

**The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in China-EU and Muslim-US Relations:  
An Empirical Analysis of Public Perceptions**

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This paper argues that as a consequence of globalization and the move to multi-polarity, cultural diplomacy assumes an increasingly important role in foreign affairs. One of the primary goals of cultural diplomacy is to create among foreign publics a positive attitude towards one's culture. We define this attitude as (positive) cultural affect. Up to now, the debate about cultural diplomacy has been predominantly theoretical in nature. This paper contributes an empirical analysis with four objectives. First, it describes the levels of Muslim and Chinese affect towards American and European culture, respectively. Second, it analyzes the relationship between cultural affect and public perceptions of foreign affairs. Third, it explores a number of potential determinants of cultural affect. Fourth, it shows that cultural affect significantly improves the attitude of foreign publics towards one's country. Among the most critical international relationships of our times are China-EU and Muslim-US relations. Therefore, the empirical part of the paper focuses on Chinese affect towards European culture and Muslim affect towards American culture. The differences and similarities between the two cases are highlighted. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of policy recommendations from a Euro-American perspective.

Keywords: cultural diplomacy, cultural affect, China-EU relations, Muslim-US relations

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **Research Question:** One of the primary goals of cultural diplomacy is to create among foreign publics a positive attitude towards one's (national) culture. We define this attitude as cultural affect. What are the levels, determinants and consequences of cultural affect?
2. **Research Focus:** This paper focuses on Chinese affect towards European culture and Muslim affect towards American culture, because China-EU and Muslim-US relations are critical to our understanding of world politics in the age of multi-polarity.
3. **Background:** We argue that cultural diplomacy assumes an increasingly important role in international affairs as the move to multi-polarity, in conjunction with the forces of globalization, has brought about a competition of "Multiple Modernities." Emerging powers like China use cultural diplomacy to promote models of social, economic and political development that rival those of the West. If the West wishes to maintain its leadership role in the cultural realm, and thus indirectly safeguard also its economic and political influence in world politics, Western governments must recognize the need for an appropriate answer to the ambitious cultural diplomacy efforts of the emerging powers.
4. **Levels of Cultural Affect:** Chinese exhibit high levels of positive affect towards all aspects of European culture. By contrast, Muslims express predominantly negative affect towards all aspects of American culture.
5. **Determinants of Cultural Affect:** The perception of realistic threat is a major determinant of both Muslim affect towards American culture and Chinese affect towards European culture. Other significant determinants of Muslim affect towards American culture are: having traveled to the US (+); age (-); cultural ethnocentrism (-); the importance of religion (-); and religious extremism (-). Other significant determinants of Chinese affect towards European culture are: the perceived trustworthiness of Europeans (+); the communicated image of the EU (+); and the perceived value distance between Europeans and Chinese (-).
6. **Consequences of Cultural Affect:** Positive cultural affect significantly improves the attitude of Muslims towards the US and the attitude of Chinese towards the EU. In addition, Muslim affect towards American culture is significantly associated with a more favorable attitude towards US foreign policy, while Chinese affect towards European culture is significantly associated with a more favorable attitude towards the EU's role in world politics and towards China-EU relations.
7. **Policy Implications:** Generally, policy makers need to recognize that cultural diplomacy (via cultural affect) can influence the attitude of foreign publics towards one's country. In order to increase Muslim affect towards American culture, the US should expand opportunities for cross-cultural exchange between Americans and Muslims, especially those Muslims who consider religion an important aspect of their life and who justify the use of violence in defense of Islam. As far as Chinese affect towards European culture is concerned, it appears that there is little room for improvement. However, the EU may want to increase Chinese trust in Europeans (the major determinant of Chinese affect towards European culture) by expanding opportunities for Chinese to acquire more knowledge about the EU and Europe. Also, the EU should try to reduce Chinese perceptions of value distance between Chinese and Europeans.

## Introduction

Cultural diplomacy constituted an integral component of Western foreign policy during the Cold War. When the Soviet Union collapsed, some academics enthusiastically proclaimed the end of history (Fukuyama, 1992). It appears that this notion provided Western governments with a welcome argument to scale down their cultural diplomacy efforts (Arndt, 2006 & 2005; Nye, 2004; Finn, 2003; Leonard, 2002).

However, two developments of the post-Cold War era give reason to believe that a renaissance of cultural diplomacy is imminent: globalization and the move to multi-polarity. Globalization has, according to Thomas Friedman (2006), entered a third stage: after governments and companies, globalization has finally reached the individual. Recent advances in communication and transport technologies allow individuals to communicate, compete and cooperate with other individuals around the world in real time, thus producing unprecedented levels of cross-cultural exchange.<sup>1</sup> This latest stage of globalization has profound implications for cultural diplomacy. First, it leads to an expansion of the domain of cultural diplomacy. Second, it creates global competition for market share in the creative goods and services industries; for tourism, foreign students and talented immigrants; and for direct foreign investment, all of which leads to a reconceptualization of culture as resource (Yudice, 2000) or power (Nye, 2005a). Hence, cultural diplomacy has become “a quest for the tourist dollar as well as a battle for hearts and minds” (Bound et al., 2007, p.19).

The move to a multi-polar world is the second major development of the post-Cold War era that has profound implications for cultural diplomacy. As predicted by Francis Fukuyama’s academic alter ego, Samuel Huntington (1993 & 1996), the global supremacy of “the West” is coming under attack. The spectacular economic growth of the BRIC countries on the one hand and the economic and sovereign debt crises in the United States and the European Union on the other hand are the most obvious exemplifications of the shifting balance of power in world politics. Importantly, unlike many Western governments, rising powers like China recognize the necessity for strategic cultural diplomacy (Nye, 2005b; Huang & Ding, 2006). The spectacular speed with which Confucius Institutes are being established the world over is testimony to China’s ambitious cultural diplomacy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the KOF Social Globalization Index for the growth of social globalization over time: <http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch/> According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development’s “Creative Economy Report 2010,” global trade of cultural goods and services has increased by 14 per cent between 2003 and 2008, reaching 600 billion dollars in 2008.

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese national Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (Hanban) aims to open the 1000<sup>th</sup> Confucius Institute by 2020, although the first Confucius Institute was opened only in 2004.

The emerging powers actively employ cultural diplomacy as a means to “project themselves not just to foreign governments, but also to a global public opinion and potential partners and allies” (Bound et al., 2007, p.17). What is more, through their cultural diplomacy the emerging powers promote alternative models of social, economic and political development that rival those of the West. The notion of the “End of History” has been cast aside by the prospect of “Multiple Modernities,” which rejects the equivalence of modernization and “Westernization” (Eisenstadt, 2000 & 2002).

So, while globalization increases cross-cultural exchanges in an undirected and uninterested manner, the move to multi-polarity infuses these cross-cultural exchanges with a strategic dimension, because the “competition of cultures” is as much about market share as it is about ideas and values.

This development does not inevitably lead to Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” (1993 & 1996), but it makes very clear that in today’s interconnected, multi-polar world “we should no longer think of culture as subordinate to politics. Instead, we should think of culture as providing the context for politics” (Bound et al., 2007, p.20). However, the growing political relevance of culture and thus of cultural diplomacy is not only highlighted by the competition of “multiple modernities,” but also by the challenges posed by political movements that are in fact “anti-modern,” such as Islamic fundamentalism. According to Huntington (1996), many of these political movements are driven by cultural identity crises and present a backlash to the globalization of Western modernity.

As Walter Laqueur remarked in his prescient *Foreign Affairs* article from 1994:

[...] the world has entered a period of great disorder. In facing these new dangers, a re-examination of old priorities is needed. Cultural diplomacy, in the widest sense, has increased in importance, whereas traditional diplomacy and military power [...] are of limited use in coping with these dangers. (p.20)

Hence, cultural diplomacy assumes an increasingly important role in foreign affairs. The economic supremacy of the West is already being challenged by the economic development of the BRIC countries. If the West wishes to maintain its leadership role in the cultural realm, and thus indirectly safeguard also its economic and political influence in world politics, it must find an appropriate answer to the cultural diplomacy efforts of the emerging powers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> According to the UNCTAD “Creative Economy Report 2010,” 83 percent of creative services exports and 53 percent of creative goods exports are accounted for by the developed countries, first and foremost the United States and Western European countries. However, China is the largest exporter of creative goods in 2008 and its market share of 20.8 percent dwarfs the 8.6 percent of the United States. In addition, India shows the greatest growth in exports of creative goods between 2002 and 2008.

The challenges posed by globalization and multi-polarity require a pragmatic and goal-oriented reconceptualization of cultural diplomacy. What should the goals of cultural diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century be? Cultural diplomacy may be defined in the abstract as public diplomacy by way of cultural means and policies.<sup>4</sup> The goals of *public* diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have been outlined by Mark Leonard et al. (2002; see also Leonard, 2002) and succinctly summarized by Bound et al. (2007, p.24):

1. *“Increasing familiarity:* making people think about your country and updating their image of it;
2. *Increasing appreciation:* creating positive perceptions of your country and getting others to see issues from your perspective;
3. *Engaging people:* encouraging people to see your country as an attractive destination for tourism and study and encouraging them to buy its products and subscribe to its values;
4. *Influencing people’s behavior:* getting companies to invest, encouraging public support for your country’s positions, and convincing politicians to turn to it as an ally.”

In addition, Leonard’s conception of public diplomacy (see Leonard et al., 2002) features three temporal dimensions: news management (short-term), strategic communications (medium-term) and relationship building (long-term). It is conceivable that cultural diplomacy can make significant contributions to the strategic communications and relationship building dimensions of public diplomacy.

However, one should take note of Raj Isar’s (2010, p.33) warning that “[...] too much is expected of cultural diplomacy today, that it is pressed into service in the name of goods that it cannot deliver.” In response, a more skeptical observer may even ask “Is there any evidence to support the claim that cultural diplomacy can in fact contribute *anything* to public diplomacy as defined above?” The predominantly theoretical debates about the role of cultural diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot conclusively answer this question. Generally, we believe that cultural diplomacy as a foreign policy tool is underappreciated, because its impact is not well understood (see also Mark, 2009, pp.1-4). This is so, because “[m]easuring success in cultural diplomacy [...] is challenging. How does one quantify changes in attitude?”<sup>5</sup>

This paper takes up the challenge as it seeks to demonstrate the impact of cultural diplomacy on foreign public opinion by way of empirical analysis. But where should one start with the empirical exploration of this issue? Are there critical cases that deserve special attention? This paper focuses on China-EU and Muslim-US relations. The former constitutes one of the fastest growing international trade relationships with huge potential for cultural exchanges, while the latter is arguably the most conflictual relationship in international relations today,

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<sup>4</sup> See Mark (2009) for a comprehensive discussion of the various definitions of cultural diplomacy.

<sup>5</sup> Cynthia P. Schneider: *Cultural Diplomacy and the “I Didn’t Know That Factor,”* Huffington Post, December 15, 2010.

not least due to the politicization of culture on both sides. Both relationships are of critical importance for our current understanding of world politics as they shed light on the relations between “the West” and its “challenger civilizations,” as Huntington calls them (1996, pp.102-121). Hence, the proposed analysis does not only contribute empirical insights to the largely theoretical debate about the role of cultural diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but its findings may also inform closely related debates about the “Clash of Civilizations.”

In light of our goal-oriented definition, one may claim that one of the primary functions of cultural diplomacy is to create among foreign publics a favorable attitude towards one’s (national) culture. We define this attitude as (positive) cultural affect. The empirical analysis will focus on this function of cultural diplomacy, i.e., we analyze the effect of cultural diplomacy by way of cultural affect. More specifically, we pursue four objectives with the empirical analysis. First, we describe the levels of Muslim and Chinese affect towards American and European culture, respectively. Second, we investigate the relationship between the attitude of foreign publics towards one’s culture (cultural affect) and foreign public perceptions of one’s country as an international actor. Third, we explore potential determinants of cultural affect. Fourth, we determine the impact of cultural affect on the attitude of foreign publics towards one’s country.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: the first part presents definitions, operationalizations and data sources; the second part reviews previous empirical research on the role of cultural affect in Chinese public perceptions of (1) China-EU relations and of (2) the EU as an international actor; the third part analyzes the role of cultural affect in Muslim public perceptions of US foreign policy; the fourth part discusses similarities and differences between the two cases. The paper concludes with a brief presentation of policy recommendations from a Euro-American perspective.

### **Definitions, Operationalizations and Data Sources**

One of the central goals of cultural diplomacy is to create among foreign publics a favorable attitude towards one’s culture. We define this attitude as (positive) cultural affect. Importantly, affect can be either positive or negative. Some argue that positive and negative affect are independent of each other (Watson & Clark, 1997; Zautra, Potter & Reich, 1997); others maintain that they constitute polar opposites (Eich, 1995; Reisenzein, 1994; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). This paper measures positive and negative affect on the same scale, i.e., affect is viewed as being bipolar. In addition, we consider affect to be post-cognitive (Brewin, 1989; Lazarus, 1982).

We must now define the object of affect: culture. Hall (1997, p.2) claims that “[c]ulture is one of the most difficult concepts in the human and social sciences.” And Vincken et al. (2004, p.7) reach the conclusion that “[s]ocial scientists seem to agree that culture on the conceptual level includes almost everything and excludes almost nothing known to human life.” While we acknowledge that culture is notoriously difficult to define, we argue that in order to conduct any empirical research, it is necessary to establish a working definition of culture. Hence, we define culture as the historically transmitted system of social organization of a self-identified group of people that finds expression in artifacts, institutions, behaviors and ideas, which reflect common values. Our operationalization of culture will try to do justice to its multi-dimensional nature.

In this paper we measure affect towards two specific cultures: European and American culture. However, we believe that it is not necessary to define the exact “content” of these two cultures, for it is irrelevant how Chinese and Muslim survey respondents define European and American culture, respectively; what matters is the direction and intensity of their affect towards their *subjective idea* of what European and American culture may (or may not) be.

We measure cultural affect with the following survey items:

<b>Affect towards European Culture</b>	<b>Affect towards American Culture</b>
1. It is good that European cultures are spreading here, OR it's bad that European cultures are spreading here.	1. It is good that American ideas and customs are spreading here, OR it's bad that American ideas and customs are spreading here.
2. It is good that European fashion is spreading here, OR it's bad that European fashion is spreading here.	2.-4. I like American music, movies and television, OR I dislike American music, movies and television.
3. I like European music, OR I dislike European music.	
4. I like European movies, OR I dislike European movies.	
5. I admire Europe for its technological and scientific advances, OR I do not admire Europe for its technological and scientific advances	5. I admire the United States for its technological and scientific advances, OR I do not admire the United States for its technological and scientific advances.
6. I like European ideas about democracy, OR I dislike European ideas about democracy.	6. I like American ideas about democracy, OR I dislike American ideas about democracy.
7. I like European ways of doing business, OR I dislike European ways of doing business.	7. I like American ways of doing business, OR I dislike American ways of doing business.

The seven items measure affect towards different aspects of culture as we seek to do justice to its multi-dimensional nature. Item 1 elicits a holistic affect response, which implicitly taps symbolic threat perceptions, i.e., whether the foreign culture is perceived as a threat to one's own culture or not. Items 2-4 measure affect towards various popular artifacts of European/American culture. Please note that in the case of American culture the popular culture items are merged into a single item. Item 5 measures admiration for

European/American technological and scientific achievements. Item 6 measures affect towards European/American ideas about democracy and thus, by implication, of European/American political values. Item 7 measures affect towards European/American “ways” of doing business, thus tapping the respondent’s attitude towards European/American “behavior” in a particular social domain.

The above items were combined into an index, which is constructed according to a formative rather than a reflexive logic, meaning that each item measures affect towards a particular aspect of European/American culture and only combined do they represent an indicator of affect towards European/American culture (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Consequently, internal consistency is not expected and it is not relevant that the Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha = 0.620$ ) for the European affect index is below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). The American affect index, however, has a Cronbach’s Alpha of .704, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Since the constituent items of both indices were coded 0 (negative response) and 1 (positive response), the European affect index ranges from 0 to 7 and the American affect index ranges from 0 to 5.

The empirical findings presented in this paper are based on analyses of two different data sets. The analysis of Muslim affect towards American culture is based on the PEW Global Attitudes Project (GAP) 2007 dataset, which contains representative samples of 47 countries.<sup>6</sup> More specifically, our Muslim sample is exclusively based on survey participants from predominantly Muslim countries who also indicated an Islamic religious tradition as their religious affiliation.<sup>7</sup>

The findings on Chinese affect towards European culture that we report in this paper are based on previous research by Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press). They analyzed data from a representative random sample of Chinese citizens, who participated in a survey that was conducted in 2010 in the cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xi’an, Chengdu, and Nanning as part of the European Commission project “Disaggregating Chinese Perceptions of the EU and the Implications for the EU’s China Policy.”<sup>8</sup> This urban sampling focus means that the findings reported here cannot be extended to China’s rural population, whose socio-demographic characteristics are not comparable to those of the urban Chinese population.

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<sup>6</sup> See the data archive of the PEW Research Center: [www.pewglobal.org/category/datasets/2007/](http://www.pewglobal.org/category/datasets/2007/)

<sup>7</sup> Our sample consists of respondents from the following countries: Bangladesh; Egypt; Indonesia; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Malaysia; Mali; Morocco; Pakistan; Senegal; Turkey.

<sup>8</sup> Please consult the project website for further details: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/research/funded-projects/chinese-eu/index.aspx](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/research/funded-projects/chinese-eu/index.aspx)

## **Chinese Affect towards European Culture**

This section reviews the findings of previous research by Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) on Chinese affect towards European culture. This section has four parts: first, we describe the level of Chinese affect towards European culture; second, we show how Chinese affect towards European culture relates to Chinese public perceptions of (1) China-EU relations and (2) the EU as an international actor; third, we review the major determinants of Chinese affect towards European culture; fourth, we determine the impact of Chinese affect towards European culture on the attitude of Chinese towards the EU.

### *The Level of Chinese Affect towards European Culture*

Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) find that 87 percent of survey participants express positive affect towards European culture. What is more, 96 percent of respondents have a positive attitude towards the spread of European culture within China, which shows very clearly that Chinese do not perceive European culture as a symbolic threat to their own culture.<sup>9</sup> Considering more specific aspects of European culture, Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) find that urban Chinese also express a very favorable attitude towards European cultural goods (fashion = 92 percent positive; movies = 83 percent positive; music = 82 percent positive), European ways of doing business (85 percent positive) and European ideas of democracy (82 percent positive). Admiration for European technological and scientific advances is even higher as nine out of ten Chinese express positive affect towards the latter.

In conclusion, Chinese express high levels of positive affect towards all aspects of European culture. Importantly, Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) find that the overall level of affect is very homogeneous across socio-demographic groups.

### *The Relationship between Chinese Affect towards European Culture and Chinese Public Perceptions of China-EU Relations and the EU as an International Actor*

If we believe that cultural diplomacy, via creating a positive attitude among foreign publics towards one's culture (cultural affect), can contribute to the strategic communication goals of public diplomacy, we would expect to see a significant positive relationship between Chinese affect towards European culture and Chinese public perceptions of the EU and of China-EU relations. Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) find exactly that. For the sake of brevity, the findings of their correlational analysis are reproduced in the form of Table 1.

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<sup>9</sup> Concerning the concept of "symbolic threat," see Stephan and Renfro (2003), Stephan and Stephan (2000) as well as Stephan et al. (2009).

**Table 1: Bivariate Correlations with “Affect towards European Culture”**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
<i>EU’s Role in the World</i>	
Peace in the world	0.26***
International economy	0.19***
Protection of the environment	0.22**
Scientific progress	0.18***
Fighting poverty	0.23***
Fighting international terrorism	0.25***
Promotion of democracy	0.17***
<i>China-EU Relations</i>	
Evaluation of current relations	0.11***
Friendliness of current relations	0.13***
Prospects of relations	0.18***
Characterization of current relationship	0.15***
Increased cooperation	0.21***

Significance levels: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$

The positive and significant correlation coefficients show that as Chinese affect towards European culture increases, Chinese public perceptions of the EU’s role as an international actor and of China-EU relations become more favorable. Importantly, correlations do not permit causal inferences. However, Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) conduct a series of one-way ANOVAs, which show that on the whole urban Chinese who express positive affect towards European culture have a significantly more positive attitude towards the EU’s as an international actor and towards China-EU relations compared to those respondents who are “affectively neutral” or express negative affect.

In conclusion, there is a significant positive relationship between Chinese affect towards European culture and Chinese public perceptions of the EU as an international actor and of China-EU relations.

#### *Determinants of Chinese Affect towards European Culture*

Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) also explore potential determinants of Chinese affect towards European culture. They find that the perceived trustworthiness of Europeans significantly increases Chinese affect towards European culture (beta = 0.176;  $p < .001$ ).<sup>10</sup> By contrast the perceived aggressiveness of Europeans significantly reduces Chinese affect towards European culture (beta = -0.110;  $p < .01$ ).<sup>11</sup> Both effects are interpreted as being congruent with the premises of Intergroup Threat Theory (Stephan & Renfro, 2003; Stephan

<sup>10</sup> The “perceived trustworthiness of Europeans” was measured by the item “Do you think in general that Europeans are trustworthy or cannot be trusted?”

<sup>11</sup> The “perceived aggressiveness of Europeans” was measured by the item “Do you think in general that Europeans are peaceful or aggressive?”

& Stephan, 2000), which proposes threat perceptions as major determinants of out-group attitudes. However, it is also possible to relate these findings to Image Theory (Alexander et al., 2005; Herrmann, 1985; Cottam, 1977) and the Stereotype Content Model (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2008; Fiske et al., 2002) as both argue that perceived intentions are key determinants of intergroup attitudes.

A third variable that influences Chinese affect towards European culture is the image of the EU that has been communicated to the respondent by his or her most important source of information about the EU. Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) find that a positive image of the EU significantly increases Chinese affect towards European culture (beta = 0.084;  $p < .05$ ).

Finally, the perceived value distance between Chinese and Europeans significantly reduces Chinese affect towards European culture (beta = 0.063;  $p < .05$ ). This finding is interpreted as being consistent with Rokeach's (1980) Belief Congruence Theory and Stephan and Stephan's (1996 & 2000) Intergroup Threat Theory, which argue that (perceived) congruence in values and beliefs leads to positive attitudes and feelings towards out-groups (see also Hogg & Vaughan, 2008; O'Driscoll & Feather, 1983).

Combined, the perceived trustworthiness of Europeans, the perceived aggressiveness of Europeans, the communicated image of the EU, and the perceived value distance between Chinese and Europeans explain roughly 16 percent of the variance in Chinese affect towards European culture.

Interestingly, Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) find that despite their prominence in the literature on intergroup relations, nationalism (e.g., "I am proud of being Chinese"), cross-group contact (speaking a European language, travel to the EU, personal contact with Europeans) as well as factual and self-reported knowledge about the EU and Europe have no significant effects on Chinese affect towards European culture once the above mentioned variables are controlled for.

In conclusion, the analysis by Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) shows that Chinese stereotypes of Europeans are an important factor determining Chinese affect towards European culture.

#### *The Impact of Cultural Affect on the Attitude of Chinese towards the European Union*

Finally, we want to determine the impact of Chinese affect towards European culture on the attitude of Chinese towards the European Union. To this end, we conducted two OLS regression analyses with the original dataset of Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press). The results are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2: OLS-Regressions [Beta (T-value)] on “Attitude towards the EU”**

Model	1	2
Gender	0.003 (0.073)	-0.016 (-0.482)
Age	-0.032 (-0.790)	-0.037 (-0.933)
Education	0.006 (0.132)	0.017 (0.421)
Income	0.001 (0.015)	0.002 (0.048)
Perceived value distance	0.003 (0.098)	0.015 (0.429)
Perceived trustworthiness of Europeans	0.212*** (5.932)	0.180*** (5.032)
Perceived aggressiveness of Europeans	-0.083* (-2.390)	-0.065 (-1.894)
Speaking European language	0.044 (1.159)	0.039 (1.044)
Having been to EU	0.023 (0.658)	0.019 (0.530)
Personal contact with Europeans	0.025 (0.700)	0.029 (0.827)
Nationalism	0.008 (0.227)	0.008 (0.247)
Attentiveness to international news	0.064 (1.730)	0.054 (1.489)
Self-reported knowledge about EU/Europe	0.057 (1.440)	0.046 (1.148)
Factual knowledge about EU	0.002 (0.049)	0.003 (0.075)
Communicated image of EU	0.062 (1.757)	0.046 (1.303)
CULTURAL AFFECT		0.179*** (5.073)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.106	0.132
N	866	866

Note: City residence is controlled for; Significance levels: \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$

The dependent variable, the attitude towards the EU, was measured by the item “Please tell me if you have a very unfavorable, somewhat unfavorable, somewhat favorable or very favorable impression of the EU.” The first regression model contains all variables that Graf, Reher and Welzel (in press) used as predictors of cultural affect. We believe that these variables are also potential predictors of the attitude of Chinese towards the EU. From the first column in Table 1, we can see that only Chinese perceptions of European trustworthiness and aggressiveness have a significant influence on the attitude of Chinese towards the EU. Notably, trust plays the more important role as it has an effect more than twice the size of the effect of the perceived aggressiveness of Europeans. The first model explains 10.6 percent of variance in the attitude of Chinese towards the EU. So, it appears that Chinese stereotypes of Europeans do not only influence Chinese affect towards European culture, but also the attitude of Chinese towards the EU.

Now, in order to determine the impact of cultural affect over and above the other predictors, we simply add cultural affect to the first model. From the second column in Table 2, we can see that cultural affect significantly improves the attitude of Chinese towards the EU. The effect of cultural affect is as strong as the effect of the perceived trustworthiness. Interestingly, once we control for the influence of cultural affect, the effect of perceived aggressiveness becomes insignificant, meaning that part of the original effect of perceived aggressiveness is explained away by cultural affect. Finally, we should note that cultural affect adds 2.6 of explained variance, which may not seem like much. However, the model as a whole explains 13.2 percent of variance in the attitude of Chinese towards the EU. And given that only perceptions of trustworthiness and cultural affect have significant and equally strong effects, we believe that the findings of this analysis demonstrate that cultural diplomacy – via cultural affect – can significantly influence the attitude of Chinese towards the EU.

#### *Section Summary: Chinese Affect towards European Culture*

This section has shown that: (1) Chinese express high levels of positive affect towards all aspects of European culture; (2) that as Chinese affect towards European culture increases, Chinese perceptions of the EU's role in the world and of China-EU relations become more favorable; (3) that Chinese stereotypes of Europeans are the major determinants of both Chinese affect towards European culture and the attitude of Chinese towards the EU; (4) and that cultural affect has a comparatively strong and positive influence on the attitude of Chinese towards the EU.

#### **Muslim Affect towards American Culture**

Joseph Nye wrote about Muslim-US relations in a 2004 *Foreign Affairs* article that “[...] many fear, misunderstand, and oppose U.S. policies, but they nonetheless admire certain American values and aspects of American culture” (p.18). This section analyzes how Muslim affect towards American culture relates to Muslim public perceptions of US foreign policies. More specifically, this section has four parts: first, we describe the level of Muslim affect towards American culture; second, we investigate the relationship between Muslim affect towards American culture and Muslim public perceptions of US foreign policies; third, we explore potential determinants of Muslim affect towards American culture; fourth, we determine the impact of Muslim affect towards American culture on the attitude of Muslims towards the US.

### *The Level of Muslim Affect towards American Culture*

The respondents in our pooled Muslim sample express predominantly negative affect towards all aspects of American culture (see Table 3). The only positive exception is the high level of admiration for American technological and scientific advances. By contrast, the spread of American values and customs in the respondents' own countries is viewed most critically, which suggests that the majority of Muslims perceives American values as a symbolic threat to their own culture. American ways of doing business, popular cultural goods and ideas of democracy rank in between. Hence, we do not find evidence in support of Joseph Nye's notion that Muslims admire American culture.

**Table 3: Muslim Affect towards American Culture**

<b>Aspect of American Culture</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>N</b>
Admiration for technology and science	71.3	28.7	9428
American ways of doing business	43.3	56.7	9290
American movies, music and television	37.2	62.8	9856
American ideas of democracy	32.2	67.8	9318
Spread of American values and customs	15.1	84.9	9663

*Note: Reported figures are percentages.*

### *Muslim Public Perceptions of US Foreign Policy*

Before we proceed to the analysis of the relationship between Muslim affect towards American culture and Muslim public perceptions of certain US foreign policies, we believe it is necessary and informative to describe the latter in more detail.

The aggregate responses to the policy items show that the majority of Muslims view US foreign policies negatively (see Table 4). In essence, most Muslims perceive the United States as a selfish actor in world politics that is inconsiderate of other countries' interests and promotes democracy only where it serves its own interests. Furthermore, the great majority of Muslims opposes the United States' military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as its global war on terror.

In sum, the findings of the descriptive analysis put the opening comment by Joseph Nye (2004) somewhat into perspective, i.e., the majority of Muslims do not only disapprove of US foreign policy, but they also express negative affect towards almost all aspects of American culture, with the sole exception of the United States' technological and scientific achievements.

**Table 4: Muslim Perceptions of US Foreign Policy**

Item	Response Options	Valid %	N
In making international policy decisions, to what extent do you think the United States takes into account the interests of countries like our country?	Not at all	38.6	9340
	Not too much	33.1	
	Fair amount	19.3	
	Great deal	8.9	
Do United States policies increase the gap between rich and poor countries, lessen the gap between rich and poor countries, or do United States policies have no effect on the gap between rich and poor countries?	Increase gap	65.7	9296
	No effect	14.0	
	Lessen gap	20.3	
Does the United States promote democracy wherever it can, OR does the United States promote democracy mostly where it serves its interests?	Where serves interests	79.2	8746
	Wherever it can	20.8	
Do you favor the US-led efforts to fight terrorism, OR do you oppose the US-led efforts to fight terrorism.	Oppose US efforts	73.7	9210
	Favor US efforts	26.3	
Do you think the U.S. should keep military troops in Iraq until the situation has stabilized, or do you think the U.S. should remove its troops as soon as possible?	Remove its troops	87.0	9539
	Keep troops in IRQ	13.0	
Do you think the U.S. and NATO should keep military troops in Afghanistan until the situation has stabilized, or do you think the U.S. and NATO should remove their troops as soon as possible?	Remove their troops	85.9	9240
	Keep their troops in AFG	14.1	

*The Relationship between Muslim Affect towards American Culture and Muslim Public Perceptions of US Foreign Policy*

In order to analyze the relationship between Muslim affect towards American culture and Muslim public perceptions of US foreign policy, we conducted a series of bivariate correlations (see Table 5).

The significant and positive correlation coefficients indicate that as affect towards American culture increases public perceptions of US foreign policies become more favorable. Even support for US military operations in the Muslim world increases with higher levels of affect towards American culture. Again, we need to emphasize that correlational analysis does not allow for causal inferences. However, a series of one-way ANOVAs shows that respondents who express positive affect towards American culture have a significantly more favorable attitude towards US foreign policy than those respondents who are “affectively neutral” or express negative affect (see Table 6).

**Table 5: Bivariate Correlations with “Affect towards American Culture”**

Policy Item	Correlation	N
US takes into account other countries’ interests	.265***	7983
US policies reduce the gap between poor and rich countries	.154***	7973
US promotes democracy wherever it can	.293***	7565
Support for US war on terror	.360***	7870
US should keep troops in Iraq until the situation has stabilized	.293***	7860
US should keep troops in Afghanistan until the situation has stabilized	.278***	7705

Note: All correlations are one-tailed; significance levels: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Table 6: Results of One-way ANOVAs and Associated Post-hoc Tests**

Independent variable: Affect towards American culture (three groups: positive, neutral and negative)					
Dependent variable	ANOVA	Post-hoc test mean difference		SE	
US takes other countries’ interests into account	$F(2,7803) = 251.977, p < 0.001$	Positive	Negative	.636***	0.030
			Neutral	.319***	0.031
Gap between rich and poor	$F(2,7790) = 95.669, p < 0.001$	Positive	Negative	.346***	0.027
			Neutral	.237***	0.027
Promotion of democracy	$F(2,7866) = 538.789, p < 0.001$	Positive	Negative	.417***	0.014
			Neutral	.291***	0.015
Support for war on terror	$F(2,7561) = 305.308, p < 0.001$	Positive	Negative	.299***	0.014
			Neutral	.157***	0.015
Troops in Iraq	$F(2,7856) = 348.488, p < 0.001$	Positive	Negative	.271***	0.013
			Neutral	.180***	0.014
Troops in Afghanistan	$F(2,7702) = 305.665, p < 0.001$	Positive	Negative	.264***	0.013
			Neutral	.184***	0.014

Significance levels: \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$

### *Determinants of Muslim Affect towards American Culture*

In order to explore potential determinants of Muslim affect towards American culture, we conducted a series of OLS regression analyses. Before we present our results, however, we would like to emphasize that the choice of predictor variables was heavily constrained by the availability of relevant items in the GAP 2007 survey. As a result, it was impossible to include in our analysis the same set of predictors that Welzel, Graf and Reher (in press) used in their analysis of Chinese affect towards European culture. While this circumstance may preclude more direct comparisons between the two cases, it enables us to explore additional predictors of cultural affect.

We should further note that the regression analyses were conducted exclusively with cases that have valid values across all the variables included in the analysis. This ensures that the effects are comparable across the models and not mere artifacts of the otherwise changing size

and composition of the samples. However, this case selection criterion reduces the sample size to N=1681.<sup>12</sup>

We tested a total of six models (see Table 7). The first model is the socio-demographic baseline model consisting of gender, age and education. Unfortunately, we saw ourselves unable to include an income variable, because the income variable in the GAP 2007 is coded differently for every country and the income categories are not comparable.<sup>13</sup> We find that the socio-demographic model alone explains 1.9 percent of variance in affect towards American culture. *Gender* does not influence Muslim affect towards American culture, which is an interesting finding given that Inglehart and Norris (2003) argue that the true clash of civilizations between the West and the Muslim world is about attitudes towards divorce, abortion and gender equality. On the basis of that argument, one would expect Muslim women to be significantly more sympathetic to American culture than Muslim men. However, we find no evidence in support of this notion. *Age* significantly reduces affect towards American culture, meaning that younger Muslims express more positive affect towards American culture than older Muslims. However, from the reported effect, we cannot discern between a cohort and a life-cycle effect. *Education* significantly increases affect towards American culture, which is consistent with previous research showing that education reduces out-group prejudice (González et al., 2008; Wagner & Zick, 2006; Kunovich, 2004).

The second model adds three religious variables to the baseline model, which increases the amount of explained variance in affect towards American culture to 4.2 percent. The *importance of religion* and the *belief that violence is justified to defend Islam* significantly reduce affect towards American culture. The *frequency of prayer*, however, has no significant effect. These findings show that religious attitudes do matter for Muslim affect towards American culture, but not as much as one might have expected given the importance that US mass media ascribe to the role of religion in their debates of the question “Why do Muslims hate us?”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The composition of the reduced sample is as follows: Bangladesh = 12.3% (N=207); Egypt = 14.9% (N=250); Indonesia = 3.1% (N=52); Jordan = 15.3% (N=257); Kuwait = 12.8% (N=215); Lebanon = 21.0% (N=354); Malaysia = 1.1% (18); Pakistan = 10.4% (N=175); Turkey = 9.2% (N=154).

<sup>13</sup> Country-specific stepwise regression analyses show that the effect of income on affect towards American culture is always positive, but insignificant. However, there is one notable exception to this general finding: income has a significant positive effect on the affect towards American culture for Indonesian Muslims. In this case, income is the only significant predictor and explains 12.8 percent of variance in affect towards American culture.

<sup>14</sup> Joe Scarborough’s discussion of the issue on MSNBC, September 17, 2012, serves as a good example of the tenor of the debate in US mass media: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/17/joe-scarborough-muslims-hate-us\\_n\\_1890007.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/17/joe-scarborough-muslims-hate-us_n_1890007.html) For another example, watch the “O’Reilly Factor” on Fox News, September 17, 2012: <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1846049445001/why-do-so-many-millions-of-muslims-hate-the-us/>

**Table 7: OLS Regressions [Beta (T-value)] on “Affect towards American Culture”**

Model	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gender (Female)	0.032 (1.334)	0.040 (1.635)	0.043 (1.776)	0.041 (1.707)	0.044 (1.825)	0.053* (2.275)
Age	-0.088** (-3.449)	-0.091*** (-3.583)	-0.085** (-3.347)	-0.118*** (-4.671)	-0.086** (-3.453)	-0.121*** (-5.169)
Education	0.078** (3.068)	0.071** (2.798)	0.083** (3.269)	0.028 (1.073)	0.073** (2.913)	
Importance of religion		-0.134*** (-4.900)				-0.078** (-3.238)
Religious violence justifiable		-0.071** (-2.966)				-0.076** (-3.240)
Frequency of prayer		-0.008 (-0.303)				
Traditional lifestyle is being lost			-0.082** (-3.372)			
Cultural ethnocentrism			-0.093*** (-3.822)			-0.099*** (-4.230)
Lifestyle needs protection from foreign influence			0.002 (0.071)			
Travel to USA				0.172*** (6.755)		0.149*** (6.186)
Friends or relatives in USA				0.058* (2.330)		
US may become military threat to one’s own country					-0.192*** (-8.072)	-0.146*** (-6.049)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.019	0.042	0.035	0.055	0.056	0.096
N	1681	1681	1681	1681	1681	1681

Significance levels: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$ .

The third model adds three cultural attitude variables to the baseline model. *Cultural ethnocentrism* and the *belief that one’s traditional lifestyle is being lost* significantly reduce affect towards American culture; the *belief that one’s traditional lifestyle needs to be protected from foreign influences* appears to be irrelevant. One would expect these three cultural attitudes to be rather strong predictors of attitudes towards a foreign culture and to explain a fair amount of variance. However, the two significant effects are comparable in size to the effects of age and education, and they explain only an additional 1.6 percent of variance in Muslim affect towards American culture, which is even less than the socio-demographic predictors.

The fourth model tests the effect of intergroup contact, namely, *having traveled to the US* and *having regular contact with friends or relatives who live in the US*. This model explains 5.5 percent of variance in cultural affect. Both variables significantly increase Muslim affect towards American culture, a finding which is consistent with the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) and empirical research showing that intergroup contact reduces individual’s inclination to perceive in-group threat from culturally different out-groups (Stephan et al., 2000; Stephan & Stephan, 1992) and increases favorable attitudes towards

foreign out-groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Reigrotski & Anderson, 1959; Triandis & Vassiliou, 1967). Interestingly, once we control for the effect of “intergroup contact,” the positive effect of education becomes insignificant, whereas the negative effect of age grows stronger. This means that part of the original effect of education is explained away by the effect of the contact variables, while the age effect grows stronger, because previously it appears to have been “covered up” by the unaccounted variation in contact experiences across the age groups.

The fifth model tests the effect of the *perception of realistic threat*. The item asked survey participants “How worried are you, if at all, that the U.S. could become a military threat to your country someday?” This formulation taps the perception of realistic group threat, which relates to the in-groups physical and material well-being. Congruent with the premises of Intergroup Threat Theory (Stephan & Renfro, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 2000), the perception of realistic threat proves a comparatively strong predictor of out-group attitudes, in our case, affect towards American culture. However, the amount of explained variance of 5.6 percent is also quite low.

The last model is a stepwise regression model, which automatically selects from the full set of predictors only those predictors that have a significant effect while controlling for the influence of all other predictors with the goal of maximizing the amount of explained variance in the dependent variable, i.e., affect towards American culture. This model shows that *having traveled to the US*, the *perception of realistic threat*, *age*, *cultural ethnocentrism*, the *importance of religion* and the *belief that violence is justified to defend Islam* significantly influence Muslim affect towards American culture. Interestingly, in the stepwise model the effect of *gender* becomes suddenly significant (if only marginally), such that being female has a positive effect on affect towards American culture, albeit a very weak one. This model explains almost 10 percent of variance in Muslim affect towards American culture.

#### *The Impact of Cultural Affect on the Attitude of Muslims towards the US*

Finally, we want to determine the impact of Muslim affect towards American culture on the attitude of Muslims towards the US. This analysis is central to our argument that cultural diplomacy “works,” because it directly demonstrates the impact of cultural diplomacy – via cultural affect – on the attitude of foreign publics towards one’s country.

The attitude towards the US was measured by the item “Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of the United States?” Because we suspect that the variables that we used as predictors of Muslim

affect towards American culture are also potential predictors of the attitude of Muslims towards the US, we ran two OLS regression analyses consecutively to isolate the effect of cultural affect on the attitude of Muslims towards the US: the first regression model contains all predictors less cultural affect; the second model simply adds cultural affect. The results are reported in Table 8.<sup>15</sup>

The first regression analysis reveals that the *perception of realistic threat*, the *belief that violence is justifiable to defend Islam* and *age* have significant negative effects on the attitude of Muslims towards the US, whereas both *contact variables* have significant positive effects. This model explains 8.8 percent of variance in the attitude of Muslims towards the US (see Model 1).

**Table 8: OLS Regressions [Beta (T-value)] on “Attitude towards US”**

Model	1	2
Gender (Female)	0.011 (0.452)	0.032 (1.412)
Age	-0.078** (-3.059)	-0.038 (-1.585)
Education	0.022 (0.850)	0.033 (1.380)
Importance of religion	-0.023 (-0.832)	0.002 (0.072)
Religious violence justifiable	-0.096*** (-4.015)	-0.070** (-3.104)
Frequency of prayer	-0.022 (-0.793)	-0.019 (-0.737)
Cultural ethnocentrism	-0.013 (-0.0551)	-0.049* (-2.133)
Traditional lifestyle is being lost	-0.025 (-1.007)	-0.037 (-1.617)
Lifestyle needs protection from foreign influence	-0.034 (-1.394)	-0.030 (-1.329)
Travel to USA	0.087** (3.355)	0.040 (1.628)
Friends or relatives in USA	0.128*** (5.005)	0.118*** (4.947)
US may become military threat to one’s own country	-0.158*** (-6.290)	-0.107*** (-4.500)
CULTURAL AFFECT		0.356*** (15.332)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.088	0.202
N	1657	1657

Significance levels: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$ .

<sup>15</sup> Please note the slight change in the composition of the sample: Bangladesh = 12.3% (N=204); Egypt = 15% (N=248); Indonesia = 3.1% (N=52); Jordan = 15.3% (N=255); Kuwait = 12.4% (N=205); Lebanon = 21.2% (N=352); Malaysia = 1.1% (18); Pakistan = 10.4% (N=172); Turkey = 9.2% (N=152).

When we add cultural affect to the first model the amount of explained variance in the attitude of Muslims towards the US increases to 20 percent (see Model 2). Moreover, cultural affect has by far the largest effect of all predictors included in the model and accounts alone for more of the explained variance in the attitude of Muslims towards the US than all other predictors combined. Once we control for the influence of cultural affect, *having traveled to the US* and *age* do not matter anymore for the attitude of Muslims towards the US, whereas *maintaining social ties to the US*, *the perception of realistic threat from the US* and *religious extremism* remain significant determinants. These findings show that cultural affect has a big influence on the attitude of Muslims towards the US. On that basis, we argue that in the case of Muslims, US cultural diplomacy can make a very significant contribution to the strategic communication dimension of US public diplomacy.

#### *Section Summary: Muslim Affect towards American Culture*

This section has shown that: (1) Muslims express negative affect towards almost all aspects of American culture; (2) that as Muslim affect towards American culture increases, Muslim public perceptions of US foreign policies become more favorable; (3) that a diverse set of variables influences Muslim affect towards American culture: having traveled to the US; the perception of realistic threat from the US; age; cultural ethnocentrism; the importance of religion; and religious extremism; (4) and that cultural affect has a strong and positive influence on the attitude of Muslims towards the US.

### **Discussion**

The central question this paper has been trying to answer is whether or not cultural diplomacy – via cultural affect – can contribute to the strategic communication dimension of public diplomacy. The analysis has focused on Chinese affect towards European culture and Muslim affect towards American culture, because China-EU and Muslim-US relations are central to our understanding of world politics in the age of multi-polarity.

What have we learned from the analysis? First, Chinese express high levels of positive affect towards all aspects of European culture, whereas the majority of Muslims express negative affect towards almost all aspects of American culture. Second, despite the differences in the levels of cultural affect, we find that as cultural affect increases, the attitudes of Muslims and Chinese towards the US and the EU as international actors improve, respectively. So, regardless of the initial level of cultural affect, an increase in cultural affect is associated with a more favorable attitude towards one's country as an international actor. In the case of China,

cultural affect is also significantly and positively associated with more favorable perceptions of China-EU relations. Moreover, we have shown that above and beyond a number of other relevant determinants, cultural affect has a comparatively strong effect on Chinese and Muslim attitudes towards the EU and the US, respectively. On that basis, we argue that positive cultural affect significantly improves the attitude of foreign publics towards one's country. These findings demonstrate that cultural diplomacy, by way of cultural affect, can contribute significantly to the strategic communication dimension of public diplomacy.

The second major objective of our analysis has been the exploration of potential determinants of cultural affect. However, our ability to make comparisons between Muslims and Chinese in this regard is limited due to dissimilar sets of predictors. Only two factors were included in both analyses: intergroup contact and the perception of realistic threat.

Concerning intergroup contact, we find that it significantly increases Muslim affect towards American culture. This finding is in line with established research showing that intergroup contact increases favorable attitudes towards foreign out-groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Reigrotski & Anderson, 1959; Triandis & Vassiliou, 1967). However, intergroup contact appears to be irrelevant for Chinese affect towards European culture. In the Chinese case then, it may be necessary to measure not only whether someone had contact with Europeans or not, but to control also for the quality of the contact experience. However, no such item had been included in the relevant survey.

Concerning the perception of realistic threat, we find that it constitutes a major determinant of both Chinese affect towards European culture and Muslim affect towards American culture. The perception of realistic threat significantly reduces cultural affect in both cases. As mentioned earlier, this finding is consistent with Intergroup Threat Theory (Stephan et al., 2009; Stephan & Renfro, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 2000), which identifies realistic threat perceptions as one of the primary determinants of out-group attitudes.

Beyond cross-group contact and threat perceptions, direct comparisons between the determinants of Muslim affect towards American culture and Chinese affect towards European culture are not possible due to dissimilar predictors in the analyses. Other significant determinants of Chinese affect towards European culture are (in order of their effect size): the perceived trustworthiness of Europeans; the communicated image of the EU; and the perceived value distance between Europeans and Chinese. Other significant determinants of Muslim affect towards American culture are: age; cultural ethnocentrism; the importance of religion; and religious extremism.

Generally, we must admit that the amount of variance in cultural affect that is explained by the predictors in our analyses is rather low. However, as far as the analysis of Muslim affect towards American culture is concerned, we need to consider that many of the predictor variables are dichotomous, which limits their possible degree of correlation with the dependent variable (Gradstein, 1986). Also, we did not control for the influence of macro-level variables such as GDP per capita or trade with the United States. Hence, a follow-up analysis should employ multi-level regression analysis to investigate the possible impact of macro-level variables on individual-level cultural affect. Ultimately, the relatively low amount of explained variance simply suggests there are other determinants of Muslim affect towards American culture, which we have either failed to consider or for which we simply have no data.

As a final remark, we would like to note that although the predictors included in our analyses may not explain much variance in affect towards American culture in the *pooled* Muslim sample, they do explain 25 and 18 percent of variance in Lebanese and Turkish affect towards American culture, respectively.<sup>16</sup> This finding highlights the need for a comparative approach to exploring determinants of Muslim affect towards American culture rather than the broad brush approach followed by our analysis of a pooled sample of Muslims from all over the world. Moreover, it emphasizes the need for multi-level analysis, because clearly the national context matters.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has argued that as a direct consequence of globalization and the move to multi-polarity cultural diplomacy assumes an increasingly important role in foreign affairs. While the latest stage of globalization has created a truly global market for creative goods and services as much as ideas and values, the move to multi-polarity means that the emerging powers challenge the dominance of the West in that market in an effort to promote their own models of human progress, which reject the universal pretensions of Western culture more generally and the notion of the equivalence of modernization and Westernization in particular. In addition, the West' cultural influence in the world is challenged by Islamic fundamentalism, which presents a backlash to the globalization of Western modernity.

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<sup>16</sup> Lebanon: violence justified to defend Islam (beta=-0.284; p<.001); realistic threat perception (beta=-0.141; p<.01); lifestyle needs protection from foreign influence (beta=-0.167; p<.001); having traveled to the US (beta=0.136; p<.01); gender (beta=0.133; p<.01); frequency of prayer (beta=-0.128; p<.01).  
Turkey: education (beta=0.268; p<.01); realistic threat perception (beta=-0.248; p<.01); age (beta=-0.170; p<.05).

In the face of these challenges, Western governments need to recognize the power of cultural diplomacy, i.e., they need to embrace the evidence produced by our analysis: positive cultural affect significantly improves the attitude of foreign publics towards one's country and is associated with more positive attitudes towards the foreign policy of one's country.

How can one increase cultural affect? There is no universal formula for increasing the affect of foreign publics towards one's culture. However, the perception of realistic threat has been identified as a major determinant of both Chinese affect towards European culture and Muslim affect towards American culture. Unfortunately, realistic threat perceptions are not easily influenced as they are determined by a plethora of possible factors. However, empirical research in the tradition of Intergroup Threat Theory suggests that perceived differences in status, negative contact experiences, the level of in-group identification and negative stereotypes are important individual-level variables influencing realistic threat perceptions (Aberson & Gaffney, 2008). Cultural diplomacy may not be able to work on these determinants directly, but policy makers should keep these factors in mind as guiding principles when formulating new policies that have relevance for international and cross-cultural relations.

More practical suggestions for increasing cultural affect among foreign publics need to be country or at least group specific. In the case of Muslims, the US should create opportunities for personal cross-cultural exchanges as the personal contact experience of having traveled to the US proved one of the strongest determinants of affect towards American culture in our analysis. Cross-cultural exchanges can take many forms such as expanding educational and cultural exchange programs (e.g., Fulbright), revitalizing American volunteerism abroad or reopening American Centers that provide safe havens for the exchange of ideas between visiting American experts and local audiences.<sup>17</sup>

Importantly, any such programs need not only address liberal local elites, but also engage a particularly problematic group of Muslims: the highly religious, who tolerate the use of violence in defense of Islam. This suggestion may seem somewhat obvious given that this group presents a natural recruitment pool for Islamist organizations, but our analysis shows that these two factors – *importance of religion* and the *belief that violence is justified in defense of Islam* – significantly reduce affect towards American culture. Engaging this group of people will be no easy task, but to abandon them may mean that some of them will

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<sup>17</sup> For policy recommendations that are in line with our empirical findings and that mirror our own suggestions, see the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy's 2005 report entitled "Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy;" available online at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/54374.pdf>; as well as Helena Finn's 2003 *Foreign Affairs* article "The Case for Cultural Diplomacy: Engaging Foreign Audiences" and Edward Djerejian's 2007 book "Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World."

eventually travel to the US, only that their plane ticket is not paid for by the Fulbright Program, but Al Qaeda.

Concerning Chinese affect towards European culture, we need to remember that Chinese express already very high levels of positive affect. Hence, it appears there is little room for improvement. However, the EU may still try to reduce Chinese perceptions of value distance between Europeans and Chinese. Our analysis indicates that one possible pathway for communicating value congruence would be via the EU's image in Chinese mass media. Since government controlled TV is not an option, the EU may consider a targeted online campaign instead.

However, the primary determinant of Chinese affect towards European culture – Chinese perceptions of European trustworthiness – is not that easy to manipulate. Yet, research by Delhey and Graf (in press) shows that greater knowledge of the EU and Europe significantly increases trust in Europeans. Consequently, the EU should take measures to enable and encourage Chinese (especially the youth) to acquire more knowledge about the EU and Europe, for instance, by supporting European Studies at all levels of the Chinese education system and increasing its support for cultural and educational exchange programs such as the China strand of Erasmus Mundus, the China-EU School of Law or the EU-China Managers Exchange and Training Programme.

If the West wishes to maintain its cultural leadership role, and thus indirectly safeguard also its economic and political influence in the world, Western governments must find an appropriate answer to the ambitious cultural diplomacy efforts of emerging powers like China. At the same time, Western governments must intensify their non-violent efforts of engaging Islamic fundamentalists. Our analysis shows that cultural diplomacy can significantly contribute to achieving these goals, because it has the power to change foreign public perceptions of your country and its policies. Hence, in the interconnected world of today, cultural diplomacy may prove a more valuable foreign policy tool than military threat. Or as James William Fulbright once put it: “In the long course of history, having people understand your thought is much greater safety than another submarine.”

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