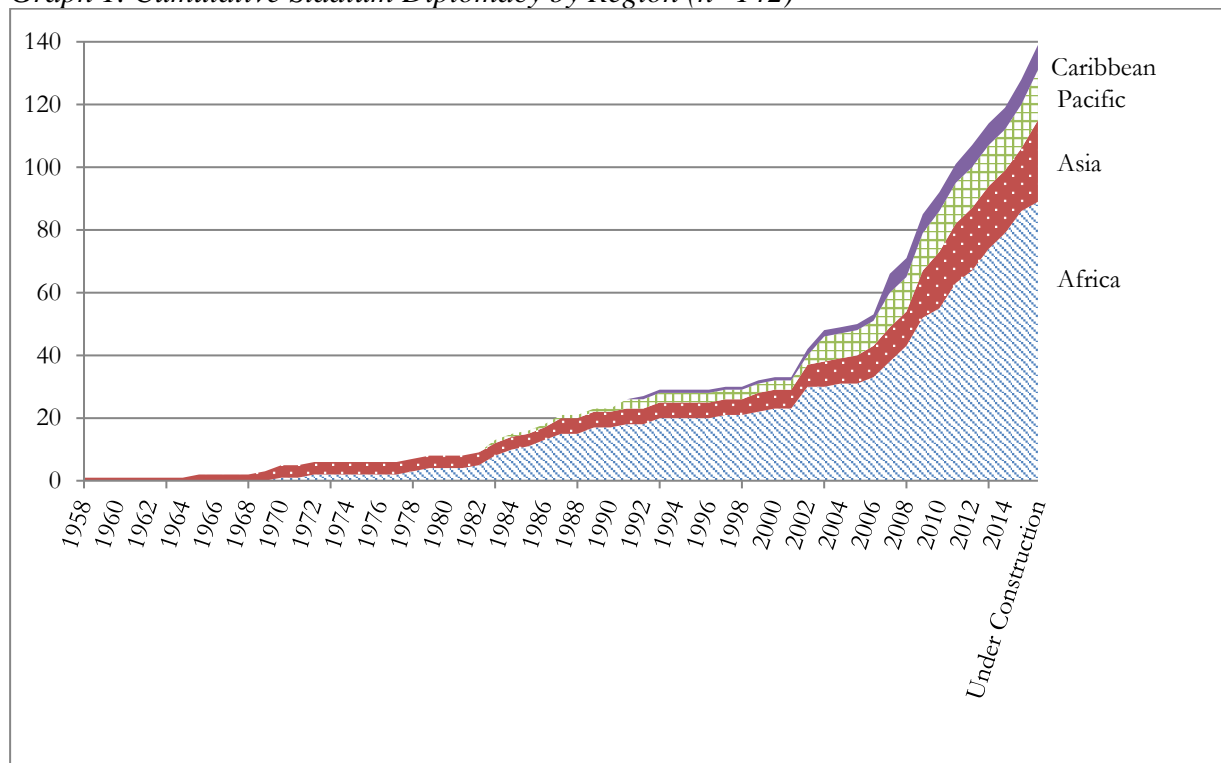
*Table 1. Inventory by State*

<b>Recipient State</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Recipient State cont.</b>	<b>n</b>
Senegal	12	Somalia	2
Ghana	6	Uganda	2
Laos	6	Vanuatu	2
Mali	6	Zimbabwe	2
Cameroon	5	Antigua & Barbuda	1
Fiji	5	Bahamas	1
Tanzania	5	Benin	1
Angola	4	Burkina Faso	1
Cambodia	4	Cape Verde	1
Samoa	4	Central African Republic	1
Sierra Leone	4	Chad	1
Zambia	4	Cook Islands	1
Congo	3	Costa Rica	1
Equatorial Guinea	3	Cote d'Ivoire	1
Gabon	3	Dominica	1
Mongolia	3	Democratic Rep. Congo	1
Papua New Guinea	3	Micronesia	1
Algeria	2	Gambia	1
Barbados	2	Guinea	1
Djibouti	2	Kiribati	1
Grenada	2	Malawi	1
Guinea Bissau	2	Mauritania	1
Jamaica	2	Mauritius	1
Kenya	2	Mozambique	1
Liberia	2	Rwanda	1
Morocco	2	Sri Lanka	1
Myanmar	2	St. Lucia	1
Nepal	2	Suriname	1
Niger	2	Syria	1
Pakistan	2	Togo	1
Seychelles	2		

*Source:* Authors own work

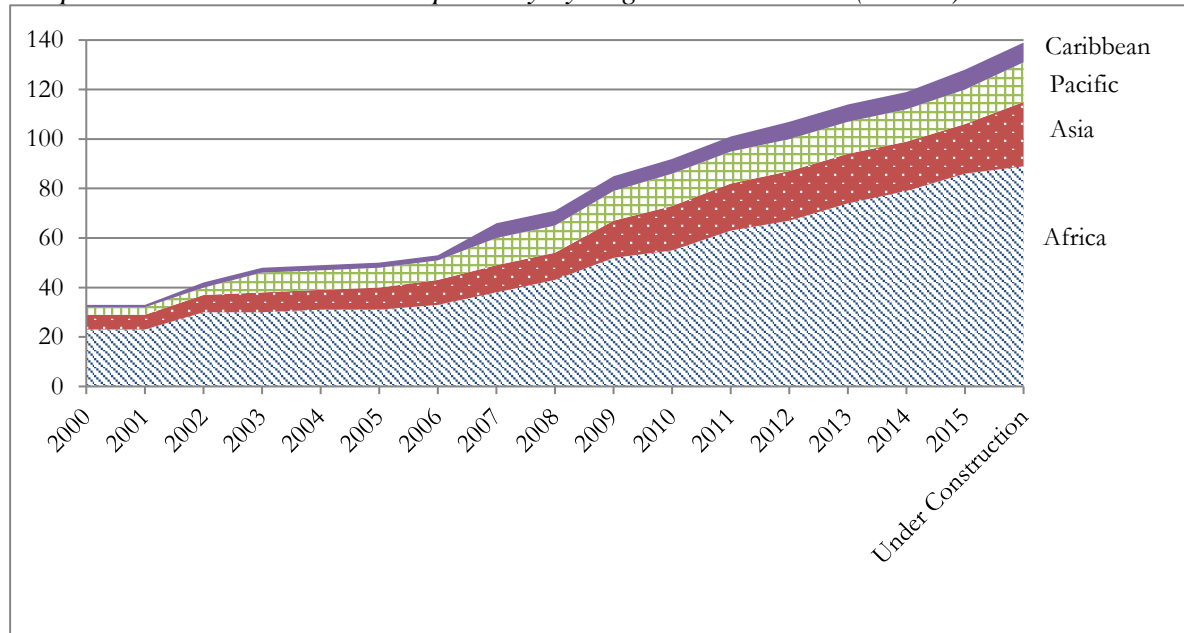
Table 1 identifies 142 cases of stadium diplomacy in 61 countries on every continent but Europe. The average distribution is 2.32 stadiums per recipient state, but 43 of 61 recipients have two or fewer, resulting in a modal distribution of one stadium per recipient state. The count data exceed the estimates of all previous authors (Alm, 2012; Barranguet, 2010) and even the most recent self-reported data by more than half (SCIO, 2011). The total number of stadiums and recipient states is not the only intriguing observation. There is also a marked acceleration in the use of stadium diplomacy which is immediately apparent in Graphs 1 and 2. Between 1958 and 1989, there are 25 identified cases (0.8 per year). From 1990-2009, there are 62 observations (3.3 per year); and from 2010 through summer 2016 there are 57 examples (8.8 per year). This acceleration of soft-power usage mirrors China’s overall foreign aid expenditures (Brautigam, 2009: Chapter 6) and is in line with what one would expect to see from an economy that saw near double digit year-on-year growth for over a decade. It also suggests that China finds increasing utility in this particular form of soft power

Graph 1. Cumulative Stadium Diplomacy by Region (n=142)



Source: Authors own graph

Graph 2. Cumulative Stadium Diplomacy by Region 2000 – 2016 (n=108)



Source: Author's own graph

The acceleration of stadium diplomacy takes on added theoretical significance when considered with its regional distribution. The recipients of Chinese-built stadiums are disproportionately located in Africa, the Caribbean, and Oceania with 114 of 142 of all cases, and 87 of 108 since 2000, found in these three regions. These data suggest that both the 'stadiums-for-resources' and 'stadiums-for-friends' explanations may be in play, though they may operate in separate regions. Additionally, this pattern of regional clustering suggests these regions are not only salient to China but increasingly so.

### A New Multi-Determinant Theory of China's Stadium Diplomacy

The inventory of all observed cases of stadium diplomacy suggests the phenomenon has multiple determinants with distinct domains. Existing research programmes have arrived at two superficially credible, partial-explanations of stadium diplomacy which are capable of identifying issues-at-stake for China and linking those issues to the geographic regions with a high number of cases. Considered in tandem, the 'stadiums-for-resources' and 'stadiums-for-friends' theories appear to hold explanatory power over a significant number of cases. Reconciling the two may result in a more robust theory capable of explaining an even greater number of cases. Presented here is a new theory of stadium diplomacy capable of accounting for the simultaneous existence of multiple determinants with distinct explanatory domains: *China employs stadium diplomacy to secure diplomatic recognition in line with the One-China policy and to secure natural resources.*



**The Classification Scheme and Typology**

The classification scheme presented here categorizes the recipient states of stadium diplomacy by their shared characteristics along two theoretical dimensions identified by previous research into salient issues-at-stake for China: durability of diplomatic recognition; and resource richness. The ordering principle reflects China’s policy of diplomatic recognition as a precondition for economic relations (McElroy & Bai, 2008: 239). The resulting typology leads to the creation of ten genotypes as laid out in Figure 1. Type 1, for example denotes a stadium where the recipient state is an enduring friend that is resource rich. Type 9 on the opposite end of the spectrum represents a stadium constructed for a new friend that is not resource rich.

*Figure 1. Classification System of Stadium Diplomacy by Genotype*

Dimension	Enduring Friends			Stable Friends			New Friends			Non-Friends
	Resource Rich	Potentially Resource Rich	Not Resource Rich	Resource Rich	Potentially Resource Rich	Not Resource Rich	Resource Rich	Potentially Resource Rich	Not Resource Rich	
	(Type 1)	(Type 2)	(Type 3)	(Type 4)	(Type 5)	(Type 6)	(Type 7)	(Type 8)	(Type 9)	(Type 10)

Source: Authors own work

Within the typology, Types 1-9 lie within the domain of our proposed theory that China engages in stadium diplomacy to secure friends and resources. Cases classified as Type 10 lie beyond the explanatory domain of the theory and represents a failure of Chinese soft power to secure its predicted policy preferences. For future theory appraisal, it is important to identify in advance those observations beyond the explanatory domain that could falsify the theory. Observations classified as Type 10 could call into question the theory’s validity and potentially falsify it.

*Table 2. Cases by Type (n=142)*

	n
Type 1	46
Type 2	21
Type 3	32
Type 4	2
Type 5	0
Type 6	10
Type 7	5
Type 8	2
Type 9	21
Type 10	3

Source: Author’s own work

Table 2 classifies 142 cases of stadium diplomacy observed since 1958 and reports the number in each category. In the following two sections, the utility of each theoretical dimension as a determinant will be assessed. Each section begins with a research design which lays out the operationalization criteria for each genotype, followed by the findings.

### *Durability of Diplomatic Relations*

The dimension consists of four hierarchical categories derived from Rich (2009). An *enduring friend* (Type 1, 2, 3) is operationally defined as a state that has recognized China and the One-China policy since at least 1976 without interruption;<sup>4</sup> a *stable friend* (Type 4, 5, 6) is a state that has recognized China and the One-China policy since at least 1977 without interruption; and a *new friend* (Type 7, 8, 9) is a state that has recognized China and the One-China policy since 1990. A *non-friend* (Type 10) is defined as a state that does not currently recognize China or the One-China policy.

#### - Findings

We observe 99 stadiums (70% of all cases) have been directed to enduring friends, 28 (20%) to new friends, and 12 (8.5%) to stable friends; while 3 cases (2.1%) have been directed to non-friends.

How to differentiate between beneficiaries of stadium diplomacy is of major concern in Dunmore's (2011) attempt to make sense of the phenomenon. By examining patterns of stadium diplomacy in the Caribbean, he hypothesizes stadium diplomacy is associated with recent changes in diplomatic recognition away from Taiwan. Will (2012) also identifies an association between stadium diplomacy and the PRC vs. Taiwan rivalry; however by looking at the PRC's use of stadium diplomacy in other regions, specifically Africa and Central America, she arrives at the opposite conclusion as Dunmore and hypothesizes stadium diplomacy is directed towards early supporters of the PRC. Our observation that 127 stadium diplomacy projects (90% of the total) are directed towards Types 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9 appears to support both Dunmore's and Will's hypotheses.

Scholarship into soft power within interstate rivalry is remarkably underdeveloped (for one of the few examples, see Mabon, 2013). This is surprising, because the rivalry research programme is robust, and states employing soft power to resolve issues-at-stake would be

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<sup>4</sup> Enduring Friends are early-adopter states which supported China's initial application or recognized China within five years of its successful admission to the UN in 1971.

consistent with rivals' behaviour and a win-at-all-costs mind-set. Rivals will go to extraordinary lengths to win, even if it harms themselves (Diehl & Goertz, 2000). They carry historical and psychological baggage and have a reason to mistrust the other (Colaresi, Rasler, & Thompson, 2007), because their relationship forms through a series of repeated negative interactions, each deepening the rivalry spiral (Valeriano, 2012). And for those rivals who have been "born-feuding," these patterns of bellicose behaviour are especially pronounced and harder to modify (Wayman, 2000). China's rivalry with the ROC on Taiwan dates to the end of the Chinese Civil War and the 1949 birth of the People's Republic on the mainland. The PRC's foreign policy has been coloured to a great extent by its continued efforts to isolate its rival, the ROC (Ellis, 2012: 11), and it has expended a disproportionate amount of effort to pursue this policy goal (Erikson & Chen, 2007: 69). To realist observers, Taiwan ought to be an afterthought: recognized by less than two dozen other minor-powers, its economy is dwarfed by its mainland rival. But for the PRC, the relationship *vis-à-vis* Taiwan has become loaded with intrinsic, emotional value, making it highly salient (Erikson & Chen, 2007; Vasquez, 2009).

It is significant that 14 of the 17 states which recognize Taiwan are in the Caribbean and Oceania (Archibold, 2012; Kurlantzick, 2007: 42,142-144). These states, although "miniscule and little known [are] vitally important in the diplomatic game between Beijing and Taipei;" (Zhu, 2013: 156) and they appear to be serial targets of Chinese soft power, suggesting China does indeed use stadium diplomacy as a soft power tool within the context of rivalry. Scholarship on China's international relations grounded in realist logic, e.g. China-threat theory, cannot account for the China vs. Taiwan rivalry as a salient issue-at-stake for decision-makers in Beijing. Critically, realist logic cannot explain the empirical evidence of China's preference for directing stadium diplomacy to enduring and new friends.

Considering our observations through the lens of interstate rivalry is a novel approach that brings theoretical clarity to the uneven geographic distribution of China's soft power: accounting for the intersection of regional salience and rivalry in China's foreign policy (Brautigam, 2009: 125; Erikson & Chen, 2007: 69; Reveron, 2007: 26,31-32). The evidence broadly supports the assertion that China uses stadium diplomacy to reward diplomatic recognition – and rejection of Taiwan. With 90 percent of cases directed towards enduring and new friends, durability of diplomatic recognition appears to offer at least partial explanatory power as a determinant of stadium diplomacy. However, 12 cases directed towards stable friends had no clear association with the historical development of the China vs. Taiwan rivalry. Additionally, three cases were classified as Type 10, falling beyond the

explanatory domain of the proposed theory. These three failures of soft power to secure diplomatic recognition demonstrate China's stadium diplomacy is often but not always effective. Together, these 15 cases suggest the durability of diplomatic recognition on its own lacks explanatory power over the entire phenomenon.

### *Resource Richness*

To identify cases where resource acquisition may be in play, our typology classifies states into three hierarchical categories: resource-rich, potentially resource-rich, and not resource-rich. A state is operationally defined as *resource-rich* if resource export revenues equal at least 20 percent of total state revenues or exports averaged over five years (International Monetary Fund, 2007; International Monetary Fund, 2012: Appendix 1, table 2); or it has proven reserves in excess of 10 billion barrels of oil or 3 trillion cubic meters of gas (BP, 2014). A state is operationally defined as *potentially resource-rich* if it has 'identified reserves but production has not yet begun or reached significant levels;' (International Monetary Fund, 2012: Appendix 1, table 2) or has proven reserves less than 10 billion barrels of oil or 3 trillion cubic meters of gas (BP, 2014); or if it possesses proven reserves of rare earth elements (United Nations Statistics Division, 2015). A state is operationally defined as *not resource-rich* if it fails to meet the criteria for the above two categories.

The resources used in the operational definitions are previously identified as particularly salient to China for its continued economic growth (Ferdinand, 2012: 88), and by extension, regime stability (Will, 2011). To protect against over-sensitivity towards small, resource-driven economies, our classification criteria also consider states with large absolute resource reserves to be resource-rich, even if resource exports represent a smaller share of the state's more diversified economy.<sup>5</sup> Potentially resource-rich states have reserves of natural resources that are neither particularly large nor are they primary economic drivers. Such potentially-rich states represent a different type of partner for China which may be behaving as a savvy investor or talent scout, identifying untapped sources of future value in order to maximize its return on investment. Dichotomizing states as either resource-rich or resource-poor as Barranguet (2010) and Ross (2014) do is methodologically questionable, because it assumes identical resource richness across the entire domain and cannot account for China's 'moneyball' behaviour with these types of partner states.

#### - Findings

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<sup>5</sup> e.g. the USA whose natural resource-wealth is large in absolute terms but whose economy is diverse.

Our observations reveal that of 142 cases, 53 (37%) have been directed towards resource-rich states (Types 1, 4, 7); 23 (16%) towards potentially resource-rich states (Types 2, 5, 8); and 63 (44%) towards not resource-rich states (Types 3, 6, 9). This bi-modal distribution is unexpected given the preponderance of literature support for a resource-seeking Chinese foreign policy.

The pursuit of natural resources is often used to explain China's international economic relations, particularly with developing states (The Economist, 2008a; The Economist, 2008b; New African, 2008; Naim, 2009). Such hypotheses rest on the claim that China's domestic political stability is dependent upon maintaining the economic growth that has lifted over 500 million out of poverty since Deng's market reforms (Ravallion, 2009; Will, 2011). The raw materials to fuel this development, though, increasingly lie beyond China's borders, necessitating that China import its "industrially vital" natural resources (Ferdinand, 2012: 88) and pushing China towards new, non-traditional suppliers with higher risks but potentially higher rates of return (Brautigam, 2009: 56). Barranguet (2010), Alm (2012), and Ross (2014) adopt this '*stadiums-for-resources*' perspective in their analyses to credibly explain the majority of cases within Africa where Graphs 1 and 2 show most cases are located. Unfortunately, their distinctions between resource rich and poor states are implicit, lacking definitional, and subsequently, analytical clarity.

The typology allows us to make claims about stadium diplomacy which are supported by empirical data. Fifty-four percent of cases are directed towards resource-rich or potentially resource-rich states. One interpretation of this finding is the predictions of previous investigations are correct about half of the time. On the other hand, those resource-seeking predictions fail about half of the time, unable to account for 46 percent of cases, including in regions with diplomatic though not economic rationales for Chinese investment (Chen, 2010; Sheringham, 2007). This suggests China pursues multiple policy goals through the use of stadium diplomacy. Both the resource-richness of China's partners and the durability of diplomatic recognition individually offer partial explanatory power over China's stadium diplomacy; indicating that we are on the correct path when we consider the two determinants in tandem to explain China's use of stadium diplomacy as a soft power foreign policy tool.

### **Analysis, Discussion, & Conclusions**

Three final tasks remain for our investigation. We must appraise the multi-determinant theory, assess stadium diplomacy's place within China's foreign policy, and delineate the implications of our findings for international relations research programmes. Theory appraisal

is crucial for progressive research (Vasquez, 1998: Chapter 10). “Good theory” must describe observations of the world with empirical accuracy. If it cannot, it ought to be discarded (Vasquez, 1998: 230). We employ a two-tailed Pearson’s chi-square test to determine whether the observed distribution of stadiums statistically differs from the predicted distribution. Figure 2 displays the crosstab of the nine typological groups within the explanatory domain of the multi-determinant theory. Observed values are listed above, with expected values in parentheses. Typological groups whose observed value exceeds the expected value are bolded.

Figure 2. Chi-Square Analysis of Stadium Diplomacy (valid n=139)

	Enduring Friends	Stable Friends	New Friends	
Resource Rich	<b>46</b> (37.75)	2 (4.58)	5 (10.66)	53
Potentially Resource Rich	<b>21</b> (16.38)	0 (1.99)	2 (4.63)	23
Not Resource Rich	32 (44.87)	<b>10</b> (5.44)	<b>21</b> (12.69)	63
	99	12	28	139

$$\chi^2=24.0133; p<0.001$$

Source: Author’s own work

The analysis finds that a statistically significant difference exists between the observed and the predicted distribution of cases across the nine typological groups ( $\chi^2=24.0133$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This allows us to conclude that a relationship between the determinants *does* exist: the multi-determinate theory that *China employs stadium diplomacy to secure diplomatic recognition in line with the One-China policy and to secure natural resources* is empirically accurate, and it offers explanatory power. Furthermore, as we will see, it is capable of providing new insight into the phenomena and guiding future inquiry.

Within China’s foreign policy, stadium diplomacy fits a pattern of both hard and soft power-projecting behaviours typical of a major-power state. In the past decade, China has demonstrated military strength through a new aircraft carrier (Lockie, 2016) and sought to build alliances, even joining international efforts to combat piracy (BBC News, 2010). It has promoted national values of toughness, resolve, strength, success, and non-interference; and it has increasingly demonstrated its economic power and the vitality of its economic system

through foreign aid, scholarships, and investment. Some of China's power-used-softly might seem familiar (cultural exchanges, food, pandas); but China also attracts by appealing not to western liberal-democratic values of free speech or political rights but rather to values of political non-interference and economic development whose only conditionality is adherence to the One-China policy. These atypical attractive values are channelled through atypical mediums. Sport is a particularly effective medium, because it is extremely salient. It "is as old as we are... When we watch sport we're more than spectators" (Jennings, 2011: 393), which enables it to shape public opinion and transmit values of rivalry, group-identity, competition, power, and glory, which are all familiar to international relations scholars. Sport's multi-functionality, its ability to simultaneously transmit political and social values makes stadium diplomacy an appealing form of power-used-softly. Stadiums and the events they host are attractive to recipients, because they are tangible symbols of prestige and status (Rhamey & Early, 2013), highly visible markers of a country that is modern and "world-class" (Bloomfield, 2010: 279).

The presence of at least 142 stadiums in 61 different countries demonstrates just how attractive they are to both recipients *and* to China. There is a clear, accelerating distributive pattern giving quantifiable, empirical support to the proposition that China is deliberate and selective in using stadium diplomacy. It projects conspicuous economic capability and ambition and can be a powerful attractive tool for achieving China's core foreign policy objectives: recognition vis-à-vis the One-China policy and securing natural resources for sustained economic development. China's international economic engagement takes political considerations into account (Dreher & Fuchs, 2011), but this is no different than other major-powers' preference for diplomatically aligned partner-states (Dreher, Nunnenkamp, & Thiele, 2008; Dreher & Fuchs, 2011). Stadium diplomacy is not deviant behaviour by a rogue superpower flouting the norms of the international community. It is a new form of attractive economic power being used by a superpower to achieve policy goals.

As an emerging superpower, China has become increasingly willing to play a part in affairs beyond its backyard. Its newly prominent place in the international community shouldn't come as a surprise. The only surprise is that a country of China's size and wealth took so long to punch its weight. However, China must be careful to avoid throwing away gains it secured through its soft use of power. China's rise has bred suspicion about its motives (Mearsheimer, 2006; Naim, 2009), and its soft power is less attractive if China is perceived as threatening (Reveron, 2007; Vuving, 2009: 8-12). No matter how many roads, bridges – or indeed, stadiums – that China builds, if it earns a reputation, deserved or not, as

an aggressive bully operating outside of international norms, China's ability to leverage its attractive power could be severely limited. Such a constraint would be self-inflicted and would impede China's peaceful pursuit of its foreign policy goals.

From this analysis we can conclude that the classification system serves several purposes, but its most useful role is the power to demarcate the differences which exist between cases. The ten genotypes presented in Figure 1 delineate the two intersecting policy goals which underlie China's use of stadium diplomacy, and they make explicit those cases which fall beyond the explanatory domain. The typology provides empirical evidence that China's use of stadium diplomacy is guided by its ongoing rivalry with the ROC on Taiwan and its pursuit of natural resources.

Further, this analysis demonstrates that operationalizing a specific form of soft power, the issues-at-stake, and the intended policy outcomes can yield novel and generalizable conclusions; and the methodology is capable of guiding the selection of theoretically meaningful cases for future empirical research. The utility of this methodological approach should be of particular interest to the rivalry and the soft power research programmes. China may be unique in employing soft power to gain an advantage over an interstate rival, but that seems unlikely knowing what we do about rivals' mind-sets (Bremer, 1992). Li's power-used-softly (2009) offers a framework where illiberal values such as toughness and political non-interference can be seen to be equally attractive as western-democratic values, which make a wider range of political behaviour available for investigation. China's continued rise as a global superpower will see its increasingly frequent and sophisticated use of soft power, and social scientists must be equipped to engage with a world in which soft power plays an increasingly important role.

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**Appendix 1. Classification of China's Stadium Diplomacy**

Recipient State	Completion Date	Stadium Name	Location
<b>Type 1: n=46</b>			
Mongolia	1958	Mongolia Central Sports Palace	Ulaanbaatar
Syria	1980	Tishreen Stadium	Damascus
Mauritania	1983	Stade Olympique	Nouakchott
Suriname	1987	Anthony Nesty Sporthal	Paramaribo
Papua New Guinea	1991	Sir John Guise Stadium	Port Moresby
Papua New Guinea	1991	National Indoor Sports Complex	Port Moresby
Mali	2002	Stade du 26 Mars	Bamako
Mali	2002	Stade Modibo Keita	Bamako
Mali	2002	Stade Abdoulaye Nakoro Cissoko	Kayes
Mali	2002	Stade Barema Bocoum	Mopti
Mali	2002	Stade Amari Daou	Segou
Mali	2002	Stade Babemba Traore	Sissako
Congo	2007	Municipal Stadium	Pointe Noire
Equatorial Guinea	2007	Estadio de Bata	Bata
Equatorial Guinea	2007	Estadio de Malabo	Malabo
Congo	2008	Denis Sassou-Nguesso Stadium	Dolisie
Angola	2009	Estadio 11 de Novembro	Luanda
Angola	2009	Estadio Nacional de Ombaka	Benguela
Angola	2009	Estadio Nacional do Chiazi	Cabinda
Angola	2009	Estadio Nacional da Tundavala	Lubango
Cameroon	2009	Yaoundé Multipurpose Sports Complex	Yaoundé
Congo	2009	Marien Ngouabi Stadium	Owando
Laos	2009	South-East Asia Games Stadium	Vientiane
Laos	2009	National Aquatics Stadium	Vientiane
Laos	2009	National Tennis Complex	Vientiane
Laos	2009	Gymnasium Tanggo Buntug	Vientiane
Laos	2010	Gymnasium Pahoman	Vientiane
Mongolia	2010	Buyant Ukhaa Sports Complex	Ulaanbaatar
Papua New Guinea	2010	Prince Charles Oval	Wewak
Equatorial Guinea	2011	Estadio de Bata	Bata
Gabon	2011	Stade de l'Amitie	Libreville
Guinea	2011	Nongo Stadium	Conakry
Laos	2011	National Indoor Shooting Center	Vientiane
Zambia	2011	Levy Mwanawasa Stadium	Ndola
Cameroon	2012	Stade de Limbe	Limbe
Zambia	2012	Olympic Youth Development Centre Pool	Lusaka
Zambia	2013	National Heroes Stadium	Lusaka
Algeria	2014	Stade Abdelkader Fréha	Oran
Algeria	2015	Grand Stade d'Alger	Alger-Baraki
Cameroon	2015	Bafoussam Omnisport Stadium	Bafoussam
Zambia	2015	Independence Stadium	Lusaka
Cameroon	<i>Under Construction</i>	Stade OmniSports	Yaounde
Cameroon	<i>Under Construction</i>	Stade de la Reunification	Douala
Mongolia	<i>Under Construction</i>	New Mongolia Central Sports Palace	Ulaanbaatar
Gabon	<i>Under Construction</i>	Stade de Port-Gentil	Port-Gentil
Gabon	<i>Under Construction</i>	Stade de Oyem	Assok Ngomo
<b>Type 2: n=21</b>			
Tanzania	1969	Uhuru Stadium	Dar es Salaam
Tanzania	1970	Amaan Stadium	Zanzibar
Somalia	1978	Mogadishu Stadium	Mogadishu

Sierra Leone	1979	National Stadium	Freetown
Uganda	1997	Mandela National Stadium (Namboole)	Kampala
Togo	2000	Kegue Stadium	Lome
Sierra Leone	2002	National Stadium	Freetown
Sierra Leone	2006	Bo Stadium	Bo, S. Province
Ghana	2008	Sekondi Takoradi Stadium	Sekondi Takoradi
Ghana	2008	Tamale Stadium	Tamale
Ghana	2008	Accra Sports Stadium	Accra
Ghana	2008	Baba Yara Stadium	Kumasi
Tanzania	2009	Mkapa National Stadium	Dar es Salaam
Mozambique	2010	Estadio Nacional do Zimpeto	Maputo
Tanzania	2010	Amaan Stadium	Zanzibar
Ghana	2011	Ghana Armed Forces Sport Complex	Accra
Tanzania	2011	Uhuru Stadium	Dar es Salaam
Uganda	2011	Mandela National Stadium (Namboole)	Kampala
Sierra Leone	2014	Bo Municipal Stadium	Bo, E. Province
Ghana	2015	Cape Coast Stadium	Cape Coast
Somalia	2015	Mogadishu Stadium	Mogadishu

**Type 3: n=32**

Cambodia	1965	Olympic Stadium	Phnom Penh
Pakistan	1970	Jinnah Stadium	Islamabad
Benin	1982	Stade de l'Amite	Cotonou
Morocco	1983	Moulay Abdallah Stadium	Rabat
Morocco	1983	Salle Omnisports Moulay Abdallah	Rabat
Samoa	1983	Apia Park Stadium	Apia
Rwanda	1986	Amahoro National Stadium	Kigali
Kenya	1987	Moi International Sports Center	Nairobi
Myanmar	1987	Thuwunna Indoor Stadium	Yangon
Mauritius	1991	Stade Anjalay	Belle Vue Maurel
Nepal	1999	Dashrath Stadium	Kathmandu
Seychelles	2002	Piscine Olympique	Victoria
Fiji	2003	National Hockey Centre	Suva
Fiji	2003	Damodar Aquatic Centre	Suva
Fiji	2003	National Netball Centre	Suva
Fiji	2003	Victoria Tennis and Squash Court	Suva
Fiji	2003	Vodafone Arena	Suva
Myanmar	2003	Thuwunna Youth Training Center Stadium (track)	Yangon
Jamaica	2006	Sligoville Mini Stadium Complex	Sligoville
Jamaica	2007	Greenfiled Stadium	Trelawny
Samoa	2007	Samoa National Natatorium	Tuanaimato
Samoa	2007	Apia Park Stadium	Apia
Pakistan	2007	Liaquat Gymnasium	Islamabad
Sri Lanka	2010	Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium	Hambantota
Seychelles	2011	Piscine Olympique	Victoria
Kenya	2012	Moi International Sports Center	Nairobi
Nepal	2012	Dashrath Stadium	Kathmandu
Cape Verde	2014	Estadio Nacional de Cabe Verde	Praia
Samoa	2015	Apia Park Stadium	Apia
Cambodia	<i>Under Construction</i>	Cambodia National Stadium	Phnom Penh
Cambodia	<i>Under Construction</i>	Cambodia National Tennis Complex	Phnom Penh
Cambodia	<i>Under Construction</i>	Prek Phnov Stadium	Phnom Penh

**Type 4: n=2**

Democratic Rep. Congo	1993	Stade de Martyr	Kinshasa
Cote d'Ivoire	<i>Under Construction</i>	Stade National de la Côte d'Ivoire	Abidjan



**Type 5: n=0****Type 6: n=10**

Zimbabwe	1987	Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium	Harare
Barbados	1992	Sir Garfield Sobers Gymnasium	Willey
Djibouti	1993	Stade du Ville	Djibouti City
Micronesia	2002	FSM-China Friendship Sport Center	Pohnpei
Djibouti	2004	Omnisport Cener	Dikhil
Barbados	2005	Sir Garfield Sobers Gymnasium	Willey
Antigua & Barbuda	2007	Sir Vivian Richards Stadium	North Sound
Zimbabwe	2010	Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium	Harare
Vanuatu	<i>Under Construction</i>	Korman Stadium	Port Vila
Vanuatu	<i>Under Construction</i>	Vanuatu Multi-Sport Complex	Port Vila

**Type 7: n=5**

Chad	1972	Stade Nacional	N'Djaména
Liberia	1986	Doe Sports Complex	Paynesville
Niger	1989	Stade General Seyni Kountche	Niamey
Niger	1999	Stade General Seyni Kountche	Niamey
Liberia	2007	Doe Sports Complex	Paynesville

**Type 8: n=2**

Central African Republic	2006	Barthelemy Boganda Sports Complex	Bangui
Malawi	2015	Civo Stadium	Lilongwe

**Type 9: n=21**

Gambia	1984	Gambia Independence Stadium	Bakau
Senegal	1985	Leopold Senghor Stadium	Dakar
Guinea Bissau	1989	Estadio 24 de Setembro	Bissau
Dominica	2007	Windsor Park	Roseau
Grenada	2007	Queen's Park	River Road
Cook Islands	2009	Telecom Sports Arena	Avarua
Senegal	2009	Stade Alassane Djigo	Pikine
Senegal	2009	Stade Ely Manel Fall	Diourbel
Costa Rica	2011	Estadio Nacional de Costa Rica	San Juan
Bahamas	2012	Thomas Robinson Stadium	Nassau
Senegal	2012	Stade Kamine Gueye	Kaolack
Guinea Bissau	2013	Estadio 24 de Setembro	Bissau
Senegal	2013	Caroline Faye Stadium	Mbour
Senegal	2013	Stade Massene Sene	Fatick
Senegal	2013	Stade Al Boury Ndiaye	Louga
Senegal	2013	Stade de Kolda	Kolda
Senegal	2013	Stade de Tamba	Tambacounda
Senegal	2014	Stade Regional de Matam	Matam
Senegal	2014	Stade Mawade Wade de Medina	Saint Louis
Grenada	2015	Kirani James Stadium	River Road
Senegal	2015	Stade Aline Sitoe Diatta	Ziguinchor

**Type 10: n=3**

Burkina Faso	1984	Stade du 4 Aout	Ouagadougou
St. Lucia	2002	George Odium Stadium	Vieux Fort
Kiribati	2007	Betio Sports Complex	Tarawa

\*(Data collection cut-off: 1 May 2016)

Source: Author's own data collection