



Assessing the Dimension of Romania's Public Diplomacy in China: "Treasures of Romania" in Beijing and Chengdu

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Abstract

This article assesses the dimension of Romanian public diplomacy in China through a particular study case that revolves around an art exhibition entitled "Treasures of Romania". Presented in 2016, in Beijing and Chengdu, the exhibition featured over 400 artifacts that have never been presented abroad before, and was organized under the auspices of a bilateral government project aimed at increasing cultural cooperation and exchange between Romania and China. A similar exhibition, labeled "Treasures of China", has been previously inaugurated in Bucharest, in 2013, under the same government project.

The narrative of this article, firstly, debates some generic trends in public diplomacy as revealed by emerging theories, current ideas pertaining to the specialized scholarship realm and factual functions that confine this diplomatic practice. Secondly, the narrative shifts to create a climax that analyzes "Treasures of Romania" in Beijing and Chengdu, the implications and results attained. Lastly, it reflects on some potential orientations regarding the practice of Romanian public diplomacy and, more broadly, on the theoretical orientations that could reveal vectors towards concretizing the spectrum of public diplomacy in international foreign affairs.

Summarizing the aspects that are coercive to the practice of Romanian public diplomacy, this article imperatively observes that public diplomacy is identical to cultural diplomacy. Thus, this undefined boundary creates synopsis for alteration of the theoretical understanding of public diplomacy in a Romanian context, while the analysis provided throughout this article reveals that perturbation affects the extrinsic and intrinsic results that public diplomacy could achieve. Beyond the political significances of such endeavors, the emphasis of this article is closely related to the empiricisms of the exhibitions, through content analysis, compilation of data and process tracing.

Keywords: Romania; China public diplomacy; Cultural diplomacy; Treasures of Romania

Introduction

Public diplomacy is regarded as a complex tool in international foreign affairs. Recent debates in the academia and in diplomatic circles have paved the way for ambiguous definitions, establishing thus a very delicate boundary amid different approaches to its conception and practice [1]. And indeed, attempting to trace down the hectic theoretical spectrum of public diplomacy within the practical paradigm of international foreign affairs remains a challenge. Major impediments are in place due to the fact that, more broadly assessing, scholars did not reach a definition of public diplomacy that is universally accepted. On the other hand, diplomatic practice denotes a similar ambiguity, since for various state actors, for example, public diplomacy is perpendicularly identical to cultural diplomacy.

In 2013, the Government of Romania and that of the People's Republic of China enthusiastically co-signed an ample program of cultural cooperation that lasted until 2016 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania). Being regarded as a "point of reference in Romanian-Chinese cultural relations" (Ibidem), the program concretized some major art exhibitions, each of which were organized in the respective country by the corresponding, subsidiary cultural outlets. Beyond doubt, a main assessment of these exhibitions, both entitled suggestively "Treasures of Romania" and "Treasures of China" respectively, is the principle of reciprocity. Thence, the start of this ample Romanian-Chinese cultural program has been inaugurated by the "Treasures of China" exhibition in 2013 at Romania's National Museum of History [2]. China's Ambassador at the time pointed out that, among the exhibits that attracted "the most attention were the five representative piece of the terracotta warriors", Romania being the first country in Central and Eastern Europe that had the chance to host such artifacts (Ibidem). This vivacity revealed, as a result, a "concrete embodiment of the attention the Chinese Government" offers in respect to Romania (Ibid.)

A few years later, namely in 2016, through the Romanian Ministry of Culture, in partnership with China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage and the National Museum (National Museum of China), it was Romania's occasion to display "445 pieces (sets) of exhibits" (Ibidem) in Beijing and Chengdu [3].

Perhaps not as successful as China's exhibition in Bucharest, "Treasures of Romania" remains a symbol of coerciveness in terms of cultural assertiveness and an endeavor that, to some extent, propelled Romania's image in a robustly unknown environment. Hence, this article aims at addressing a sharp fundamentum inconcussum in terms of what exactly culture and diplomacy encompass, for the resulting matrix is a thorough assessment of Romania's public diplomacy in China. The main focus of the narrative is to assess the representation of "Treasures of Romania" as a distinct, particular case with emphasize on an approach that. However, what remains odd to this article is that the Romanian definition of public diplomacy is integrated within the core understanding of cultural diplomacy to a degree that offers no corporeality. The case of Romanian art exhibitions in China represent a set of prospects that brings about a narrow process of exploring cultural perception of oneself as well as of vast mechanisms for the promotion of heritage in the context of valuating a much more complex bilateral relation.

What is public diplomacy? Core ideas, functions and emerging theories

In an aggregated form, public diplomacy may be directly pegged to the concept of soft power. Nye JS [4], first debated this notion and described it as the capability of a state to "obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because of other countries - admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness - want to follow it" (p. 15). Nye points out that "soft power rests on the ability to shape the preference of others" (p. 5), adding the fact that the concept relies (mainly) on three resources: "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)" [5]. Therefore, "Nye's book is an appropriate point of departure [because] soft power analyzes the relationship with public diplomacy" [6]. These substantial definitions would be drawn toward the idea that culture is a pivot when speaking about public diplomacy, since it creates "meaning for a society" [5] and possesses "abundant demonstration" (Ibidem).

Accordingly, this article contends that existing links created between soft power, public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy are only natural. Howbeit, when transferred into practice, aside influencing the public opinion in a foreign (target) state, this theoretical approach cannot be equated with public diplomacy per se. One reason for this is the fact that not all activities falling under the umbrella of cultural diplomacy are carried out in relation to the public abroad. For example, the negotiation of international treaties regulating cultural relations among states is undoubtedly an important part of

cultural diplomacy. It is carried out by and among diplomats, though not by the public. In consequence, this cannot be considered a part of public diplomacy.

Another reason why cultural diplomacy cannot be equated with public diplomacy is the fact that public diplomacy can include not only activities undertaken within the framework of cultural diplomacy, but also within other niches of diplomacy. For example, public presentations undertaken by an economic attaché at the chamber of commerce of the diplomats' country, aimed at investment or trade promotion, are an integral part of economic diplomacy. Here, those economic interests of the respective state are at stake, and so such activities could as well be undoubtedly regarded as part of public diplomacy due to the public-oriented nature of the presentations [7]. What remains of certainty revolves around the fact that, in the post-Second World War era, the concept of public diplomacy has broadly emerged. As a result, the specializing literature totals inter alia public diplomacy as the engagement of "states, associations of states, and some sub-state and non-state actors" [8], entailing a conduct that facilitates the concretization of assorted channels for comprehending "cultures, attitudes and behavior" (Ibidem), for building and managing relationships, and for influencing thoughts and mobilizing "actions to advance interests and values" (Ibid.); "the ability to convince and persuade through trade, diplomacy, foreign aid and the spread of values" [9].

In order to elucidate upon some of the latter findings in terms of public diplomacy, it is of great significance to regard what Hartig [10] reveres as "determinants" of the old and the new public diplomacy vectors. Although Hartig identifies similarities between the two types, such as their overall aim (e.g. "the management of the international environment"), he acknowledges that the "identity of [the] international actor" included in the new public diplomacy extended to non-state actors (p. 335). Furthermore, the same Hartig perceives technological advancements, "media environments" ("clear line" versus "blurring of domestic and international news sphere"), or various other sources of approach as changeable vectors that have shaped the new public diplomacy. In addition, determinants of the new public diplomacy have suffered fluctuations in terms of terminology, structure of role (e.g. "top down, actors to foreign peoples" versus "horizontal, facilitated by actors") as well as in the nature of role (p. 355).

Systematically, public diplomacy could be described as the equivalent of the basic use of soft power, being "a form of civil persuasion" [9]; it finds its origins inside a certain society and seeks to transpose, in a delicate manner, various self-elements within another society. A simple classification of public diplomacy has emerged and has been divided into five different components: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy and international broadcasting [11]. Henceforward, cultural diplomacy, according to the more sequential pragmatic scholarship, develops into "a linchpin of public diplomacy" [12]. Thereupon, despite the undetermined definition of public diplomacy, and in attempt to categorize not only the sources, but also the foundations of public diplomacy, the scholarship realm and state actors retain the very basics of

transmitting information, sharing values, exchanging ideas, whilst conserving one's perseverance and spreading inspiration as universally accepted functions.

Implying the diffusion of a country's cultural capital, public diplomacy has a peculiarity which consists in the desire of the decisive entity (governments, usually and traditionally) to control, and to exercise a certain degree of influence in other societal, political or economic structures [11]. The exact instruments practiced in order to achieve these are of bizarre variety: language, social media, symbols, high-profile perceptions extracted from nature or history, the arts or even national airlines [9]. As a deduction, public diplomacy implies a wide range of functions, depending ultimately on the creativeness of the generating entity and its techniques. Successful representations of cultural diplomacy may include animals, cultural institutes or historical figures (Ibidem).

In order to obtain tangible results, the generating entity has to conceive public diplomacy in such a manner that it spreads, as much as possible, polite and positive messages [13]. More concretely, it requires dedication, "long-term commitment to winning the hearts and minds of reasonable people everywhere" [12] and a strong "focus on achievable as well as desirable goals" [9]. Otherwise, if mismanaged, it can become conspicuous propaganda (Ibidem).

Public diplomacy represents an amalgam of tactics, patience, skills and long haul vision, considering that its practice demands "more time for results to materialize" [14]. Gravitational agents pertaining to public diplomacy are disparate, depending on the peculiarities of irrespective geographical areas. For instance, the United States launched a series of classifications connected to cultural and public diplomacy, articulating that both could entail "a foundation of trust" [12] between the American people and other peoples, encouraging others to give the United States credit and advance "a presumption of shared interest" (Ibidem), thus combating the "popular notion that Americans are shallow, violent, and godless" (Ibid.). The American definition adds that cultural and public diplomacy

"provides a positive agenda for cooperation in spite of policy differences [...] Creates a neutral platform for people-to-people contact; Serves as a flexible, universally acceptable vehicle for rapprochement with countries where diplomatic relations have been strained or are absent; Is uniquely able to reach out to young people, to non-elites, to broad audiences with a much reduced language barrier; Fosters the growth of civil society; Educates Americans on the values and sensitivities of other societies, helping us to avoid gaffes and missteps [...] Can leaven foreign internal cultural debates on the side of openness and tolerance" (Ibid.).

Considering the fact that within the international relations (IR) academia there is a deficiency in delivering factual theory of public diplomacy, since it has "emerged as a much discussed, if little understood, component of foreign policy" [15], the acknowledgment portended by various state actors indicates a shrewd groundwork for the emergence of a particular doctrine. Generally estimating, this is in contrast to

the public relations or communication scholarship realms that preserve a much more pragmatic approach to public diplomacy. This being said differently, doctrines built around public diplomacy are distinctive. As an illustration, the United States seek to remain persistent in combating terrorism [12] by using the tentacles of public diplomacy, while the Chinese holistic view emphasizes responsibility, commitment and "full engagement" with a multipolar, multilayered and multilateral international establishment. In brief, the Chinese understanding of public diplomacy seeks to gain a truly global perspective, becoming extremely preoccupied with creating a balanced and sustainable emergence, while American diplomacy seems keen on protecting its already privileged position in world affairs [16].

Moreover, a German perspective towards public diplomacy resembles a blurred political terminology, hence the "gist of the ongoing debate" [17]. In Japan, "<Public diplomacy> is not a term that is heard often... and still it is not a concept that is shared as a social consensus except amongst a small diplomatic community" [18]. Subsequently, "Eastern European public diplomacy efforts focus on well-defined countries of geopolitical and geographical positions and importance" [19], as it is the case of Romania. For these reasons, defining cultural diplomacy in a palpable vocabulary indeed remains fragmented, in the first place, through geographical experiences.

In supporting this assumption, the following has been asserted:

"Existing research in public diplomacy suffers from several major weaknesses. Most studies are historical, and they mostly deal with the U.S. experiences during the cold war. Historical accounts of public diplomacy are significant, especially if they are analytical and not just anecdotal, but their contribution to the development of theory and methodology in public diplomacy has been limited. Limited, too, is research on public diplomacy programs and activities of countries other than the United States and of new international actors such as NGOs, civil society groups, and individuals" [20].

In pursuance of retaining a functional public diplomacy, of maximization, one has to scrutinize that public diplomacy is a double-sided mindset which does not clarify, nor atone despised policies - it is rather the habit that causes qualitative differences [15], in relational interactions between cultures, nations and peoples, remaining malleable and sophisticated, gracious and conciliatory (Ibidem).

From a broader perspective, public diplomacy can be traced down through culture in different geographical areas across a variety of historical parallels. Thus, one of the most acclaimed scholarly examples extracted from the history of diplomacy may be related, for example, to "the activities of medieval Byzantine missionaries" (Ibid.). But this claim shall be perceived as when it has been endorsed "as a specific instrument of foreign policy... to implement the idea of purposeful use of culture" (Ibid.). Whatsoever, the practice of public diplomacy has been unconsciously applied long before the medieval Byzantine. Indefinitely, the facilitation of

people's mobility in the Roman Empire because of commercial, military or administrative reasons implies the practice of public diplomacy.

Subsequently, this article can relate to the examples of "animal-generated public diplomacy" [21] due to the fact that "the practice of using animals as diplomatic tools can be traced back to several centuries" (Ibidem: 53-54): the 9th century elephant "given to Charles the Great by the Caliph of Baghdad", the 15th century Medici Giraffe, the 16th century white elephant received by Pope Leo X from Portuguese King Manuel I, the 19th century gift "from the Egyptian ruler, the Pasha Muhammad Ali" to Charles X of France (Ibid.) or some "70 furs and a pair of giant pandas" sent by Tang Dynasty Empress Wu Zetian to the Japanese emperor.

Despite all these historical observations, the present-day perspective of public diplomacy only gained a minimal form by the end of the 19th century [7]. The emergence and establishment, respectively, of specialized agencies and institutions aimed at dealing with diplomatic and/or cultural relations, hence, began to pave the way for a more concrete idea of cultural and public diplomacy (Ibidem). Alliance Française represents a mild origin of palpable cultural diplomacy. Established in 1883, the first "comité local" was opened in Barcelona and, although regarded as an NGO, most funds would come from the French Foreign Ministry (Ibid.). Later on, by the first half of the last century, cultural attachés started to be deployed for various diplomatic missions, while the French created a Directorate General for Cultural Affairs within their Foreign Ministry. Consequently, in the interbellum period, the British Council, for instance, or the Division for Cultural Relations of the U.S. State Department were established [7].

The climax of this evolutionist architecture is reached during the Cold War. The intensity created by the two-folded facet of IR brought cultural diplomacy a "special significance as an important instrument of ideological struggle" (Ibidem). Ambassador Schneider, Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy at Georgetown University, notes that

"...during the cold war, [when] the United States armed itself with jazz, abstract expressionism, and modern literature. In the late 1950s more than 100 acts were sent to 89 countries in four years. Musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, and Charlie Parker brought abstract concepts of liberty to life by democratizing their concerts and insisting that ordinary people, not just elites, be allowed to listen. They departed on tours of one to two months, playing in Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Nigeria, and many other Muslim countries, as well as in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe" [15].

Culture, in its distinctive portrayal, alongside foreign politics, becomes the most integrative feature, beyond the challenges and the favorable circumstances [22]. And rightly, governments approach cultural diplomacy in dissimilar styles. Analogies may have the capability to aggregate this dynamic, although they remain utterly "conditioned by institutional and ideological imperatives and contexts" [23]. Statecraft dissimulates, as in all other state related realms, the strategies

pertaining to cultural diplomacy. The spread of interests in diversified parts of the world, the constant struggle for power within the anarchic, chaotic and hegemonic IR system represent the creation of quintessential norms targeted to avoid frivolousness. Habitual behaviors associated with cultural diplomacy acquire, more recently, harmony, and circular initiative has taken form, including initiatives with transnational characteristics such as the European Union National Institute for Culture (EUNIC).

At last, cultural diplomacy emphasizes both the nucleuses of culture and diplomacy [7]. It is crucial to understand the dimension of cultural diplomacy and to truly appreciate the multifaceted composing elements. These comprise an association of particular "foreign policy priorities and interest, as well as its organization of diplomatic service" (Ibidem). More or less, cultural diplomacy, universally speaking, will not suffer major changes within its matrix in the near future. Governments will continue to intensify the use of soft power mechanisms, but since there is hesitation in acknowledging a model of best practice, cultural diplomacy strategies will remain still and fragmented in accordance to peculiar cultures, objectives and communication systems. Hence, the nonexistence of a singular theory continues to provoke debates and pursuits in propelling an equidistant set of ideas, provisions and convictions which aim at delineating a 21st century reliable definition of cultural diplomacy.

Analyzing the role of public diplomacy as a tool in foreign affairs: "Treasures of Romania" in Beijing and Chengdu

The fall of "the bipolar system" [7] forced a sudden change in the configuration of public diplomacy, since the ideological battle came to an end. Hence, there is a palpable tendency to reduce, since the end of the Cold War, activities pertaining to cultural public diplomacy (Ibidem), although "soft power is a new concept for an old habit". The 9/11 attacks, for instance, "led to re-considering the importance of explaining cultural values in foreign countries (especially in states with Islamic culture) and, thereby, to rediscovering the value of cultural diplomacy" [7].

Such ascertainment are consistent with the diminishing of the intensity of Romanian-Chinese bilateral relations in the aftermath of the Cold War [24], and China's erratic policy in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) until the early 2010's [25] when President Xi Jinping of China put into motion "16+1" - a cooperation mechanism that integrated sixteen CEE countries and China [26]. This cooperation mechanism encouraged inter alia cultural cooperation more closely, as acknowledged by relevant documents released [27-32].

According to the examples revealed by the practice of Romanian diplomacy, cultural and public diplomacy are two practices that remain similar and proportionally commensurated. The evolution and the merging of the two concepts into one, single conception could be explained, firstly, by the fact that the Romanian diplomatic tradition has been systematically challenged by regime change. Secondly,

the imperative of extracting authenticity and promoting strategies and programs connected to the extraction of authenticity is rather vague. Thirdly, the striking allegory of the establishment to determine precise circumstances of programs that either fall under the umbrella of public diplomacy or cultural diplomacy is fractured among the decision making mechanisms. Fourthly, the real assessment of culture and its role in the 21st century [33] is somehow lost in the perspective of crafting public diplomacy. In an increasingly advanced world, dominated by modern technology and facile communication systems, the invariable exchange of rational or irrational information among actors becomes extremely accessible (Ibidem). However, it is hard for the Romanian decision making actors to differentiate situations, anticipate public expectations and establish coherent objectives when designing public diplomacy projects, without losing the core significance of culture and its interference with diplomacy.

The case study that this article advances is on represents a wider project concealed by Romania and China, more concretely the exhibitions of "Treasures of Romania" in Beijing and Chengdu, and an exhibition entitled "Treasures of China" in Bucharest. Despite the previous remarks regarding reciprocity and some factual features of the exhibition, what remains of core interest is the cultural program entailed by Romania and China at bilateral level, through a document that amounts the actions coordinated from 2013 to 2016 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania). Beyond doubt, Romania has also unveiled other few "priority programs of public and cultural diplomacy", including The Cantemir Tercentenary or The Brâncoveanu Year (Ibidem), yet bilateral agreements that regulate cultural interactions, even for limited periods of time, are the most important for the Romanian Government.

An analysis in this regard would depict a scale that integrates not only the significance of the project, but moreover the results attained. This assessment of Romania's dimension of public diplomacy does not debate the origins of the projects or the actions per se, but rather the implications and results concealed by this project. Therefore, it is also the case of "Treasures of Romania" that first went on display at China's National Museum in Beijing for several months, in 2016 (National Museum of China). Although the first part of the tournament held in Beijing attracted considerable amounts of people, this is partially due to the inertia of the National Museum of China. In this respect, it is noted that there remains no clear as regards the number of visitors, and not even estimate that could regulate a sharp evaluation.

The contribution of the Romanian Cultural Institute in Beijing to the exhibition cannot be measured precisely either, although the institution is the main, principal Romanian cultural outlet not only in China, but also in Asia. This can be explained by the fact that inter-institutional dialogue, or perhaps even the inter-institutional memory is centric, not linear. Centrism, in this context, damages the evaluation of such initiatives from an institutional point of view. Of course, it is very difficult to assess the public diplomacy in terms of influence or in terms of the effect it could grasp upon the

public, yet institutional-oriented evaluations are provided case by case.

In this train of thoughts, "Treasures of Romania" represents the "first Romanian exhibition of this magnitude" in China and, more broadly, in Asia, displaying precisely 445 objects that have been "collected from over 30 museums in Romania" [2]. Epistemologically assessing, "Treasures of Romania" produced, beyond political significance, a relevant cultural framework in Beijing due to the fact that some of the artifacts exhibited were transported out of Romania "for the first time [being] the only occasion that all these pieces have been assembled in a single exhibition space" (Ibidem). In other words, "stoneware, ceramics, gold and silver ware, glass ware, wooden ware, mural paintings, manuscripts and textiles" were displayed to the public, conveying "a long history of a wide geography" - from the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvania Plateau to Tisza and Moldova (National Museum of China). This narrative included three major themes: "Birth of Romanian Civilization", "Prelude to the Birth of Romanian Nation" and "Romanian Civilization at the Crossroads of the East and the West" (Ibidem). Although the artifacts presented were unique, the point of reference has been understood only at political level, in spite of the fact that this hardly had any impact on Romania's public diplomacy. This is due to the sustainability of actions taken in terms of public diplomacy. Thus, this article notes that sustainability itself is uncertain, and the constant bilateral cultural cultivation remains nuanced, depending on rigid government regulations. Consequently, there are no conclusive studies or substantive research for the current cultural relations between Romania and China, and no deep, sincere interest in exploring such bearings within the current academia.

In Beijing, "Treasures of Romania" attracted much more attention than in Chengdu, for example, media outlets iterating that "Treasures from Romania shine in Beijing" [34], while in Chengdu the artifacts were simply "showcased" at the Sichuan Museum (Ibidem). A constant headline that could easily be depicted in the narrative of the Chinese mass media is that "Treasures of Romania" were constantly pegged to "Treasures of China" that went on display three years before [35,36] in Bucharest. This is of particular interest to scrutinize, since from a Chinese perspective, this set of cultural actions represent a continuous process of some previous exhibitions that were co-jointly organized in 1973 and 1985 [37]. On the other hand, Romanian mass media was more preoccupied with the costs involved in hosting "Treasures of Romania" in China due to the fact that government funds allocated initially for this project have had dissipated and emergency-related funds had to be allocated [38]. A more confined media perspective upon "Treasures of Romania" has been conferred by Adevărul which accentuated more the immaterial value of the exhibition, rather than the material costs [39].

Furthermore, the same Adevărul offers background information about China's National Museum, being the only media outlet that has done so. Stanca [40] from Gândul aligns its discourse predominantly with the one of Digi 24, criticizing the lack of coherent budget-planning of the Government of

Romania for organizing "Treasures of Romania" in China. However, she emphasizes the political and cultural significance of this event, citing various Romanian politicians and government officials that insist on the fact that Romania has not organized art exhibitions in China, similar to those of 1973 or 2013. Therefore, Romania has the duty to pursue to reduce the "imbalance in cultural relations between the two sides" and tackle the "lack of reciprocity" [40].

From the perspective of public diplomacy, as integrated structurally within the spectrum of Romanian-Chinese relations, "Treasures of Romania" had a considerable positive impact. The reasons that would explain this is multilayered: first, political statements and diplomatic communiqués have been praising the efforts of both sides to organize not only the Romanian exhibitions (i.e. "Treasures of Romania") in Beijing and Chengdu, but also the one in Bucharest (i.e. "Treasures of China"). Secondly, and most importantly, the year of 2013 is considered as the peak of success in terms of bilateral relations for the 21st century.

In other words, Premier Li's first visit to CEE had been to Romania after taking office in Beijing and one of a Chinese Premier to Romania in more than 19 years. In the aftermath of the visit, Li Keqiang compared Romanian-Chinese relations to those of a big ship that sails speedily on proper wind [41]. Highlights of the specialized literature believe that the big ship, in this context, is represented by China, while the wind, by Romania [42], and thus Li forsaken avowals according to which major achievements could be accomplished "only if Romania wishes so and acts accordingly" (Ibidem).

Furthermore, at the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Romania and China, which was complimented by the 10th anniversary of the Comprehensive Partnership, the Romanian Prime Minister paid, in return, a visit to Beijing and met "both Premier Li and President Xi" (Ibid.). As a result, another sequence of optimistic political declarations have been released by the two sides, this time having the Chinese officials to accentuate more strongly Romania's potential at the level of the European Union and its role in regional European politics. More narrowly, in tandem with "Treasures of Romania", the first Romanian Cultural Institute in Asia had been inaugurated in Beijing [43], and Romania was invited to participate as one of the honorary guests at Beijing's 2016 International Book Fair [44].

The sequence of these events and actions, although not studied enough within the scholarship realm, reflects and confirms a modest upward trend in the resumption of Romanian-Chinese relations. It is important to acknowledge the fact that, depending on the governing party, Romania's relations with China was heavily dependent on the specific context. Governances that whirl around the social-democrats are rather efferescent in approaching China, while right-centrists distance themselves from pursuing closer ties on the bilateral axis. This is due to the fact that Romanian public perception remains critical toward totalitarian regimes as well as attached to a welter of liberal political values. Hence, politicians are extremely attentive to domestic public opinion, especially in electoral years. In this respect, some scholars

vociferate [41,42] that the Romanian establishment has to emphasize less the effects of each successive "electoral process" [41], and more the priorities of the nation and those of national interests.

As regards Romania's <treasures>, beyond doubt, the art exhibition in Beijing was much more successful, in comparison to the one in Chengdu. Having analyzed the role of such exhibition in a heavily-dependent political context, it remains imperatively to assess the fact that "Treasures of Romania", in their crude state, did not entail ultimate triumph in terms of Romanian-Chinese cultural cooperation. Howbeit, their inclusion in a certain succession of cultural events on the bilateral arbor has recorded, to some extend of degree, admiration, success and progress. The limitations of Romanian public diplomacy, as demonstrated through the experience provided by "Treasures of Romania", lay in the fact that Romania cannot attain sustainability within the practice of its public diplomacy. Considerable gaps perhaps that could explain such limitations are to be found in those features of theoretical public diplomacy and their discord in institutional frameworks.

Despite the circular mindsets upon public diplomacy as a tool in Romanian foreign affairs, its potential has yet not been acknowledged due to its constant cycles of formation or, perhaps, deformation. In other words, its continuous techniques of evolution, of brining cultural and public diplomacies up to date have not been largely acquiesced by the Romanian political establishment. Cultural diplomacy has the potential to engage (with) wide audiences, for example, from students, elites, diasporas, to ethnic or religious minorities, for it can provide advantage to governments and the representing countries on the international stage [45], and in relation to a specific country or group of countries. In order for cultural and public diplomacies to stretch their power, the requisite of the entity advancing such diplomatic strategies have to outburst a dyadic venture "in how the practice is conceived and implemented" (Ibidem).

The same Simon Mark [45] argues that many governments, "official entities" (p. 33), use this diplomatic practice to provide the public and the media "the positive aspects of a state" (Ibidem), accentuating some of the "finest cultural achievements" (Ibid.). On the other hand, cultural diplomacy may become frequent in the sense that it can be used as a juxtaposition of a governmental strategy even if a certain government may not concede with its demonstration (Ibid.: 33-34). Yet, this ideal synergy would only become real if actors involved will discern the role of cultural diplomacy "within nation branding" (Ibid.: 35). Lastly, what governments do not seem to quite be conscious of, nor interested in, is that cultural diplomacy has the competency to achieve "national domestic goals" (Ibid.: 36) by "improving the esteem of minority groups and enhance national confidence and national social cohesion" (Ibid.).

The role of cultural diplomacy as a tool in foreign affairs seems blurred. Comparable to the "wide range of definitions of cultural diplomacy" [45], the lack of "scholarly attention" (Ibidem) are some of the main aspects that cause this dim, as

it is the case in Romania and, more broadly debating, in CEE. Sources of this inconsistency "may have its roots in the lack of clarity about what precisely the practice [of cultural diplomacy] entails" (Ibid.). As long as diplomats and politicians will revere cultural diplomacy as a minor utensil of diplomacy, there will be a persistent mediocre arrangement conferred to cultural diplomacy. One of the reasons that back these attitudes is the difficulty in determining the long term impact of cultural diplomacy upon the audiences. Of course, events and different activities may be measurable in terms of success or failure, by reason of counting the number of people who attended a concert, for example, but for those funding cultural diplomacy it has been bedewed on account of not being able to measure the impact on people on the long run (Ibid.: 2-3). Regardless of the above acclaimed findings, cultural diplomacy holds a great potential which has to be acknowledged truly, especially because it can be adjusted to the information age [20].

Conclusion

This article argues that public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, assayed either separately or individually, are variable practices that, predominantly, derivate from a deed of culture and diplomacy merged for the public, at least from a Romanian understanding of the two. These derivatives, as previously discussed, are closely related to historical, geographical or cultural items that eventually define these empiricisms. It is utterly important to take note of the fact that cultural diplomacy is not uniform, thus being dispersed according to the hazardous and natural framework confined to it. On behalf of state actors, admitting the lack of a universal coherent definition of public diplomacy, the endorsement regarding its gravitational agents, already represents a step favoring the process of contouring the rational of this diplomatic practice.

In other words, a universally accepted definition will only become materialized when the majority of governments will integrate a clear-cut institutional framework for tackling soft power and these derivatives as well as accept the contribution of scholars from adjacent fields of studies, such as public relations or communication. Those gravitational agents are perhaps side-effects of a specific behavior and of systematic rational actions that inter alia consider nation branding as a discipline non-relatable to international foreign affairs.

Additionally, the most essential component of this perspective is that the potential of public diplomacy becomes endorsed by governmental bodies. Hitherto, the oddity of these attributions advanced by the United States remain biased because the potential achievements of cultural diplomacy may have a wide variety of nuances, depending on the vision, objectives and aspirations encapsulated by one.

Quests of categorizing the pinnacles of soft power remain in place. As the case may be, in order to narrow down the direction of reaching such definitions that could match the existing practices in international foreign affairs, it may become indicative to subjugate the two pinnacles of soft

power to a more confined panorama, namely from the perspective of a much simpler categorization that could be labeled as public cultural diplomacy, or cultural public diplomacy. The hiatus of this linguistically-edged terminology and their subsequent fusion might offer a new dimension to understanding theory from within the core practices of governments, as demonstrated through the examples provided by "Treasures of Romania" in Beijing and Chengdu.

The evolutionist architecture of cultural diplomacy and its application to the IR dimension is a vibrant demonstration. Advocating for cultural diplomacy at present times, in a global environment where technologies and communication systems dominate, is the foremost viable option from my perspective. This might bequest maintaining undeviating conditions of interstate relations, respecting the values, norms and principles of not only those who struggled for creating a groundwork toward averting wars or conflicts, but also for those who adhere to these, for the sake of preserving this normative conformity. The desire for a pacifist 21st century, with its already high-spirited international establishment, exhibits that present times are not anymore about <hard> approaches and fierce responses, but about <soft> approaches and reactions.

Finally, public diplomacy fosters and softens these communication systems by means of impending peoples, bolstering cross-cultural attitudes and cultural relativism, if so to plead in anthropological terms. Either I am making explicit referral to soft power, public diplomacy or cultural diplomacy, it is not always imperative to divide them because truly they do go hand in hand. What remains crucial to discern is their contextual application, as Pajtinka points out. In addition, it would be vital to approach cultural diplomacy as a boundless range of opportunities, adjuvant towards creating opportunities, thus diminishing the brunt of actual vulnerabilities brought up by Gilboa.

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