How Do South Korean People View the US and Chinese National Influence?: Is Soft Power Zero-Sum?

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Abstract

This paper addresses the zero-sum of soft power against the backdrop of the rise of China and the relative “decline” of America. It attempts to find out that whether the “decline” of America’s soft power is caused by the rise of China’s soft power, and whether China’s rise could guarantee with certainty the growth of soft power. In light of the particularity of South Korea, that is, its economy relies on China and its security relies on the US, this paper chooses South Korea as the entry point for the study. Based on the Pew data from a South Korean opinion poll, this paper conducts bivariate correlation and binary logistic regression respectively, to explore the existence of zero-sum “competitions” between China’s and America’s soft power.

Keywords: soft power, zero-sum, China and America, South Korea, opinion poll, bivariate correlation and binary logistic regression

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Introduction

The importance of soft power, as opposed to other sources of power, in international politics is increasing in parallel with the rapid globalization of the world economy and the revolution in the field of information technology. Against the background of globalization and digitalization, hard power, such as military and economic power, is not sufficient for projecting national power abroad. Instead, “soft” sources of power, including culture, political ideology, and diplomacy, are increasingly playing essential roles in building national images and promoting normative power (Nye & Wang, 2009; Breslin, 2011).

As the most important emerging new power with galloping economic and military growth, China usually notices the importance of soft power and regards soft power as a major source of power, which could modify the existing international order and alleviate the international fear of and discontent with China. Against this backdrop, therefore, China has put enormous efforts into soft power construction. For example, in the past dozen years, China is escalating overseas investment, actively engaging in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian aid, expanding exchange programs in academic, language and cultural aspects, frequently hosting high-level meetings, and increasingly growing more active in international multilateral organizations (Zheng, 2009). All of these actions are increasing China’s soft power in the world to some extent. In East Asia, with echoes of China’s political and economic influence, China’s soft power has already become a reality.

On the other hand, after around 60 years of global leadership, the US has encountered growing anti-Americanism since the Iraq War (Keohane & Katzenstein, 2006). A number of American scholars note the decline of America’s soft power. For example, Julia Sweig (2006), a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, states that since 2000, the world holds declining views about the US. Sweig is not the only one; Joseph Nye (2004a), the creator of “soft power,” also stresses the decline of America’s soft power. Additionally, Fred Reed (2007), an American author, claims the US is the most hated
country in the world, although America was once widely admired. After the financial crisis in 2008, many analyses and debates showed America’s decline (Kong & Mei, 2012). Although the US retains its military and economic influence in East Asia, anti-US sentiment is rising even in America’s allies, such as South Korea (ROK). Some South Koreans even regard China as an alternative to the US, especially after two Korean middle school girls were hit by an American armored vehicle (Lee, 2008).

Given China’s enormous efforts to increase its in soft power, and the decline of America’s soft power, it seems like China not only tries to catch-up and compete with the US in economic and military fields, but also occupies the soft power vacuum left since America “lost” its attractiveness. Therefore, Nye (2005) talks about “the rise of China’s soft power—at America’s expense.” However, disputes about whether China’s rise weakens America’s global influence continue in academia. Therefore, the research questions are: Is soft power zero-sum? Is there a correlation between the rise of China’s soft power and the decline of America’s? If there a correlation exists, how strong is it? How should the potential correlation be interpreted via theoretical and empirical approaches? Based on the results of South Korean people’s opinions about China and the US, this paper analyzes above questions.

This paper mainly consists of three parts. First, I will review existing academic and empirical literature about the topic and try to point out their limitations. Second, I will introduce the research design of this paper. In this part, I will justify variables, research models, and introduce my hypotheses. Then, I will conduct bivariate correlation and binary logistic regression model (BLM) on various independent variables and dependent variables, and interpret and discuss the results. On this basis, I will make conclusions and judgments about whether soft power is zero-sum.

**Literature Review**

In order to analyze the research question, it is necessary to understand soft power. Nye defines (2004b) soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather
than coercion or payments.” Moreover, soft power rests on three sources: culture, political ideology, and diplomacy (Nye & Wang 2009). Additionally, in behavioral terms, soft power is attractive power, and in terms of resources, soft power resources are the assets that produce such attraction (Nye & Wang, 2009). Thus, different sources could produce different types of soft power, such as cultural soft power and economic soft power. As a concept, soft power cannot be touched but could be truly perceived. According to Nye (2004b), it is appropriate to assess soft power by checking public opinion, which is an indicator of soft power. Concretely speaking, a more favorable public opinion signifies stronger soft power, and a more unfavorable public opinion means weaker soft power. This part will briefly review existing literature about the research question.

**Academic Arguments**

In the early twenty-first century, the rise of China has become one of the topics that academia is most concerned with. In addition to the rise of China’s hard power, such as economic and military power, the rise of China’s soft power is also worthy of attention, especially in light of China’s emergent multi-national enterprises, internationally acclaimed cinema, Confucius Institutes, Beijing Consensus, ASEAN membership and hugely successful hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games, which might be interpreted as efforts to expand Chinese international soft power. Numerous American scholars are keenly aware of the rise of China’s soft power and most of them harbor mixed feelings about the rise, which is embodied in their works. In addition to Ney’s claims, mentioned above, another example is Joshua Kurlantzik, an American scholar, who claims China started its charm offensive in the early 2000s. Moreover, Kurlantzik notices America’s good images in numerous countries, such as Thailand, the Philippines, Zambia, and Argentina, began to suffer when China entered. He suggests that the US must focus on rebuilding its soft power where China’s soft

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2 Some resources can generate both hard and soft power. For instance, a strong economy can produce important carrots for paying others, as well as a model of success that attracts others (Nye & Wang, 2009).
power possibly threatens America’s interests (Kurlantzik, 2006). Additionally, scholars of the US Naval War College, Andrew Erickson and Lyle Goldstein (2006) argue that, based on the assessment of the rise of China’s hard and soft power, America cannot rule out the possibility of China’s challenge to American hegemony. From a zero-sum perspective, these works hold a negative rather than positive attitude towards the rise of China’s soft power.

However, there is also a handful of scholars with different views. Wang Yiwei (2008, p.271), a Chinese scholar, argues that “it is naïve to say the rise of China’s soft power is at the expense of the decline of American soft power;” on the contrary, both countries share similar images in driving and benefiting from globalization. Moreover, a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (2009) states that the aim of China’s soft power projection is to promote its own national interests and will not pose a direct challenge to America. Through emphasizing the reconcilable national interests, these works hold non-negative attitudes towards the growth of China’s soft power.

**Empirical Analyses**

When scholars discuss soft power, they generally rely on multinational public opinion polls to record and calculate it. Opinion polls provide a window to understand mainstream attitudes and sentiments. Numerous professional polling organizations conduct multinational opinion polls about America, while given the increasing influence of China, several questions in most opinion polls would mention China and compare China with America in some areas. For example, compared to BBC World Service Poll 2005, the views about China’s economic power in the BBC poll of 2011 (2011) remained positive on balance, and negative views about China’s growing economic power rose in numerous countries, such as France, Germany, and Italy. In the 2011 poll, most respondents thought China will overtake the US in the economic field in their countries within the next decade and most of them harbor negative attitudes towards China’s growing military power.

In addition, based on numerous data from multinational opinion polls, the CSIS (2016) has analyzed and compared numerous countries’ opinions about China and America
respectively. For instance, many East Asian countries express significant apprehension towards China and are unwilling to face undesirable competition between China and America. In Africa, although opinions about China from 2009 either are improving or remain relatively constant, America’s rating is declining but is still more popular than China in these countries. Similar to Africa, although China increased its investments in Latin America, America still has higher favorability in the region (57% vs. 16.5%).

My empirical analyses utilize public opinion data about China and America respectively. In general, respondents hold non-negative attitudes towards China’s economic growth, while regarding China’s growing military power as a threat. In contrast, the US performs better than China in opinion polls, although China has made some progress in recent years.

**Limitations of Existing Literature**

These two kinds of literature dissect the soft power “competition” between China and America. However, to some extent, both research approaches have defects. The academic approach normally introduces and lists a host of “evidence” to support arguments, such as the increasing number of Confucius Institutes, more international students in China, and the growing of China’s overseas investments. This approach demonstrates how China improves its global image via diplomacy, economy, and culture, and notices that the rise of China’s soft power is almost simultaneous with America’s relative decline. However, these scholars cannot judge whether America’s decline can be attributed to China’s rising.

In contrast, empirical analyses utilize a quantitative approach. For instance, they regularly conduct opinion polls and compare recent polls with previous data, and conclude and describe changes over a period of time. However, polling organizations do not statistically analyze the data, even though they utilize advanced statistical tools to control for socioeconomic and demographic variables when they collected data. Therefore, it is hard to define the influence of other variables. Without considering other relevant
variables, it is possible to find a spurious correlation. Given these existing limitations, this paper, therefore, will sort and analyze data statistically.

**Research Design**

**Dataset Justification**

This paper utilizes the Pew Global Attitudes Project Spring 2014 data to conduct research. As mentioned earlier, a public opinion poll could measure soft power. Our analysis utilizes a subset of the dataset, that is, South Korean opinions about China and America in relevant fields. The 2014 Pew Project was conducted from March 17 to June 5, 2014. The survey used a random sample survey as its sampling method and follows stringent procedures as to how it was carried out. There are 1,009 South Korean respondents in the survey with a 3.2% margin of error (Pew, 2014).

There are several reasons for choosing South Korea to analyze the research question. First, South Korea relies on America’s security and on China’s economy, due to the ROK-US alliance and the ROK-China strategic cooperative partnership (Han, 2012). Therefore, balancing the relations with America and China is vital for South Korea. Nevertheless, the cooperation of ROK-US and ROK-China is not stable. For example, in South Korea during Roh Moo-Hyun’s administration, anti-US sentiment was running high. By contrast, China was proposed as South Korea’s best diplomatic and commercial partner (Lee, 2008). However, with the inauguration of Lee Myung-bak, South Korea strengthened and considered the ROK-US alliance as a priority and attenuated the ROK-China relations (Han, 2012). Meanwhile, disputes between China and South Korea weaken mutual trust, such as the Cheonan’s sinking in 2010 and China-North Korea relationship (Zhan, 2011). Thus, it is meaningful to take South Korea’s data to analyze the Sino-US soft power “competition.”
Dependent and Independent Variables and Hypotheses

Dependent and independent variables are deduced from several questions in the Pew dataset. These questions relate to public opinion about China and America in various fields:

1. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the US?
2. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of China?
3. Overall, do you think that China’s growing economy is a good thing or a bad thing for our country?
4. How concerned are you, if at all, that territorial disputes between China and neighboring countries could lead to a military conflict? Very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?
5. Which comes closest to your view? China will eventually replace the US as the world’s leading superpower; China has already replaced the US; or China will never replace the US.

The first two questions could directly demonstrate South Korean opinions about America and China. Moreover, a strong economic power might generate economically attractive power; therefore, the third question can also measure soft power. Additionally, the legitimacy and moral authority of foreign policies are one resource of soft power (Nye & Wang, 2009). Therefore, the last two questions could assess the recognition of China’s military policies and compare the Sino-American leadership.

The paper utilizes people’s opinions about China and America. Moreover, given the research question of “zero-sum,” although merging variables might lose some information, a total awareness variable, such as “favorable” and “unfavorable,” could better demonstrate and test the existence of “zero-sum” of soft power. Therefore, it is better to merge categorical variables to create a new variable (IBM n.d.) Additionally, because the paper
will utilize binary logistic regression, it is better to transform dependent variables into binary variable. Therefore, this paper transforms these items into binary variables. For example, “very favorable” and “somewhat favorable” are recorded as “favorable.” Thus, the dependent variable is people's opinions about the US. In addition, there are four key independent variables: people's opinions about China; people's opinions about China's economic rise; people's opinions about China's military conflict; and will China replace the US.3

Based on the above-mentioned questions and variables, we generated four hypotheses and one null-hypothesis:

\[ H_1, \text{ People who are more pro-China are more likely to be anti-American;} \]

\[ H_2, \text{ People who think China's economic rise is a good thing are more likely to be anti-American;} \]

\[ H_3, \text{ People who are concerned about a potential war between China and neighboring countries are more likely to be pro-American;} \]

\[ H_4, \text{ People who think China can replace the US as the world's leading superpower are more likely to be anti-American.} \]

\[ H_0, \text{ There is no correlation between people's opinion about China and the US.} \]

**Control Variables**

Control variables refer to “variables whose effects on an outcome variable are statistically adjusted in order to estimate independent effects of an explanatory variable” (Mehta, 2001). The control variables are also independent variables, however, the control variables are not part of the research purposes. Therefore, it is necessary to add control variables in the research model, in order to avoid errors and spurious correlations. Five

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3 See coding in Appendix.
controls will be used in the research project: gender, age, education, income, and party affiliation.

**Gender.** Some research on public opinion supports gender differences. For example, Donald Regan, an American former chief of staff to Ronald Reagan, claims that women are more interested in shopping than in foreign affairs (Holsti, 1996). His opinion is similar to Gabriel Almond’s arguments (1950 cited in Holsti, 1996, p.166) that “more women than men seem to be ignorant of or apathetic to foreign policy issues.” Additionally, other research has shown that gender differences could lead to different attitudes towards foreign policies (Togeby, 1994). In contrast, some scholars argue that gender gap has weak and non-significant relations with foreign policy attitudes (Fite, Genest, & Wilcox, 1990). Therefore, no final consensus has been reached on the influence of gender. This paper uses gender as a control variable.

**Age.** Age plays a crucial role in the formation and development of political beliefs. Drew DeSilver (2014), a senior writer at Pew Research Center, has quoted a notion that “not to be a Republican at 20 is proof of want of heart; to be one at 30 is proof of want of head” to back the relations between age and political ideology. Moreover, terms such as “Munich generation” and “Vietnam generation” also could demonstrate the effects of generation on foreign policy. More specifically, people who have experienced the Munich Agreement and the failure of appeasement policy were more likely to support America’s containment in the Cold War; and people who have experienced the Vietnam War prefer isolationism (Holsti & Rosenau, 1984 cited in Wittkopf, 1990). Thus, given the importance of generations, this paper uses each respondent’s age data.

**Education.** Education influences attitudes towards foreign policy. For instance, with increasing levels of education, people are more inclined to support internationalism (Holsti, 1996). This paper retains each respondent’s education to conduct the research.

**Income.** In addition to education, income is also important in influencing people’s opinions towards international politics. People who have higher incomes and more
education are typically better informed about international affairs (Wittkopf, Jones, & Kegley, 2005). The dataset provides different income levels that are used in the research.

**Party Affiliation.** Party affiliation is a psychological identification with major political parties, which is not the same thing as party registration (Pew, 2012). There exist strong correlations between party identification and attitudes towards American standing (Baum & Nau, 2012). Moreover, other researchers have also found that group membership has an impact on individuals’ attitudes towards foreign policy (Belknap & Campbell, 1951-1952). The dataset lists several South Korean political parties; these political parties could be classified into the right-wing party and the left-wing party.

**Research Model and Results**

As the key dependent variables are binary, we must choose between linear regression models (LRM) or the more advanced logit models for binary responses. After taking into consideration the two main disadvantages of the LRM: that the fitted probability can be both less than zero and greater than one; and the partial effect of any explanatory variables is constant (Wang & Guo, 2001), this paper uses bivariate correlations and the BLM rather than the LRM.
Results and Interpretations

Table 1: Results of bivariate correlation and binary logistic regression on South Korean public opinion about the US and China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory Variables</th>
<th>Regression coefficient B</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
<th>Pearson’s Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opinion about China</td>
<td>1.209*** (.212)</td>
<td>3.351</td>
<td>.165***</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion about China’s economic rise</td>
<td>-.191 (.203)</td>
<td>.826</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion about China’s military conflict</td>
<td>-.907*** (.233)</td>
<td>.404</td>
<td>-.105***</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will China replace the US</td>
<td>.919*** (.918)</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>-.137***</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.003 (.191)</td>
<td>1.003</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.024*** (.007)</td>
<td>.976</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.067 (.065)</td>
<td>.935</td>
<td>-.037</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party affiliation</td>
<td>-1.657*** (.264)</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>-.223***</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Low (omitted)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-Low</td>
<td>.235 (.271)</td>
<td>1.264</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-High</td>
<td>-.068 (.242)</td>
<td>.934</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>.499 (.317)</td>
<td>1.647</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Standard errors appear in parentheses; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

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4 Among 1,009 respondents, 908 respondents gave their explicit answer to all aforementioned five questions in Pew dataset. In order to scientifically testify aforementioned hypotheses, I omitted those respondents who expressed ‘Don’t Know’ to any one of these questions.
The table shows the results of bivariate correlation analyses and binary logistic regression on South Korean opinions about China and America in various fields.

Three parameters in the table are vital for interpretation: $P$-values, Pearson's correlation coefficient (Pearson's $r$), and regression coefficient $B$. $P$-values are “powerful indicators of whether two variables are related,” the lower the $p$-values, the greater confidence we have that there exists a systematic relationship between two variables (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013, p.148).

Pearson’s $r$ measures the linear association between two continuous variables, therefore, the Pearson’s $r$ makes little sense in this case, but it still matters to relationships to some extent (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013). For example, there are four explanatory variables have statistically significant correlations with people’s opinions about America. However, correlation does not mean causation, and correlation cannot distinguish independent and dependent variables (Wang, 2007; Agresti & Finlay, 2008). Therefore, in order to explore possible causality, the results of the BLM are more important.

Regression coefficient $B$ presents the influence of independent variables to dependent variables (Wang, 2007). In Table 1, three key explanatory variables have statistically significant relationships with the dependent variable. Therefore, the null-hypothesis can be rejected.

Compared with other key independent variables, “opinion about China” has the largest regression coefficient $B$ (1.209). This variable is the most effective key independent variable, and has a positive correlation with “opinion about the US,” which means people who are more pro-China, are more likely to be pro-American. Therefore, $H_1$ can be rejected.

Moreover, in the case of “opinion about China’s economic rise” and “opinion about the US,” no relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, $H_2$ should be rejected.

Furthermore, “opinion about China’s military conflict” has a statistically significant relationship with “opinion about the US.” This independent variable has a negative
correlation with “opinion about the US,” which means people who are more concerned about potential war between China and neighboring countries, are more likely to be pro-American. Therefore, $H_3$ is supported by statistical results.

Finally, “will China replace the US” is also negatively correlated with the dependent variable, which supports $H_4$. This finding suggests that people, who think China can replace America as the leading superpower, are more likely to be anti-American.

While holding all other variables constant in the model, for every one unit increase of people’s favorability about China and people’s concerns about China’s military conflict, people’s favorability about America would be expected to increase by a factor of 1.209 and 0.907 respectively, and with a one unit increase of people’s faith that China will replace America, people’s favorability about America would be expected to decrease by a factor of 0.919. So far, $H_1$, $H_2$ and the null-hypothesis are refuted, and $H_3$ and $H_4$ are supported by statistical results.

Among control variables, only “age” and “party affiliation” have statistically significant relationships with “opinion about the US,” and these two control variables have negative correlation with the dependent variable.

**Discussion**

Based on the results, respondents who give China positive evaluations, are more likely to be pro-American, this supports Wang’s arguments. China and America share similar images in the world, both are driving forces and beneficiaries of globalization. In addition to Wang’s arguments, the relevant empirical evidence is traceable in reality. Several years ago, the notions such as “G2” and “Chimerica” indicate that China and America have stepped into a co-existence era, and has the potential to develop into Sino-American joint leadership at the global level (Ferguson, 2007; Pardo, 2014). Moreover, Chinese President Xi Jinping formally promoted the establishment of “a new type of Great Power relations”
with America in 2013 (People’s Daily, 2013). Additionally, both countries are vast in territory, play significant roles in the international arena, and are beneficiaries of the current international order, although there exist differences and contradictions between two countries. However, the Sino-American common images are more significant than differences. Therefore, considering China and America in an overall view, then soft power is nonzero-sum.

South Korean respondents who are more concerned about China’s potential military conflicts, are more pro-American. Several East Asian countries are concerned about China’s military power and the territorial disputes with China. For example, in 2014, one South Korean survey found that 66.4% respondents regarded China as a significant military threat and they also worried about Sino-North Korean cooperation (CSIS, 2016). Moreover, realists such as John Mearsheimer (2009; 2006) claim that China has a high probability of being involved in a great power conflict to seeking regional domination. Given that South Korea’s security depends on America, we can conclude that if Korean people are concerned about security, they would be more pro-American. In this perspective, soft power is zero-sum.

After the Cheonan issue, more and more South Korean people think China has a bias towards North Korea, and state that if China replaces America’s influence in the region, China would demand that United States Forces Korea (USFK) withdraw from the Korean peninsula. Thus, South Korean scholars suggest the ROK should maintain the ROK-US alliance (Zhan, 2011). Pro-American respondents think and hope China cannot replace America as the leading power. In this sense, soft power is also zero-sum.

Even more different is the data on the “opinion about China’s economic rise.” Theoretically, South Korea economically relies on China, and therefore, China should have more economic soft power. However, in this case, respondents’ opinions about China’s economic rise have no statistically significant relationship with America’s favorability, which means China’s economic soft power does not have a significant correlation with
America’s soft power. The result reflects the fact that factors other than the “opinion about China’s economic rise” might have a higher significance in embodying China’s economic soft power, or that economic power cannot generate economic soft power with certainty.

Although control variables are not key explanatory variables, these variables still could affect the results. Overall, among the control variables, “party affiliation” is the strongest indicator of respondents’ opinions about America. The effect of America’s soft power among people who support left-wing parties is weaker. South Korean political parties could be divided into left- and right-wing parties. Left-wing parties are anti-American, while right-wing parties are pro-American. The former regards America as the obstruction in the peninsula reunification process; thus, when they take power, left-wing parties are estranged from America. By contrast, right-wing parties take pro-American foreign policies. Between 1949 and 1998, the ruling party was right wing, and they relied on America during the Cold War. Therefore, a pro-American stance is compulsory for them (Zhao & Yang, 2014). The result further confirms the strong correlations between party affiliation and attitudes towards foreign policies, and proves the stances of different South Korean parties.

Additionally, in the bivariate correlation, “age” is not significantly correlated with America’s soft power, while in the BLM, the correlation become significant, which might be due to other explanatory variables’ influence in the model. Moreover, age is also a strong indicator of America’s soft power, although the coefficient B is not high. Younger people might hold more favorable opinions about America. Based on the result, America’s soft power might positively influence South Korean young people. However, the low coefficient demonstrates Korean people’s mixed feelings about America. As mentioned above, a right wing party ruled the ROK for a long duration, and therefore, it would be older generations that are more likely to support the right wing party and be pro-American. Thus, I check the bivariate correlation treatment and find that “age” has significant negative correlations with “party affiliation,” the Pearson’s r is -0.281 at 0.01 significance level. The result reflects that young people are more likely to support left wing parties. Combined with the
above results, younger Koreans actually hold an unfavorable opinion about America. The reason age has negative correlations with America’s soft power is due to the very high favorability of America that the older generations hold. Put differently, it is more plausible to conclude that young are more likely to hold unfavorable opinions about America theoretically.

Finally, the other three control variables, income, education and gender, have no significant relationship with America’s soft power, which means these variables have minimal significance. However, it is plausible that middle-high and high-earners are more inclined to stable and current international order, and therefore, they might take an exclusive attitude towards the change of world order (Johnston, 2004). China’s rise would change the order, and bring both inexpensive and fine products into South Korea, which is beneficial to low- and middle-low earners. Thus, they might hold a favorable opinion about China. However, the income variable does not have a significant relationship with America’s and China’s soft power in bivariate analysis and the BLM. Moreover, similar to income, education is also expected to have a significant correlation with “opinion about America;” however, education does not influence people’s attitudes towards America either. In addition, Table 1 implies that gender is not statistically significant as far as people’s opinion about America are concerned.

Conclusion

The conclusions from this research are mixed. First, this paper further verifies and denies several conclusions of multinational public opinion polls and theoretical arguments. For example, most people harbor negative attitudes towards China’s military power, while not necessarily holding positive opinions about its economy, which implies economic power, might not guarantee the growth of soft power; China should avoid “buying” soft power, and instead consider how to “earn” soft power. Moreover, most people do not hold a positive attitude towards China’s growing military strength, and therefore, policies such as
increasing military transparency, constructing valid standards on the use of armed force, holding dialogues with other countries’ armed forces, and clearly stating the intentions of its foreign policy and its attitudes towards regional pattern are especially important for China.

Second, whether “soft power is zero-sum” is largely dependent on perspectives. If we discuss soft power from the legitimacy and moral authority of foreign policies, then soft power will be zero-sum, which was previously suggested by people's opinions about China’s military conflict and the Sino-US leadership. However, if we view America and China in an overall view, we will find that both countries share similar national images in the world, which denies several US scholars’ arguments. Thus, soft power is nonzero-sum. This conclusion suggests that both countries should cooperate in improving their national image, as this is not a zero-sum game.

Finally, control variables do not match prior research. Some variables, however, are still worth discussing. Overall, party affiliation is the strongest indicator of America’s soft power: supporters of a left wing party are more likely to be anti-American and constituencies of right wing parties are more likely to be pro-American. In addition, based on the BLM results, age has a negative relationship with America’s soft power, which means young people hold more favorable opinions about America. However, combined with the result of bivariate correlation and the BLM and South Korea’s history, I venture to assume that young people hold unfavorable opinions about America. Additionally, income, education, and gender have no significant relationship with America’s soft power, although the results do not meet theoretical arguments. Nonetheless, the conclusion still suggests that conducting public diplomacy is necessary for a state to improve its national image. In short, different perspectives could result in various results. Therefore, how to treat the rise of China’s soft power will decide whether soft power is zero-sum.
References


http://belfercenter.hks.harvard.edu/publication/1499/rise_of_chinas_soft_power.html


Appendix

Coding

People’s opinions about the US: 0 for “unfavorable”, 1 for “favorable”;

People’s opinions about China: 0 for “unfavorable”, 1 for “favorable”;

People’s opinions about China’s economic rise: 0 for “bad thing”, 1 for “good thing”;

People’s opinions about China’s military conflict: 0 for “concerned”, 1 for “unconcerned”;

Can China replace the US: 0 for “cannot”, 1 for “can”;

Gender: 0 for “female”, 1 for “male”;

Income level: 1 for “low level” (less than 1,990,000 won), 2 for “middle-low level” (between 1,990,000 and 3,260,000 won), 3 for “middle-high level” (between 3,260,000 and 4,490,000 won), and 4 for “high level” (more than 4,490,000 won);

Party affiliation: 1 for “right-wing party” and 2 for “left-wing party”. 
## Bivariate Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Political Party Affiliation</th>
<th>Opinion about the US</th>
<th>Opinion about China</th>
<th>Opinion about China's economic rise</th>
<th>Opinion about China's military conflicts</th>
<th>Will China replace the US</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Income Level</th>
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*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); **Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*
### Classification Table 1

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<th>Step 0</th>
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a. Constant is included in the model; b. The cut value is .500

### Classification Table 2

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a. The cut value is .500

### Variables in the Equation

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<th>df</th>
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<th>Exp(B)</th>
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</table>

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Op4CN, Op4CNER, Op4CNMC, CNrUS, inL, Q133, Q138SKOR, Q132, Q158SKOR.
Biographical Note

Xiaoyu Zhao graduated from the University of Warwick, UK. His research interests lie in the international relations of Asia-Pacific, Public opinion, and Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision Making. His publication “Game” Relations between China and Japan in East Asia: Great Power Rivalry and Peaceful Interdependence won the Emerging Scholar Award awarded by the Common Ground Research Networks.

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Date of the decision: 2017-11-01