

# China's Public Diplomacy in Taiwan

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**Abstract**— The purpose of this research is to explain China's peaceful development using public diplomacy towards Taiwan together with China's focus on enhancing its image in the world through Chinese soft resources. Specifically, this research will identify the influence of Chinese public diplomacy in Taiwan to promote a positive image and improve communication, trade, and exchange. The research method uses qualitative methods to describe Chinese public diplomacy towards Taiwan. Data supporting this research obtained using literature studies in scientific journals, data publications, official sites, and other sites. The results showed that to win the hearts and minds of the people of Taiwan, China's public diplomacy approach by strengthening economic interaction in cross-strait relations with the agreement of the 2010 Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), which became an important milestone in cross-strait economic development that could develop into cross-strait free trade agreements. Improved communication between the Chinese government and Taiwan informally and with Taiwanese people results in two-way communication to increase interaction.

**Keyword**—China, Taiwan, Public Diplomacy

## I. INTRODUCTION

Along with its increasing influence, China is trying to improve its image globally, which is therefore increasingly investing in its public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is the efforts of international actors to manage the international environment through involvement and communication with foreign publics, has become an important part of overall Chinese diplomacy in recent years [1]. The use of China public diplomacy as tools for communicating with Taiwan is a peaceful initiative from China along with a policy shift towards Taiwan from the use of military force and propaganda to a more peaceful and patient approach based on economic and cultural exchange.

China, which adheres to the principle of "One China" based on the "1992 Consensus" which has the interpretation that "in this world China is represented by the People's Republic of China and Taiwan including in the territory of the People's Republic of China, and the center of Chinese government is in Beijing". Through the principle of "One China", China confirms that the status of Taiwan is part of China and granted special autonomy status such as Hong Kong and Macau [2]. In the Chinese conception of the principle of "One China" in the Taiwan problem from the beginning, it identified as a domestic problem in China,

where reunification with Taiwan is important for national unity and territorial integrity of China [3]. China's desire to reunify with Taiwan done by all means, including by using military force. This happened in 1995-1996, where Taiwan had a desire for independence, China responded by conducting military exercises and launching missile tests as a form of warning against Taiwan election.

The use of economic instruments used to show the positive value of China through trade, as well as promoting reunification in the end. With the signing of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) between China and Taiwan in 2010, it is an important first step towards cross-strait economic development [4]. Economically, China and Taiwan are interdependent. This marked by Taiwanese entrepreneurs starting to look for new business opportunities by utilizing China's open-door policy. They are interested in cheap labor costs and a favorable investment environment [5].

Several studies reviewed in this study, which intended to strengthen the literature review in related research that has similarities and differences. Hartig [6] described that one of the objectives of Chinese public diplomacy is to have an impact on the image of China nationally, where the current image of China is very important for the overall diplomacy of China in its influence in the international world. Keng and Schubert [7], explicated that the role of Taiwanese business people in China in China's efforts to reunify with Taiwan was marked by a change in interaction between Taiwanese entrepreneurs and the Chinese Government which made this Taiwanese entrepreneur an asset specifically for the Chinese government. Chun-yi and Ming-xi [8] defined that the two-way economic cooperation undertaken by China and Taiwan marked by the Taiwanese Government opened the door for Chinese entrepreneurs to invest in Taiwan.

Beckershoff [9] explained about the KMT-CCP Forum through neo-Gramscian theory highlighting the Forum's strategies, mechanisms, practices and instruments for obtaining approval for the restoration of cross-Strait relations. Rawnsley [10] compares the soft power capital and public diplomacy strategies of Taiwan and the People's Republic of China.

The difference in this study is the use of a public diplomacy approach as a tool in initiating communication between government-to-people or people-to-people through its economy between China and Taiwan. The purpose of this

study was to determine the use of Chinese public diplomacy towards Taiwan. In this study using qualitative methods. The hope, this method is useful because it can explain the Chinese public diplomacy towards Taiwan. Through this research aims to answer the main question about how China builds peaceful relations with Taiwan through public diplomacy.

## II. METHOD

The research conducted is using qualitative methods conducted to define Chinese public diplomacy towards Taiwan. Data supporting this research obtained using literature studies in scientific journals, data publications, official sites and other sites that contain public diplomacy theory and data on Chinese public diplomacy towards Taiwan. The discussion in this research carried out by analyzing relationship building through trade and investment, strategic communication through people exchange, China's influence on Taiwan's media.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Promoting a positive image of one's country is not new, but the conditions for projecting soft power have changed dramatically in recent years. In public diplomacy, the concept of soft power is one of the characteristics of new public diplomacy [11]. New public diplomacy talks about the beginnings of actor-to-people communication and comes to a new emphasis on people-to-people, with international actors playing an important role as facilitators. The old emphasis on message is top-down and the main task of new public diplomacy is characterized as "relationship building" [1].

Public diplomacy "relates to the influence of public attitudes on the formation and implementation of foreign policy. This includes the dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the formation of public opinion in other countries; group interactions and personal interests in one country with another; reporting foreign affairs and their impact on policies; communication between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and intercultural communication processes. Central to public diplomacy is the flow of information and transnational ideas [12].

In a report for the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (NCCPC) in 2012, Hu further stated "we will promote public diplomacy and solid inter-people exchange, and protect our rights and interests abroad". Represented the first time the term public diplomacy appeared in the NCCPC report, which meant that the importance of public diplomacy increased.

In 2014, in his speech at the 60th anniversary of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Xi Jinping emphasized the promotion of public diplomacy. Xi uses the story of a treasure voyage (Zheng He Xia Xiyang) from the Ming dynasty to prove that China is a peace-loving country: "Zheng He leads the most powerful fleet in the world on seven naval expeditions to the Pacific and the western Indian Ocean, visiting more from 30 countries and territories, do not occupy an inch of land, but only sow the seeds of peace and friendship," Xi said. Xi's speech aims to spread the idea that China is not a threat and to promote the idea that public diplomacy can help people around the world get to know China [13].

Public diplomacy is part of soft power, where Joseph Nye identifies soft power resources, namely culture, political values (which also include one's values), and foreign policy [11]. China has promoted Chinese culture throughout the world through language, food or tourist attractions in China. The Chinese government believes that a country without the achievements and influence of modern culture will not be respected, no matter how strong the economy. China's soft power on culture focuses on three aspects, the idea that Chinese culture needs to be protected against invasion of foreign cultures, especially the West; the state's inability to utilize culture; and questions about which aspects of culture are promoted.

In developing Chinese public diplomacy towards Taiwan, China seeks to establish daily communication with the people of Taiwan, especially entrepreneurs who want to invest or trade in China. With great economic growth, it has provided opportunities for business people in Taiwan, supported by a promising investment environment and low labor costs that have attracted the attention of Taiwanese entrepreneurs [14]. Taiwanese entrepreneurs (*Taishang*) carrying out cross-strait migration with economic motivation by seeing new opportunities in the Chinese market have made China increasingly important for Taiwanese entrepreneurs to expand their business activities in China [15].

Relations between Taiwan and China marked by a special imbalance between political and economic involvement. Economically, the two sides have become increasingly interdependent since the late 1980s, when Taiwanese entrepreneurs began looking for business opportunities on the other side of the Straits in large numbers, often attracted by low labor costs and a sustainable investment environment. It estimated that today, more than one million Taiwanese have taken up permanent residence in China. China's relations with Taiwan increasingly integrated by looking at the dynamics of economic cooperation, migration, social integration, cultural integration and political dialogue throughout the Taiwan Strait, and how this phenomenon changes the quality of relations between people and political elites on both sides. Changes in the interaction between the people and political elites of China and Taiwan can be seen from the factors that trigger political integration (1) economic integration, (2) international security considerations, (3) the existence of international abundance, and (4) institutional arrangements [16].

Economic cooperation between Taiwan and China began in the 1980s when the Chiang Ching-Kuo government in Taiwan lifted martial law and relaxed restrictions on investors to start businesses in China. Meanwhile, Taiwanese companies enjoy high growth rates resulting from government-led industrialization projects. Some began to move production across the Strait in the process of industrial restructuring, taking advantage of the location of third parties, especially Hong Kong. During the reign of Chen Shui-bian opened limited trade, transportation, and postal relations (Three Small Links). Through the opening of limited trade, exports to China increased nearly 20 times in the first 10 years of the 21st century to around US \$ 80 billion per year. However, this growth declined in 2008 and 2009 due to Taiwan's elections, but increased again in 2010

when the two sides negotiated and ratified the ECFA trade pact. Since then, cross-strait trade has entered a new pattern: for one, there has been sustained growth in both imports and exports but at a more stable rate and, secondly, the parallel trend represents a stable annual trade surplus of around US \$ 40 billion for Taiwan [17].

In trade, open bilateral trade and subsequent political integration will bring even greater benefits and other economic benefits. One of the benefits of two-way trade interactions between China and Taiwan reached \$ 130 billion in 2014 or about 40% of Taiwan's total exports to China [18]. However, in the investment sector, there is an imbalance, where from 1991 to 2015, Taiwan's foreign investment to China amounted to USD 150 billion and vice versa China to Taiwan amounted to USD 1.5 billion from 2009 to 2016. This shows that Taiwan's trade dependence on China has increased from 4.2% in 1990 to 26% in 2014[19].

The main interest of Taiwanese companies investing in China is the existence of low-cost labor, which supports the potential market of China. This is considered good for the creation of incentives for export and import relations between China and Taiwan. China as the biggest trading partner for Taiwanese businessmen and investors has really benefited from the Chinese market, where Taiwan's investment in China reached its highest point in 2014 with a total of US \$ 144 billion. The investment is the biggest outgoing investment made by Taiwan to other countries [8].

Taiwanese investors even have companies in China and build their own factories in China. The production structure upgraded from simple assembly to heavier and capital intensive or high-tech production. In other words, Taiwan has dared to invest in the heavy manufactures and high-tech industries in China, where the geographical spread of Taiwanese investment in China, which was initially, based in Fujian and Guangdong provinces, to Shanghai and spread to almost all regions of China [20]. This can be an indication that China has built good mutual trust with Taiwanese entrepreneurs.

There was an increase in exports from Taiwan to China in 2011 because one of the benefits of the ECFA was the removal of trade barriers between the two countries. Given this framework of trade cooperation, the main benefit is the two-way trade flow between China and Taiwan, which reached \$ 130 billion in 2014, representing 22% of Taiwan's total foreign trade. Taiwan's exports to China have grown dramatically since 1990, at 26% (\$ 82 billion) of Taiwan's total exports in 2014. Likewise, China is the only country where imports have consistently increased every year from 1996 onwards. In 2006, China became Taiwan's second most important source of imports after Japan, and since 2014 China has been the main source of Taiwan's imports, reaching \$ 48 billion or 18% overall. Bilateral trade between China and Taiwan reached \$ 139 billion during 2017. China and Taiwan also agreed to allow financial service providers, insurance companies and other banks to open services in both regions [21].

According to Chen explained that the increasing economic interaction of cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan had significant implications for the emergence of Taiwan's dependence on China [20]. Along with the ECFA,

which has increasingly encouraged the intensity of Chinese economic interaction with Taiwan, according to money, with the high investment of Taiwan in China accompanied by the high number of Taiwan's exports to China, Taiwan's economy is at risk of Chinese market influence. Like dominating consumer-to-consumer (C2C) corporations originating from China in Taiwan, one of them is Taobao, which is a subsidiary of Alibaba Group, currently the largest e-commerce platform in China. However, after his chairman Ma Yun announced his resignation, his leadership had been handed over to the CCP. The Chinese government has provided subsidies for cross-border Chinese e-commerce providers to provide cheap goods in large quantities and make Taiwan a major market. Taobao controls the e-commerce market in Taiwan by 86% [22].

With trade openness related to the state and trade, leading the country to globalization and free trade will lead to separatism where small countries tend to remain small in the world of free multilateral trade to maximize the flexibility of their influence in the negotiation process. In the case of China and Taiwan, assess the effects of closer bilateral trade and the prospect of political integration through a cultural approach. Chao believes that apart from economic collaboration, the political culture associated with developing Taiwanese identification encourages differences between the two populations. Differences in identity and mindset will not make political integration solutions acceptable to Taiwanese citizens.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

China sees itself as a good person whose sole purpose is to convince the world of its friendly intentions. Along with the increasing interaction between the Chinese government and Taiwan, the reciprocal communication made by the Chinese government both with the Taiwanese government informally or with the people of Taiwan. In this research, the researcher sees that the peaceful application of public diplomacy by the Chinese government to Taiwan society, the proximity of China to the people of Taiwan provides easy access for Taiwanese entrepreneurs who want to invest and trade.

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