

# Ties That Bind: Quantifying China's public diplomacy and its "good neighbor" effect

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[Executive Summary](#)



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# Executive Summary

China has a long history of using public diplomacy (PD) tools to bolster its status internationally and tell its story to the world. Nonetheless, there is a growing consensus that China has dramatically increased the volume and sophistication of its public diplomacy efforts under President Xi Jinping, whose active engagement with other countries is a departure from the low profile foreign policy of his predecessors. While its infrastructure investments are in the media spotlight, Beijing wields a wide range of public diplomacy tools—from people-to-people exchange and cultural symposia to official visits and information broadcasting—to strengthen bilateral ties and ‘rejuvenate’ China’s image as a country worthy of the world’s admiration.

Historically, there has been a lack of quantifiable data to assess the volume, direction, and downstream consequences of China’s public diplomacy efforts. The *Ties That Bind* report is a first step to better understand the spectrum of China’s public diplomacy activities and Beijing’s ability to translate these upstream inputs into a ‘good neighbor’ dividend: more favorable public perceptions of China and closer alignment with Beijing in the policy decisions taken by policymaking elites. Given Beijing’s explicit interest in engaging countries in its greater periphery, we focus specifically on China’s ‘neighborhood diplomacy’ with foreign publics and leaders in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region.

## How should we quantify China’s public diplomacy?

In this study, we examine how China (1) packages positive messages about its culture, values, and beliefs for a general audience; and (2) facilitates positive interactions between its own citizens or leaders and those of other countries to increase mutual understanding and closer ties. For this analysis, the authors collected information on China’s public diplomacy activities between 2000-2016 in 25 EAP countries from academic datasets, government records, previous studies, and AidData’s own Tracking Underreported Financial Flows (TUFF) methodology.

While data limitations precluded us from capturing all facets of Beijing’s efforts, we successfully quantified proxy measures for four of the five dimensions of its public diplomacy: Confucius Institutes (cultural diplomacy), sister cities (exchange diplomacy), official finance with diplomatic intent (financial diplomacy), and official visits (elite-to-elite diplomacy). We also captured qualitative insights on Beijing’s informational diplomacy.

## FINDING #1

### China is ramping up its public diplomacy across the board, diversifying its efforts with Confucius Institutes and an uptick in financial diplomacy

Beijing has unequivocally increased the volume and diversity of its public diplomacy overtures throughout the region between 2000 and 2016. It is most confident in its longest standing public diplomacy tools: using the power of its purse and building relationships with political elites. Yet, Beijing is experimenting with a wider set of public diplomacy tools, particularly cultural and exchange programs, to augment its traditional engagement with EAP countries.

Worth an estimated US\$48 billion between 2000-2016, Beijing’s **financial diplomacy** (i.e., debt relief, budget support, humanitarian assistance, and infrastructure investments) dwarfs its use of other instruments with EAP countries. Infrastructure investments comprise 95% of China’s financial diplomacy, serving as visible reminders of China’s generosity to improve the lives of foreign citizens or those of leaders. This financial diplomacy is accompanied by great fanfare, which can be a double-edged sword. It may raise awareness among foreign citizens of China’s overtures, but also provoke public outcry if projects are delayed, deferred, or create an undue dependence on Beijing.

China entertains more visiting dignitaries and elites each year than any other country, while its own leaders travel to receiving countries regularly. In cultivating these relationships, Beijing emphasizes the win-win nature of closer ties to China. In addition to being a ready supply of capital to finance the priority projects of elites, China may enhance the standing of a foreign leader by publicly announcing Beijing’s support for their policies. Beijing’s reliance on official visits has decreased overall in recent years, but **elite-to-elite diplomacy** still accounts for the lion’s share (90%) of its outreach with the smaller countries in the EAP region.

The breakneck growth of new Confucius Institutes (89) and Confucius Classrooms (159) since 2004 is noteworthy since EAP countries must opt-in to the program. As Beijing’s signature **cultural diplomacy** initiative, Confucius Institutes (CIs) are managed by the Hanban—a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education—and have a mandate to promote Chinese language and culture. Set up as a partnership with local universities, CIs also promote cooperation with Chinese businesses. Perceptions of CIs fluctuate widely between those who push back against what they see as propaganda infiltrating local universities and

those with a sympathetic view that these institutes add value, or at least do limited harm.

China's sister cities are tools of **exchange diplomacy** which foster greater interaction between local-level officials and business leaders in other countries with their Chinese counterparts. China has brokered over 950 sister city arrangements with EAP countries as of 2018, a 115% surge since 2000. This diplomacy matches a "twin" Chinese city, town, or province with a foreign counterpart. Agreements often entail a commitment to increased trade relations, sponsorship of cultural festivals and exhibitions, partnerships on issues of mutual interest, as well as knowledge sharing and capacity building. Beyond sister cities, China facilitates a diverse array of exchange programs for students (e.g., scholarship programs) and professionals (e.g., journalist trainings, and political party and military exchanges).

China doubled down on **informational diplomacy** via its state-owned media companies at a time when other global players have reduced investments in public broadcasting. Since the early 2000s, Beijing has expanded its international media offerings across multiple channels. The Xinhua News Agency alone has 16 local news bureaus in the Asia-Pacific and a regional news agency in Hong Kong. Beijing also leverages local media outlets to push out content via paid advertising, as well as arrange content exchanges. It curries favor with local media by buying majority ownership shares in domestic outlets through large Chinese corporations. Beijing also conducts training for journalists from other outlets in the region and hires journalists from EAP countries to increase China's local appeal.

### FINDING #2

#### **Beijing strategically targets a different mix and volume of public diplomacy tools to EAP countries in light of anticipated risk and reward**

Japan, South Korea, and Australia attract the highest volume and most diverse set of inbound Chinese public diplomacy activities. While these high-income countries do not receive any financial diplomacy from China, they receive a disproportionate share of Chinese sister cities, CIs, and official visits compared to other EAP countries. This may imply that China feels the need to export a positive image of itself with citizens and leaders in those countries with the greatest ability to undermine or strengthen its geostrategic position in light of their economic, diplomatic, and/or military assets.

Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Thailand receive the second highest volume of public diplomacy activities from China in the EAP region. Beijing wields financial diplomacy as its preferred instrument for cultivating relationships in the first three countries. Thailand did not attract similar investments, but received a higher share of CIs. Official visits were also an important public diplomacy tool for China in all four

countries. However, they were far less likely to establish sister city arrangements. China's interest in Indonesia and Malaysia may be partly due to the fact that these are two of the largest ASEAN member countries in population and economy size. Meanwhile Cambodia and Thailand may be particularly open to China, as they have had more estranged relationships with the West.

The remaining ASEAN countries (e.g., the Philippines, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam) along with Mongolia, Fiji, and New Zealand still receive a diverse mix of Chinese public diplomacy activities, but the overall level of Beijing's engagement with these countries is substantially less than with the two previous groups. Noticeably, these countries still have substantial, but relatively smaller economies (in nominal GDP) than those that get more public diplomacy attention from Beijing, with the exception of Cambodia.

China engages in limited public diplomacy with the less populous EAP countries—Samoa, Tonga, Micronesia, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Timor-Leste, Micronesia, Singapore, Brunei, Papua New Guinea—in terms of the absolute volume of its activities. Yet, strikingly, China's public diplomacy engagement *per capita* in these countries easily outstrips that of Japan and South Korea. The preponderance of China's engagement with these countries is in the form of official visits (90% on average). Beijing has two interests in these countries: to reduce the number of countries that provide diplomatic recognition to Taiwan and to mobilize support in multilateral international fora, such as United Nations.

## How do other EAP countries perceive China's overtures?

Beijing seeks to attract friends and allies throughout the EAP region in the hope of changing the narrative from the 'China threat' to a story of its peaceful rise. Yet, the tools which Beijing deploys and how they are perceived by foreign publics is likely not uniform, as they are largely shaped by cultural and geopolitical undercurrents that are highly context-specific. In this study, we interviewed 76 government officials, private sector leaders, civil society representatives, academics, and foreign diplomats to understand how Beijing wields public diplomacy to achieve its objectives in three EAP countries: the Philippines, Malaysia, and Fiji.

### FINDING #3

#### **China's public diplomacy overtures have won Beijing key allies and tactical gains among elites, but they face an uphill battle to win over the average Filipino**

Beijing's financial diplomacy is highly visible in the Philippines, particularly infrastructure projects related to railways, potable water, and improvements in irrigation and fisheries. These investments are well targeted to President Rodrigo Duterte's "build, build, build"

agenda, but are not without controversy. Two Chinese-backed projects are particularly notorious in the eyes of the public: the Fort Magsaysay drug rehabilitation facility and a four-lane China Friendship Bridge.

Official visits from Chinese leaders to Manila, as well as invitations for delegations of executive branch officials and congressmen to visit Beijing, are another go-to tool in the Philippines. Interviewees frequently cited these attempts by China to turn the heads of their countrymen, saying that Beijing puts on a show for visiting Filipino dignitaries to make them feel special. As of April 2018, President Duterte alone has visited China three times since his election in 2016.

Beijing utilizes people-to-people exchanges to socialize Filipino citizens to Chinese values and philosophy. Interviewees largely alluded to these exchanges as “leaving a good taste in the mouth” of Filipinos and “highly effective.” However, some of those interviewed acknowledged that China’s exchange diplomacy is “rough around the edges” and that the current supply of opportunities to study in China outstrips demand.

Interviewees noted an uptick in Chinese cultural diplomacy, whereby China showcases its language, traditions, and the arts, in the Philippines. China has increasingly used the embassy’s annual Chinese New Year celebration to reach mainstream Filipino society. Beijing has also established four CIs in the Philippines; however, these institutes have provoked a backlash among academics and university administrators who view them as an infringement upon their scholastic independence.

China’s informational diplomacy has been muted in the Philippines. CCTV channels broadcast content in Mandarin and are only available as paid premium channels in the Philippines. China Daily and China Radio International operate in the Philippines, but are not viewed as go-to information sources for Filipinos. Several journalists were quick to point out, however, that China engages in paid public relations, such as weekly updates and statements in local print media.

Beijing has scored several political and economic wins for its efforts. It brokered an agreement for President Duterte’s political party members to be trained by the Communist Party of China. The Department of Foreign Affairs publicly praised the urban development of Xiamen, a Chinese city, as a model for the Philippines to emulate. Controversially, Duterte recognized China for supplying the rifle used to kill the leader of a pro-Islamic militant group to end the Marawi conflict and took a pro-China stance during the 31st ASEAN summit, refusing to discuss a ruling in favor of the Philippines’ claims in the South China Sea. In 2017, Duterte also invited China to set up the country’s third telecommunications provider.

The Filipino public is more reluctant to trust the “new and friendly China” rhetoric and wants greater

transparency and fairness around China’s transactions with the Philippines. Many interviewees urged caution in viewing China as a source of “ready money,” especially if such investment requires sourcing Chinese materials or labor, which displaces opportunities for Filipino businesses, or comes with a less competitive price tag in terms of higher interest rates.

#### FINDING #4

#### **Beijing has outsized influence in setting the terms for its economic deals, but its public diplomacy has not won real concessions from Malaysian leaders**

Financial diplomacy dominates the mindshare of Malaysian people when they think about China’s presence in their country. Chinese investment has grown quickly—from 0.8% of Malaysia’s net FDI inflows in 2008 to 14.4% in 2016—since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative. However, Beijing’s investments in high-profile rail and port projects have fueled concerns of growing indebtedness to China, whether Malaysia is getting a good deal for opening its economy, and if some investments are necessary.

While CCTV and Xinhua are present in Malaysia, several journalists noted that Beijing makes greater use of local Chinese language media, particularly the Chinese language newspaper *Sin Chew*, which features pieces written by the Chinese ambassador and includes embassy statements and events. Although the Chinese embassy does outreach with English-language media, there is almost no coverage in Bahasa or Tamil papers.

In Malaysia, the majority of Beijing’s cultural diplomacy is in the form of language training and cultural studies. Beijing opened two CIs and several smaller Confucius Classrooms across the country, but interviewees did not consider them to be influential. The embassy has made generous donations to Malaysian Chinese-language schools and the University of Malaya’s China Studies Institute. In 2016, China opened its second overseas campus, Xiamen University, in Sepang. However, the university largely attracts mainland Chinese students who wish to study in Malaysia, rather than Malaysian students.

Beijing sponsors numerous exchange programs for Malaysians to visit or study in China, though Malaysia trails other Southeast Asian countries in the number of students pursuing studies in mainland China. The vast majority of scholarship recipients are ethnic Malays, as few Malaysian Chinese elect to study in China. Beijing also facilitates exchanges for influential leaders from the Malaysian government, military, and academia. During these visits, the Chinese government showcases specific regions and sectors it believes will influence its visitors to think of China favorably.

China has an outsized economic influence in Malaysia as the only foreign player willing to invest heavily in large-scale infrastructure projects. In the absence of

competition, Beijing has more leverage to maximize the financial returns on its investments. It is less certain what Beijing gets in terms of security or foreign policy concessions. According to interviewees, Malaysia largely “respect[s] China’s policies around the world,” limiting engagement with Taiwan, supporting the One China policy, and avoiding criticism of China on core issues like Tibet or Xinjiang. However, these positions have long been a part of Malaysia’s foreign policy.

Interviewees were most likely to highlight the non-response of Malaysia to Chinese incursions in the South China Sea as the most direct proof that Malaysia has acquiesced to Beijing’s wishes in response to its diplomatic overtures. However, even this is up for debate. This may have less to do with Chinese public diplomacy than it does Malaysia’s broader “hedging and balancing” approach to foreign policy. The Malaysian government wants to avoid a fight with China that they feel they may not win.

Private sector leaders publicly support Chinese initiatives like the BRI and policies on Taiwan, believing that being pro-Beijing is good for business and a prerequisite to pursue investment projects with China. Similar patterns can be observed with political elites and intellectuals. Beijing has offered opportunities for parliamentarians to visit and receive training in China, as well as seemingly campaigning on their behalf to the point of provoking public outcry. Academics are careful to describe China in positive terms, as they know that Beijing’s critics lose opportunities for funding or travel.

#### FINDING #5

##### **Beijing has parlayed its public diplomacy overtures with Fijian leaders into a series of foreign policy wins, though its success is not without roadblocks**

Official visits and financial diplomacy are Beijing’s favored tools to curry favor with Fijian elites. Official visits account for a disproportionate share of China’s public diplomacy efforts and interviewees attested to the importance of these large scale, ceremonial visits. China has also responded to Fiji’s desire for investment in a big way, committing approximately US\$360 million since 2009 to finance bridges, roads, rails, and ports. However, these concessional loans have prompted concerns about mounting debt obligations to Beijing.

Meanwhile, Beijing uses cultural diplomacy to ingratiate itself with the Fijian public. According to interviewees, associations of Fijian Chinese that have lived in Fiji for multiple generations coordinate with mainland China to promote Chinese culture through festivals, cultural centers, museum exhibits, operas, and other public displays. China also established a CI at the University of South Pacific in Suva and holds classes and events to introduce Fijians to Chinese language and culture.

Beijing’s informational diplomacy in Fiji has been primarily routed through local Fijian media, such as a

ten-year partnership with the *Fiji Sun*, a government-backed newspaper. Through a journalism training program, Fijian journalists travel to China to learn about its culture, write about its policy priorities, and develop their skills. Interviewees reported that Chinese involvement in such media outlets has become mainstreamed, which enables Beijing to secure disproportionate media coverage for its stories.

China’s public diplomacy has secured support among Fijian elites for its political and economic interests. In 2014, Fiji endorsed the One China Policy and subsequently closed down its Trade and Tourism Representative Office in Taipei. Controversially, Fijian police cooperated with Chinese counterparts in July 2017 to arrest 77 Chinese nationals living in Fiji and extradite them to Beijing without formal charges. Meanwhile, Chinese investors have preferential access to Fiji’s economy. Interviewees claimed that state-controlled media sell Chinese development projects more extensively than those funded by other partners. Moreover, diplomats lament the Chinese ambassador’s unfettered access to top politicians and Beijing’s ability to control the media narrative in the country.

## What motivates how China wields its public diplomacy tools?

We examined how the amount and type of Chinese public diplomacy invested in EAP countries correlates with three factors — economic opportunities, security concerns, and openness to influence—that we would expect Beijing to take into account in order to maximize anticipated returns (or mitigate risk). The authors constructed a set of panel regression models to assess the extent to which these factors may explain how Beijing allocates its public diplomacy tools.

#### FINDING #6

##### **Beijing targets its public diplomacy to open market opportunities for Chinese firms and sway natural resource ‘gatekeepers’**

Countries that offer high-value market opportunities tend to receive more Chinese public diplomacy activities. However, the driver is not necessarily overall wealth, but openness to Chinese goods, services, and investments. In fact, being a richer country (higher levels of GDP per capita) is negatively associated with Chinese cultural and exchange diplomacy, once all other factors are taken into account. The one exception to this rule is official visits: wealthier countries do, in fact, receive more elite-to-elite diplomacy.

Beijing targets a disproportionate number of CIs and sister city agreements towards countries that accept a greater number of new Chinese firm entrants. Chinese leaders bestow more official visits on resource-rich countries where they presumably can persuade

government officials to give them access to resource rents. Additionally, as countries transition from being consumers of Chinese imports to attractive markets for Chinese investment, Beijing shifts its tactics from official visits to emphasize cultural and exchange diplomacy.

### FINDING #7

#### **Beijing tailors its public diplomacy in response to local factors such as: Internet penetration, size of the Chinese diaspora, and popular discontent**

Beijing varies its public diplomacy on the basis of how connected a country's citizens are with the outside world. It targets more exchange and cultural diplomacy activities and fewer official visits to countries that have higher levels of Internet use. This makes good strategic sense, as the Internet gives citizens in these contexts a larger megaphone to share their views, create pressure for their officials, and compare their country's interactions with China versus other actors.

Beijing does appear to take the presence (or absence) of a large Chinese diaspora into account in its public diplomacy efforts. Countries with higher numbers of Chinese migrants in 2010 receive more sister cities and Confucius Institutes. This is broadly what we would expect to see if China views the Chinese diaspora in EAP countries as a stepping stone to influence mainstream popular perceptions. Beijing may also be willing to take advantage of popular discontent, as we find that countries with higher levels of domestic unrest (i.e., riots, strikes, protests) do, in fact, receive more CIs.

### FINDING #8

#### **Beijing uses sister cities to make inroads with countries less aligned with its security concerns and CIs to consolidate relationships with allies**

When wooing democratic countries or those that have formal military alliances with the United States, China relies more heavily on sister cities than it does with other countries. This could signal a long-term strategy for Beijing to cultivate alliances outside of the central government with local-level government officials, businessmen, and civil society while it waits for a time when political leaders are more amenable to its views.

Beijing is more willing to deploy CIs to countries that are aligned with its security and foreign policy concerns. The more militarized disputes a country has with China and greater distance from Beijing in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the less likely it is to receive a CI. Countries that are less historically aligned with China may be more reticent to opt-in to the CI program or, alternatively, Beijing may seek the path of less resistance in using CIs to consolidate relationships with existing allies, rather than convince the skeptics.

Countries that are unwilling to vote with China in the UNGA generally receive less financial diplomacy from

Beijing. Meanwhile, countries that have frequently received aid in the past from China not only get more sister cities, but also more financial diplomacy.

## Why do some people and countries perceive China more favorably?

We examined how three sets of factors correlate with how people in EAP countries perceive China: (1) the volume of Chinese public diplomacy activities their country receives; (2) their individual socio-economic characteristics; and (3) the attributes of the countries in which they live. Drawing upon two waves of the AsiaBarometer survey of public attitudes, the authors estimated a set of probit models using survey responses to approximate public perceptions of China.

### FINDING #9

#### **Financial, cultural, and elite-to-elite diplomacy are associated with more favorable views of China**

Respondents in countries exposed to a higher volume of financial diplomacy and official visits were more likely to view China as having the best development model and as a positive force in their countries. There is one exception: while official visits were associated with more positive views of Beijing's bilateral engagement among citizens in EAP countries, this does not extend to perceptions that China has more regional influence.

Surprisingly, individuals from countries that received higher levels of less concessional financing from Beijing viewed Chinese influence more positively than those who received generous handouts. Moreover, residents of countries that received more traditional aid from China viewed Beijing as having less regional influence. This enthusiasm for less generous types of financial support runs counter to conventional wisdom that countries want to avoid burdensome, high-interest debt in favor of more concessional funding.

Since people can only credit China for projects they can readily observe and monitor, we tested whether respondents' views of China varied in relation to the volume of Chinese-financed infrastructure projects in their country that were more or less visible. We find that the presence of more visible infrastructure projects is associated with positive views of Beijing's influence in one's own country, but negatively correlated with China being seen as having the most regional influence.

Beijing's signature CIs appear to be more closely associated with perceptions of China's influence than in attracting people to embrace its development model. Respondents living in countries with more CIs view Beijing as more influential and regard that influence as positive. Conversely, sister cities do not fare as well. Respondents living in countries that have higher numbers of sister cities are less likely to prefer China's

development model. However, the lack of positive effects may say more about the profile of countries that receive this diplomacy than the utility of the tool itself.

## How well does China convert its public diplomacy overtures into foreign policy returns?

Beijing has numerous foreign policy objectives to advance its regional and global interests. In the report, we focused on its ability to secure one of them: convincing EAP countries to back its positions in UNGA. The authors estimated a set of panel regression models to examine how four sets of factors correlate with UNGA voting patterns: the volume of Chinese public diplomacy a country receives; their domestic political and economic environments; and their historical foreign policy alignment with China.

### FINDING #10

**EAP countries are most likely to vote with Beijing when they receive more official visits, CIs, and financing on generous terms, but not necessarily when they accept more Chinese firms**

Beijing's relationships with elites and cultural diplomacy appear to go hand in hand with its ability to influence how EAP countries vote in UNGA. The more official visits an EAP country received, the more likely they were to vote with China in the UN General Assembly. We also saw a relationship between a country's UNGA voting patterns and the presence of Confucius Institutes. Countries that were already aligned with China may be more likely to opt-in to the CI program and request more of such institutions, or CIs could be having the intended effect of softening Beijing's image and making alignment with China more attractive.

EAP countries were more likely to vote with Beijing in UNGA if they had more of two types of financial diplomacy: concessional official development assistance (aid) and infrastructure financing for projects that were less visible to the public (the pet projects of leaders). This distinction is important since the preponderance of China's financial diplomacy is in the form of less-concessional flows. It also shows the limits of buying loyalty on less than generous terms.

EAP leaders likely consider their country's economic prospects when they make their UNGA voting decisions. Nonetheless, exposure to Chinese business was actually associated with lower levels of foreign policy alignment between EAP countries and China. Countries that attracted a greater number of new Chinese firms in the previous year were less likely to align with Beijing's foreign policy positions. This finding gives some credence to the observation raised by interviewees that Chinese businesses can undercut

Beijing's official overtures if these new entrants breed resentment for their employment practices.

## What are the implications of China's public diplomacy for the region?

Beijing's intense focus on courting political and business elites, as well as its emphasis on financial diplomacy, could increase the risk of undue influence with leaders willing to exchange favors for economic gain. In this respect, it would be prudent for EAP countries to mandate greater disclosure of the amounts and terms of foreign grants or loans that support government activities, as well as any foreign funding received by political candidates.

Given growing sensitivities in several EAP countries regarding the fine line between public diplomacy and clandestine influencing operations, democratic governments in the region should take additional steps to curb foreign influence in their domestic political activities or campaigns. This could include new legislation to prevent foreign funding of political candidates and/or political parties, as well as the requirement that paid media advertisements or sponsored content be clearly labeled as such.

There was a prevailing feeling among interviewees that Western countries had retrenched and drawn back on their public diplomacy efforts. Amidst pressures of budget reductions for aid and diplomacy efforts, there is a temptation for Western countries to turn inward rather than keep pace with the increasing volume and sophistication of China's public diplomacy efforts. If they do so, they will cede ground to Beijing. Instead, Western countries should invest in making their public diplomacy activities more targeted and tailored to the EAP region. Building upon this preliminary study of China's public diplomacy, it would be valuable to commission additional research that looks at the question of effectiveness from a comparative lens to understand what public diplomacy programs and which providers would be best received in the EAP.

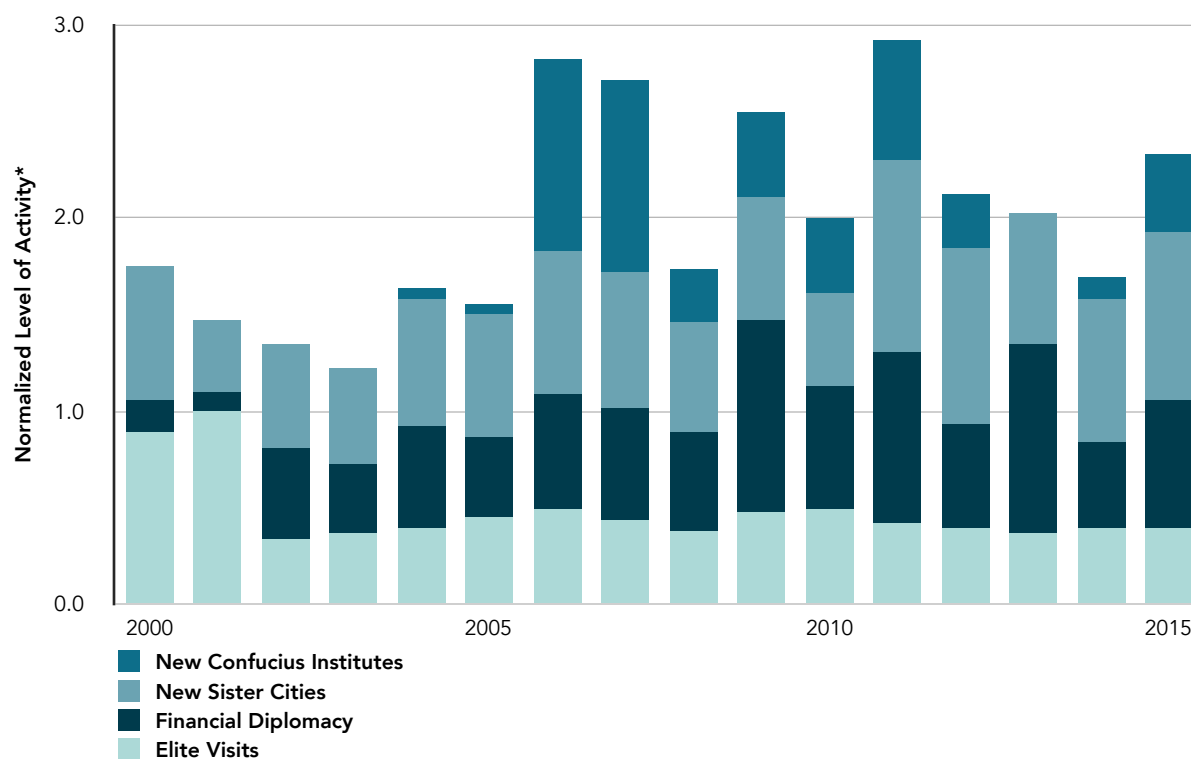
While this study broke new ground in quantifying the volume and diversity of Chinese public diplomacy tools, there are several areas that would benefit from additional research and data collection that were infeasible in this report given scope, time, and budget constraints. Future studies would do well to invest in additional data collection and research to fill in some of the remaining gaps: (1) comparable measures of information diplomacy and student exchanges over time and space; (2) data to capture *changes* in perceptions or behavior as a result of public diplomacy activities; and (3) comparative data on the public diplomacy activities and effectiveness of other foreign powers to situate China's overtures in the context of the multiple sending countries.



### Proxy Measures for Quantitative Analysis of Chinese Public Diplomacy

Category	Proxy Measure Used
Informational Diplomacy	N/A—insufficient data available to conduct comparable descriptive or statistical analysis
Cultural Diplomacy	Number of established Confucius Institutes present in an EAP country
Exchange Diplomacy	Number of sister city agreements between cities or provinces in an EAP country and China
Financial Diplomacy	Total amount of official finance dollars committed by China in assistance to an EAP country to provide budget support, humanitarian assistance, infrastructure investments, and/or debt relief
Elite-to-Elite Diplomacy	Number of civilian or military official visits at national or provincial levels between China and a given EAP country

### Public Diplomacy Portfolio Composition in EAP (Normalized Values)



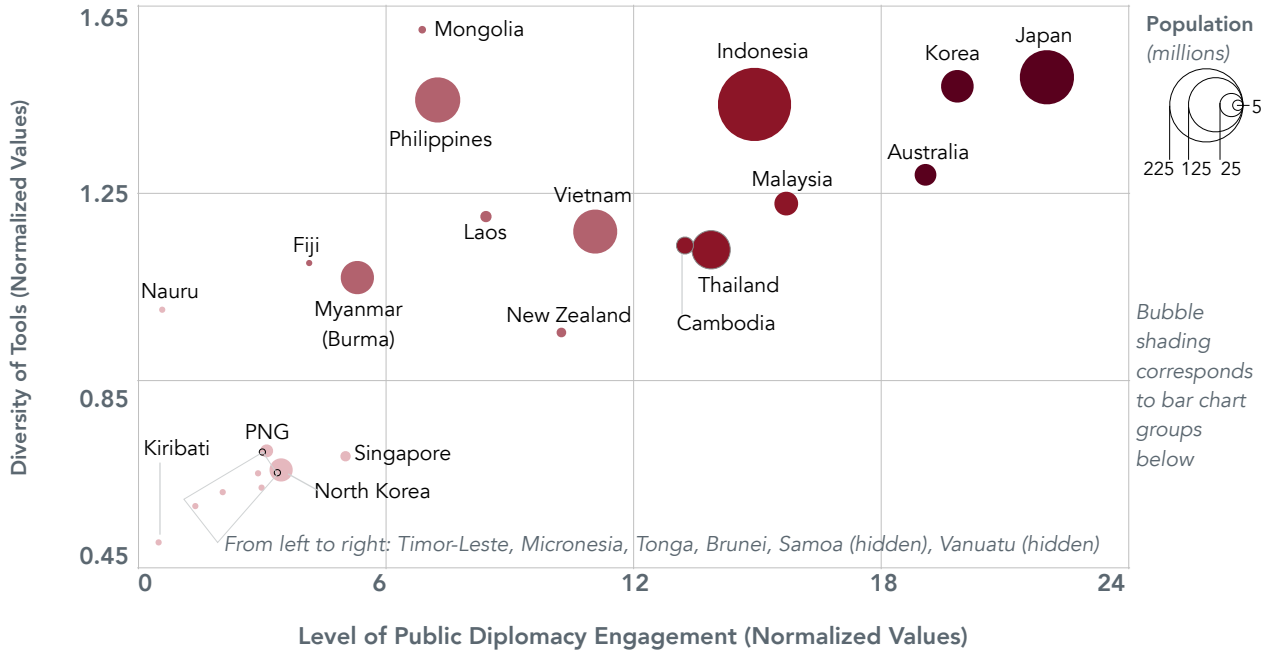
\* Y-Axis is normalized according to the highest value in each category.

**Notes:** This figure shows the mix of China's public diplomacy tools over time in the EAP region. Using normalized values to compare the different types of diplomacy, we see that China's portfolio has varied over time (e.g., a heavy focus on official visits in 2000 and 2001, and bursts of activity on CIs from 2006 and 2007). 2016 is not included because official visits not available that year. If included, the chart would show a dramatic increase in financial diplomacy in 2016. See Appendix A-3 and A-4 for description of our methodology.

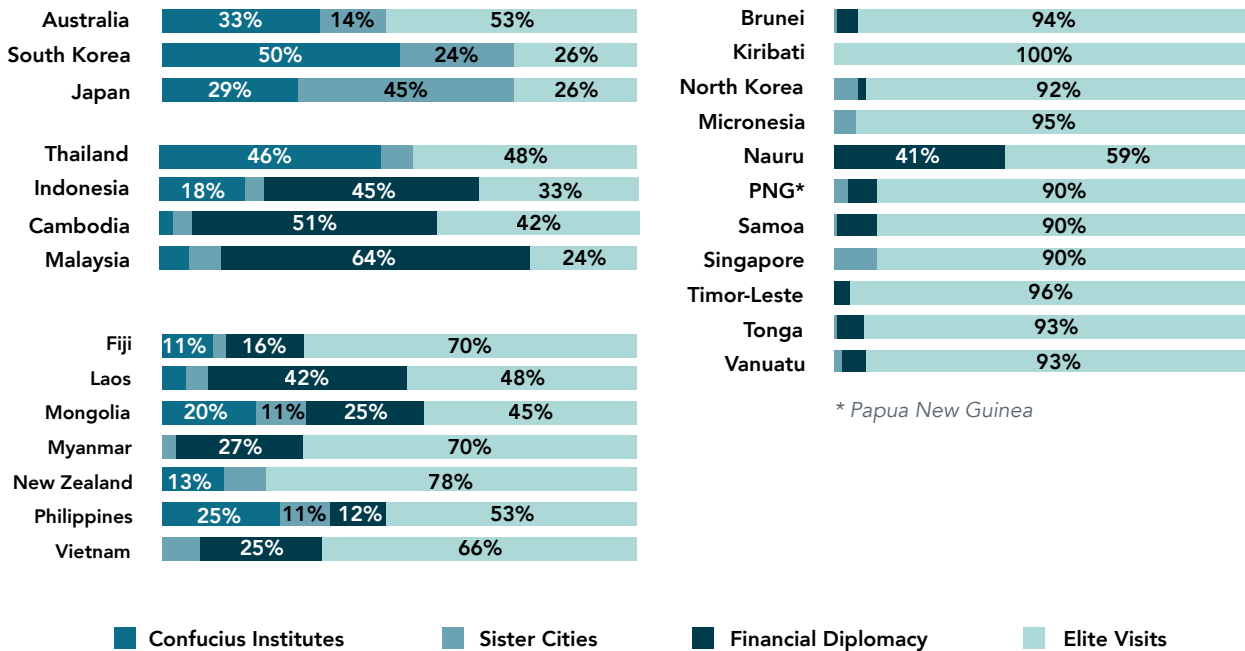
**Source:** Normalized values across four measures of public diplomacy across time calculated by AidData.

## China's Public Diplomacy Footprint in the EAP Region

Level of Public Diplomacy Engagement versus Diversity of Tools Used by China Across EAP countries



Composition of China's Public Diplomacy Activities by Country



Notes: Scores (for the level of overall engagement and diversity of public diplomacy tools) use normalized values to compare the four different types of diplomacy in each country. See Appendix A-4 for a description of our methodology. Composition refers to the mix of public diplomacy tools used by China in a given country.

Source: AidData.





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