

# The Research on China's Public Diplomacy: Focusing on the Closure of the Confucius Institute at the University of Chicago (CIUC)

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## 要 旨

孔子学院は中国政府により海外で中国語を教授する目的で設立され、文化交流の推進や国家イメージを改善するなどの公共外交施策を実施する主要機関の一つである。孔子学院は海外の大学との協力によって急成長を遂げると同時に、孔子学院へのマイナス評価も存在する。2012 年以来、9 校が次々と閉鎖された。この閉鎖現象に対してマスコミの評論があるだけで、関連研究は基本的に空白の状態であり、特に個々の事例に対する総合的な分析は欠けている。

前述の問題点に基づき、本論文はアメリカのシカゴ大学(University of Chicago)における孔子学院の閉鎖を例として選び、事例分析を行う。2014 年のシカゴ大学孔子学院の閉鎖はマスコミの評論は少なくないが、未だ系統的な学術研究は出ていない。本論文は事例を比較する研究方法により、抗議されたが最終的には生き残ったシカゴ大学ミルトン・フリードマン研究所 (Milton Friedman Institute, MFI) の事例との比較を通じて、シカゴ大学孔子学院の閉鎖原因を分析する。

**Keywords: Confucius Institutes, Public Diplomacy, National Image**

## 1. Introduction

Confucius Institutes (CIs) are China's public diplomatic efforts to promote Chinese language teaching, cultural exchanges and to improve national image. Since 2004, based on the model of joint operation with the overseas host universities and institutions, China has established 475 CIs all around the world. Despite the rapid expansion, the CIs also face negative responses.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, the opponents even urged the host universities to close their CIs.<sup>2</sup> Since 2010, 9 CIs have been closed. Although the percentage against the total number of the CIs is small, they are worthy of attention. The interpretations for the phenomenon of the CIs

closure are mainly provided in the form of media comments, but the academic research is largely lacking.

The efforts of public diplomacy can be divided into two categories: information framework and relational framework.<sup>3</sup> The initiatives within information framework focus on the design and dissemination of information to advance political objectives.<sup>4</sup> The initiatives within relational framework emphasize on building relationship with the target audiences through cultural and educational exchanges, and its first priority is to identify and build relationship.<sup>5</sup>

At present, most of the researches on the Confucius Institutes are conducted within the information framework. Especially, many papers argue that the Confucius Institutes are part of China's foreign policy aiming to improve China's national image.<sup>6</sup> There are also some papers focusing on the objectives, features, developing status and challenges.<sup>7</sup> However, the researches conducted within relational framework are relatively lacking. As a joint operation effort with the host universities, the success of the Confucius Institutes depends on maintaining a sound relationship with the host universities. However, little attention has been paid to this regard. Although there are some researches on the Confucius Institutes' stakeholders at the host universities,<sup>8</sup> they mainly focus on the administration of host universities, the Chinese language instructors and the students who attend Confucius Institutes' classes.<sup>9</sup> These stakeholders are important, but only focusing on them will miss other important players. In addition, the related faculty members of the host universities who proposed to establish and then being involved in the operation of the Confucius Institutes and the opponents against Confucius Institutes at the host universities ought to be studied.

Based on the reasons above, this paper will take the Confucius Institutes at the University of Chicago (CIUC) as a case to analyze the problems existing in the operation of the Confucius Institutes. In 2014, the closure of the CIUC drew extensive attention.<sup>10</sup> Despite many comments,<sup>11</sup> a systematic academic research is yet to be developed. Some stakeholders in this case are studied, such as the administration of the University of Chicago (UC), the related faculty members of the CIUC, the opponents against the CIUC and the Hanban.<sup>12</sup> The research on the interactions among them might be of universal significance for understanding the operations of other Confucius Institutes.

A comparative case study approach will be employed in this paper to analyze why the CIUC was closed by comparing the CIUC with another institute at the UC, the MFI/MFIRE<sup>13</sup> who was also ever protested but finally survived. The reasons why I choose the MFI/MFIRE to make the comparison are as follow: in the recent years, there were 3 petitions which were initiated by the same opponent, CORES,<sup>14</sup> towards research institutes establishments at the UC, the petition towards the MFI in 2008, the petition towards the MFIRE and

the CIUC in 2010, and the petition against the CIUC in 2014. Two institutes were protested by the same opponents almost during the same period, but their results were totally different. So, it is worthy of a comparative study.

This paper will analyze the two cases from the following perspectives:

First, what kinds of influences had the opponents imposed on the operation of MFI/MFI and CIUC?

Second, how did the related faculty members of MFI/MFI and CIUC deal with the petitions?

Third, what were the standpoints of the university administration towards the two institutes located at the University of Chicago?

Forth, were there any influences of external players?

In analyzing the cases, this paper tries to enrich the case studies of the Confucius Institutes by providing a complete case study.

## **2. MFI/MFIRE issue**

This part is designed to examine the survival of the MFI/MFIRE by focusing on the petitions towards it in 2008 and 2010.

### **2.1 The Petition in 2008**

On May 5, 2008, the UC announced to invest 200 million dollars to establish the MFI, and most of the funds will be raised from the donations of alumni and business leaders all around the world. The administration of the UC also declared that the MFI and Economy Department of the UC would be hosted in a building located at the heart of the central campus. On June 6 2008, the opponents released a letter against the MFI.

They were concerned the institute would be a partisan, elitist organization and that it shouldn't be under the auspices of a university.<sup>15</sup> The opponents thought it was inappropriate for the university to invest "so heavily in culturally and politically conservative thought".<sup>16</sup> They were concerned that "this endeavor could reinforce among the public a perception that the University's faculty lacks intellectual and ideological diversity".<sup>17</sup> They argued that such large-scale investment by the university could be better utilized by spreading it among a range of disciplines.<sup>18</sup> So, they suggested that the University ought to reconsider contributing to MFI for the interests of equity and balance. In addition, the petition also voiced concerns that wealthy donors would have inordinate influence over the institute's research.<sup>19</sup> At last, they also complained

that they were absent from the decision discussion and vote for the establishment of MFI.<sup>20</sup> So, they asked to hold Senate meeting with the President and the Provost and make full faculty vote for the establishment of MFI.<sup>21</sup>

The related faculty members of the MFI who proposed to establish the institute and then being involved in the operation of the institute released a letter as response to the above charges. Professor John Cochrane, the Director of MFI, claimed that the MFI had gone through discussions and been approved by The Committee of the Senate Council, so it followed the UC's tradition. He also denied that the MFI would undermine the UC's reputation because of Milton Friedman's legacy.<sup>22</sup>

Although the administration of the UC agreed to meet the CORES, they refused to reconsider the establishment of the MFI. As a response to the petition, the President Zimmer held two meetings with the opponents in the summer and autumn 2008. In the summer meeting, the administration did not change their stances towards MFI and refused to reconsider the establishment of the MFI.<sup>23</sup> The administration thought that the MFI was worth keeping. The Provost Rosenbaum defended the MFI by arguing that "the fears of the opponents are unfounded."<sup>24</sup> He also claimed that "the donors can receive reports and attend lectures, but they can't impose their influences on the research."<sup>25</sup> In addition, the Provost argued that they did not "take pre-conditioned stance on the selection of research topics, and they would bring in people from all over the world with all different approaches."<sup>26</sup>

The opponents were unsatisfied with the meeting. They still demanded the issue to be aired in a meeting of the faculty senate. Although the President Zimmer agreed to convene the senate in the autumn, according to the Provost, the senate meeting did not necessarily result in the concrete changes to the MFI. The senate meeting was designed to involve "talking more broadly about the intellectual portfolio of the university."<sup>27</sup>

The only one progress of the meeting was that the two sides, the opponents and the related faculty members of the MFI, began to make compromise. In the senate meeting, the CORES argued that naming the Institute after Friedman would convey an academic bias in favor of the economists' views, which advocated market alternatives to public policy.<sup>28</sup> In this case, the members of the MFI began to show their flexibility by welcoming a name change to ease the tension. The opponents welcomed this change. Professor Bruce Lincoln, the leader of the petition, admitted that "if the institute didn't use the name of Milton Friedman, a lot of people would be happy about that."<sup>29</sup>

In November 2008, a name change was put into practice. The Milton Friedman Institute for Research in Economics (MFIRE), a shift that the university hoped would emphasize the center's focus on academic

research over the legacy of a single scholar.<sup>30</sup> The Provost Rosenbaum explained to faculty by an email that “during the [Faculty Senate] meeting and in subsequent discussions, faculty has suggested augmenting the Institute’s name to make clear that it is solely an economics research institute.”<sup>31</sup>“The faculty and deans who were instrumental in establishing the Institute agreed that this would be a useful direction to pursue.... We have accepted this proposal and we will be using this official title henceforth.”<sup>32</sup>

The Provost Rosenbaum’s email has two indications as followings: first, the related faculty members of the MFI had more influences on Administrator’s decision, and the decision of the name changing was the result of the consensus between them; second, the influences of the opponents were limited, because the new name still used the name of Milton Friedman, rather than canceling it according to the request of the CORES. And that was reason why the leader of the CORES, Professor Bruce Lincoln expressed his dissatisfaction after the name change.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.2 The Petition in 2010

On May 15 2010, the university announced that the ABA architect would renovate the building of the Chicago Theological Seminary’s main building to host Economic Department and MFIRE. The opponents took the decision as a sign of renewed aggressive fund-raising activity for the controversial institute, and then presented petition again in the name of opposing the “so-called corporatization”.<sup>34</sup>

The concerns of the opponents can be categorized into two kinds. First, the administration of the UC tended to manage the university as a corporation. According to Bruce Lincoln, the move of the MFIRE represented “an ever more aggressive pursuit of outside funding, and with that we have seen evermore willingness to abridge faculty governance and compromise our [the University’s] principles of academic integrity.”<sup>35</sup> The CORES argued that “the same kind of process-administrative centralization, entrepreneurial pursuit of profit, evasion and effacement of faculty control-now threaten the University as a whole”.<sup>36</sup> And they thought the institute named after Milton Friedman would affect the UC’s reputation because he once served as economy consultant of Chile military government.<sup>37</sup>

Second, they complained the imbalance distribution of the donation funds once again. In the petition, the CORES expressed their surprise that the MFI remained one of the University’s top fundraising priorities.<sup>38</sup> Someone complained that “the University has been moving towards giving preference to those departments that will bring in the most alumni donations”, and “business and economics are the new religion at the University.”<sup>39</sup>

So, they suggested the administration to reverse the course of corporatization and began “by halting development of the Friedman Institute and changing its name”.<sup>40</sup> And then, “a full reorientation is necessary to extricate the University from a misguided and destructive corporate model, and to restore it to its rightful tradition and mission.”<sup>41</sup>

After the protest, Professor Lars Peter Hansen, the Director of the MFIRE released a statement denying the charges. He argued that the petition was not convincing because the CORES did not trace any academic records of the MFIRE even though it had been operating for 2 years.<sup>42</sup>

And the administration didn't change their attitudes towards the MFIRE. They firstly denied the charge of corporatization and characterized the petition as “incorrect and unfair in its sweeping characterization of the administration as consistently motivated by the pursuit of the financial advantage.”<sup>43</sup>

Then the administration explained that “it has been standard practice for many years not to take votes on most proposed institutes and foreign centers, unless these institutes or centers grant degrees and/or make faculty appointments.”<sup>44</sup> They call it distributed authority system. This tradition has the following characteristics: first, every proposal for a new center or institute is initiated by some related faculty members, a department or even a bloc; second, the administration should support their idea presented by the related faculty members and the new center or institute will be under their control; third, the administration should not subject the research of faculty or groups of faculty to the control of others.<sup>45</sup>

In addition, Professor Abbott, the spokesman of the Committee of the Council of the Senate, a seven member group that informs the larger Council, affirmed the above statement. He said that “the Milton Friedman Institute is not a piece of the University that will grant degrees, and since it's not going to grant degrees, and it's not going to appoint faculty...it's not really clear that the council has any particular jurisdiction on it.”<sup>46</sup>

At last, the administrators reaffirmed their commitment “to promote and preserve this distinctive culture”.<sup>47</sup> The administration highlighted the significance of this system maintaining the partnership of administrative and faculty effort, and of local initiative and central support.

“The set of relationships and the resulting distributed authority have served the University well for decades. They have allowed for appropriate respect to groups of faculty with particular academic interests and appropriate deference to departments, divisions, and schools in the development of their programs. And they have provided for full faculty engagement on the establishment of new

degree programs or new bodies with faculty appointive powers, but not on the decisions of how such programs then operate and are organized, matters properly left to the related faculty in the programs/bodies themselves.<sup>48</sup> As a result, many units that are controversial (but which they themselves fully support) – like the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory, the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, or the Center for Gender Studies – would also have to receive votes and might be in danger.”<sup>49</sup>

Hence, the stakeholders who can decide the destiny of the institutes located in the UC’s campus are the administration and the related faculty members who proposed and involved in the operation of the institutes.

However, the opponents did not agree with the administration. In the written response released on June 14 2010, they argued that any proposals that would affect more than one division or school should be approved by full faculty senate rather than some related faculty members.<sup>50</sup> But this statement did not get any responses from the UC’s administration.

Hence, the petition in 2010 did not affect the operation of the MFIRE. In June 2011, the MFIRE quietly emerged with the Becker Center on Chicago Price Theory to form the Gary Becker Milton Friedman Institute for Research in Economics. I did not see obvious functional changes of the institute, and it survived.

Another evidence for the limited effectiveness of the petition is the opponents’ continuous complains even after the establishment of the new institute. In October 2013, Professor Sahlins published his criticism towards the MFIRE in his article criticizing Confucius Institute;<sup>51</sup> In May 2014, Professor Bruce Lincoln complained that the naming of the Becker Friedman Institute was a move to attract wealthy donors who “enjoyed the ideas of Milton Friedman” in his interview with *Chicago Maroon*.<sup>52</sup> However, it seems that these criticisms did not influence the new institute.

### **2.3 Sub-conclusion**

There are several conclusions I can draw from the petition against the MFI/MFIRE in 2008 and 2010, as followings:

First, the CORES of UC were not involved in the final decisions for the MFI/MFIRE’s name change or emergence, so their influences were limited;

Second, the administration of the UC and the related faculty members of the MFI/MFIRE made the final decisions for the MFI/MFIRE;

Third, it is not necessary for the administration of the UC and the related faculty members of the MFI/MFIRE to consider the external factors when make the final decisions.

### **3. The Closure of CIUC**

This part will try to find why the CIUC were closed by analyzing the petitions towards the CIUC in 2010 and 2014.

#### **3.1 The Petition in 2010**

The Hanban and the UC signed the agreement in September 2009, and in June 1 2010, the opening ceremony of the CIUC was held at the UC. However, soon after its establishment, the CIUC faced its first protest by the CORES. 174 Chicago faculty members signed a petition protesting the growing "corporatization" of the University,<sup>53</sup> and they took the failure to consult faculty governing bodies on the establishment of the Confucius Institute as an example.<sup>54</sup>

However, there was only one paragraph about the CIUC in the petition, and the main point against the CIUC was the poor communication with other scholars in the decision making process.<sup>55</sup> The director of the CIUC Yang Dali argued that the executive committee of the Center for East Asian Studies (CEAS) had discussed the CI in the year leading up to its founding, but at least one member of this small committee-Bruce Cumings, did not learn of the CI's existence until a good six months after the deal had been signed and sealed in Beijing.<sup>56</sup> And, according to the vice Director, Theodore Foss, the executive committee of the center meets very infrequently, even less than once a year.<sup>57</sup> In addition, they also expressed their concerns that Chinese government would play a significant role in determining what is taught about China at UC through the CIUC's presence.<sup>58</sup>

Even so, these arguments did not change the administration's support for the CIUC. On June 4, the President and the Provost had a meeting with representatives of the CORES, during which the CI came under discussion. "Messrs. Zimmer and Rosenbaum acknowledged their lack of information on this matter and expressed bewilderment and regret at how this had happened."<sup>59</sup> According to Professor Bruce Lincoln, "the administration acknowledged that they had not given sufficiently serious consideration to the issue when the contract was signed and they agreed to revisit the question when the contract expired."<sup>60</sup> But the President and the Provost still insisted that CIUC had followed the standard tradition of establishing a new institute and they should respect the related faculty members who proposed to establish the CIUC.



“There had been consultation, with those faculty members whose research is most immediately focused on China and consultation of this sort – i.e., with select faculty groups most concerned with a project – has been the standard practice. Projects normally do not originate with administration, but rather with interested faculty, as in the case of the Molecular Engineering initiative, for example.”<sup>61</sup>

The administration stated their determinations to defend the standard process of establishing institute or distributed authority system, even though they agreed to hold meeting with the opponents. So, it seems that the first petition had no influence on the operation of CIUC, as same as the MFI/MFIRE issues. And there were not any external influencing factors—the influences from Hanban.

### **3.2 The Petition in 2014**

In April 2014, 108 professors signed a petition to the President and the Provost to ask the Council of the Senate to terminate the contract with the Confucius Institutes.<sup>62</sup> Compared with the petition in 2010, this petition mainly expressed their concerns on the CIs` official background and the subsequent interference on the UC`s academic freedom.<sup>63</sup> They thought the CIUC had influences on the Chinese language curriculum and had controlled the hiring or training of the language teachers. In addition, they were concerned that the UC had been involved in the Hanban`s global project that was contrary in many respects to its own academic values.

As same as the petition in 2008 and 2010, the opponents couldn`t provide substantial evidences to support their charges. The then-vice director of the CEAS, Theodore Foss confessed that “there hasn`t been any direct interference”.<sup>64</sup> Even the opponents Professor Sahlins had to admit that “the direct evidence of restraints on academic discourse is not easy to come by”.<sup>65</sup>

\Compared with the petition in 2008 and 2010, the opponents didn`t mention the imbalance distribution for the donation funds. This fact can indicate that the funds provided by the Hanban were not important for the UC.

The faculty members of the CIUC have adequate evidences to response. The former Director of the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilization (EALC) Professor Shaughnessy said the EALC “is fully responsible for all Chinese language teaching that goes on campus”.<sup>66</sup> He also said “the department

interviews the visiting instructor candidates proposed by Hanban and then votes on their appointments. The instructors teach courses under the auspices of the department".<sup>67</sup> Director of the CIUC Yang Dali denied that the CIUC had affected the research topics of the UC's professors. Instead, the CIUC has "instituted processes to be sure that the research agenda is led by our faculty."<sup>68</sup> "A faculty committee vets the research proposals, and while a budget listing the selected projects is sent to the Hanban for approval," and "in all cases the projects selected by the faculty committee have been funded."<sup>69</sup> Yang Dali also gave comments on the hiring issues. The university faculty had the right to reject nominated Confucius Institute instructors and prevent them from being hired, but the petition stated that that right had not been exercised.<sup>70</sup>

Compared with the protests in 2008 and 2010, Hanban began to show its presence. To response to the petition at the UC, Director of Hanban, Xu Lin wrote a letter to the University's dean and called the University's representative in Beijing. She told them that "if your University decides not to renew the contract, I will not object."<sup>71</sup> According to the news coverage, "her attitude worried the University authorities, and they quickly responded that they still planned to renew the contract."<sup>72</sup> This answer indicated that the administration's attitude toward the CIUC did not change, instead, the administration would like to proceed the evaluation of the CIUC, the discussion with the CIUC faculty members and the negotiation with Hanban.<sup>73</sup>

Actually, in February 2014, a three-member committee aiming to evaluate the renewable of Confucius Institute agreement was established by the Board of the CIUC on behalf of the Provost. The three members, anthropology professor Judith Farquhar, history professor Ken Pomeranz, and East Asian languages and civilizations professor Judith Zeitlin, are all from the China Study Committee, the CEAS, and two of them are the members of Academic Board of the CIUC.

In May 2014, the three-member committee submitted the recommendation report to the Faculty Council meetings.<sup>74</sup> The report first denied the charge that UC had lost the control of the CIUC. "We found no reason to share the concern that U of C had lost control of its language program to an outside entity," the committee members wrote, nothing that they had confidence in both the sources from which the instructors are drawn and in their training and supervision once they arrived on campus.<sup>75</sup> However, the report describes a high administrative and supervisory burden on the EALC department in regards to the visiting instructors and concludes that "a permanently renewable and adequately large group of locally hired, trained, and supervised Chinese language instructors would be preferable to these temporary, 'outsourced' teachers."<sup>76</sup> The outsourced instructor "is often more trouble than it is worth".<sup>77</sup>

To response to the petition, especially the concerns on sacrificing academic freedom, the report suggested to renew the agreement “but only if some serious changes are made”.<sup>78</sup> Among the most significant of the changes the committee proposed: “making explicit that Hanban does not have a line item veto over the Confucius Institute’s annual budget requests and replacing the three instructors hired through the Confucius Institute and Hanban with instructors hired by the East Asian languages department.”<sup>79</sup>

Obviously, the related faculty members of the CIUC paid attention to the pressure or burden resulted from the petition. It is not strange that the committee suggested replace the Chinese language instructors, because they had mentioned the ‘extra burden’ in the report. However, there were not any contents about the annual budget in the report.<sup>80</sup> Hence, it seems that this suggestion was designed to ease the concerns of the opponents, by showing the complete independence of the CIUC.

However, the opinion of the related faculty members became divergent when they discussed the committee report. Martha Roth, Dean of the Humanities, who also served as the chief representative of the administration on the CIUC board, refused to admit any problems.<sup>81</sup> The chair of the committee, Professor Judith Farquhar, backed away from the recommendation on language teaching. She said “the committee report is the committee’s report. I personally don’t see any particular problems with continuing to accept teachers from Hanban, with or without a CI agreement covering appointment.”<sup>82</sup> However, the other two members of the committee reaffirmed what had been written.<sup>83</sup>

I can’t get the direct responses from the above faculty members. But according to Professor Bruce Lincoln’s communication with Professor Farquhar, he sensed that “Dean Roth leaned on Professor Farquhar rather hard to modify the criticisms in the report”,<sup>84</sup> and Professor Farquhar moved closer to the administration’s position just as articulated by Dean Roth. In other words, the CIUC board accepted the report and would submit it to the Provost. According to the UC’s tradition, the President and the Provost should respect the opinion of the related faculty members. So, the recommendation report seems “to balance support and criticism and were seeking middle ground between the assertions of critics and the desires of the administration”.<sup>85</sup> According to this comment from Bruce Lincoln, the administration of the UC was inclined to renew the agreement. The administration initiated the committee not only to prevent from being accused of ill-communication,<sup>86</sup> but also to try to balance the different interest pursuit of the related faculty members and the opponents.

Hence, in May, according to *Chicago Maroon*, “the University is likely to follow the recommendation” to renew the contract.<sup>87</sup> And in June, the *University of Chicago Magazine* made the following comment:<sup>88</sup>

“As this issue went to press, no decision had been announced regarding the renewal of the Confucius Institute’s contract, but the University affirmed that the faculty is responsible for all academic programs, saying, “Authority for making these academic decisions is widely distributed. A key part of the culture, history, and processes of the University are that faculty need to be free to pursue research, collaborate on research, recommend faculty appointments, and decide on academic aspects of implementation of educational programs without the oversight of the faculty from outside their areas. Two faculty committees reaffirmed this position in 2012.”—Ed.

The request for full faculty voting was still not supported by the administration. Professor Robert Topel, a Booth School professor who led a 2012 faculty committee that examined questions of faculty jurisdiction, disagreed with the opponents’ view of faculty agency. He said that “the committee decided that the Faculty Council has legislative authority over degree programs, but that ultimate authority over the establishment of institutes and research centers lies with the President and the Board of Trustees.”<sup>89</sup> The University spokesperson Jeremy Manier added that faculty should be able to “decide on academic aspects of implementation of educational programs without the oversight of the faculty from outside their areas.”<sup>90</sup>

At that time, the result of the petition was pessimistic even for the opponents too. Bruce Lincoln admitted that although he hoped to terminate the CIUC, but it seemed impossible.<sup>91</sup> Lincoln said that “I’d prefer to see the whole thing terminated- and I don’t think that’s likely”.<sup>92</sup> He also admitted that the closure of the CIUC was “a pleasant surprise” in the email interview in this April.<sup>93</sup>

Anyway, at that time, the administration of the UC and the related faculty members of the CIUC had reached consensus on conditionally renewable. Their roles in this case were almost as same as what the administration and the related faculty members of the MFI/MFIRE had done in 2008 and 2010. The CIUC board had communicated with the opponents and paid attention to their voices, and then tried to ease opposition by showing the independence of the CIUC. According to the UC’s tradition and comments in the campus at time, the administration of the UC had accepted the recommendation submitted by the CIUC board.

Compared with the protests in 2008 and 2010, the importance of the MFI/MFIRE and the CIUC was different for their own related faculty members. According to the announcement in 2008, the administration would raise and invested 200 million dollars on the MFI/MFIRE, while the Hanban planned to donate 2

million dollars in five years. This huge gap can also affect the related faculty members' attention on them. In addition, the funds or resources provided by the Hanban were not indispensable for the Center for East Asian Studies (CEAS) where the CIUC had been located with a long history of China studies and adequate faculty resources.<sup>94</sup> The related faculty members' needs for the CIUC were actually limited, because the faculty members of the CEAS did not depend on the funds provided by the CIUC too much. According to *Annual Report 2012-2013 of CIUC*, only two of the total 8 projects were related with the members of the Committee of China Studies, CEAS, and there were another 2 projects being related with Director Yang Dali.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, the grants to research students provided by the CIUC only took little proportion of the total grants provided by the CEAS.<sup>96</sup> Just as the former vice director of the CEAS, Theodore Foss, has put it, 'thank goodness we have money for the CEAS'; so, the CEAS "can do what they want to do without the restraints" from the CIUC.<sup>97</sup>

It was for the limited needs that the related faculty members did not have strong determination to defend the CIUC in crisis. Even among the three professors of the evaluating committee, there were dramatic opinion differences. In the cases of the MFI/MFIRE, the related faculty members accommodated to the protests by name change and even emergence with another institute, but they did not need to consider the external influencing factors. However, the related faculty members of the CIUC knew that their recommendation would be taken as the negotiation condition, yet they presented the items which were seemed a little hard for Hanban to accept, to try to show the independence of the CIUC by cutting off the linkages with Hanban.

At that time, the Hanban's presence began to show, and the course was reversed after the news coverage about Xu Lin's exclusive interview became public. The news coverage made the communication between Xu Lin and the University of Chicago public. After the petition in April, Xu wrote a letter to University of Chicago and called University's representatives in Beijing. She told them that "if your university decides not to renew the contract, I will not object."<sup>98</sup> More worse, the article also said "her attitude worried the University's authorities, and they quickly responded that they would planned to renew the agreement."<sup>99</sup>

In spite of favoring the funds or channels with China from the cooperation with Hanban, the administration of the host universities still pay more attention to their reputation. They are alert of being described as China's propaganda tool.<sup>100</sup> However, even foreigner can read the sense of challenging in the article. If the UC announced to renew the agreement with Hanban after this article, they must be perceived to yield to Hanban's pressure for the sake of the funds. If so, the charge of corporatization seemed to be proved. Subsequently, the reputation of the UC can be undermined too. In another words, the UC's concerns on its

reputation was increasing because of Hanban's influences.

According to a spokesman of the UC, after the article public, the administration consulted with the related faculty members of the CIUC, and then made the decision to close the CIUC.<sup>101</sup> On September 25, Chicago University announced the statement as followings:

“Since 2009 the University of Chicago and Hanban have worked in partnership to develop the CIUC, which has benefited research on China and collaboration between the University of Chicago and academic institutions in China. The University and Hanban have engaged in several months of good faith efforts and steady progress toward a new agreement. However, recently published comments about UChicago in an article about the director-general of Hanban are incompatible with a continued equal partnership.”<sup>102</sup>

So far, I can't get the replies from the administration of the UC. Based on the materials available, there are two possible reasons why the confidential negotiation failed:

First, Hanban couldn't accept the terms asking Hanban to cancel a line item veto over the Confucius Institute's annual budget requests. Many practitioners have stated that Hanban had approved almost all of their budget requests, and the budget review serves as symbolic procedure. But that does not mean Hanban can give up, because Hanban take it as the symbol of the sovereignty.<sup>103</sup>

Second, Hanban and the UC really made a steady progress for a new agreement, but the Hanban's influences really affected the administration of the UC. For the opinion differences existing among the related faculty members of the CIUC, the administration was able to persuade them and reached the consensus to close the CIUC.

In my opinion, the second one is more likely for the following two reasons. First, Hanban really appreciates the presence in prestigious universities, so Hanban was likely to make compromises to maintain the CIUC. Considering the sensitive time for renewing the agreement, Xu Lin's communication was really out of ordinary, because Hanban usually provides principal guidance to the CIs and does not involve in the practices.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, there is a precedent for giving up the rights for approving annual budget. At Stanford University, Hanban provides endowment to Confucius Institutes at Stanford University without supervising the annual budget and appointing a Chinese director.<sup>105</sup>

Second, it was not in favor of Hanban's interests if Hanban made an unsuccessful case public,

considering the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting would be held on September 28 2014, just nine days after the news was published. In addition, September is a very sensitive time. Because “the five-year contract which expires in September 2014, will be automatically renewed for another five years unless either party notifies the other of intent to terminate at least 90 days before the agreement’s end”.<sup>106</sup> In another words, the final decision must be made before the end of the September 2014. So, the exclusive interview seems to be a chance for Xu Lin to publicize the achievements of Confucius Institutes and the case of the CIUC may be taken as a successful example.

But the administration of the UC had a different perception for this article. The indication that the tough negotiator Xu Lin got what she wanted through tough negotiating style irked the administration of the UC.<sup>107</sup> Obviously, this is not compatible with the equal partnership.

I am not sure whether the comment is Hanban’s intention, and there may be some misunderstandings. On September 26 2014, the vice Director of Hanban, Hu Zhiping gave a response in an email, saying “the Hanban expresses its regrets at the University of Chicago’s decision which was taken before the true factors of matter were established.”<sup>108</sup> This email seems to indicate that the article is the self interpretation of the journalist. After all, the comment appeared in the part of reporter’s notes rather than the part of Questions & Answers. But no matter whether that was Xu Lin’s original intention, the article seemed to affect the attitude of the administration of the UC. Then, the administration consulted with the related faculty members of the CIUC and decided to close the CIUC in a week after the article was published. To some extent, closing the CIUC would be “the university’s face-saving way”.<sup>109</sup>

### **3.3. Sub-conclusion**

There are several findings by analyzing the closure of the CIUC:

First, the opponents’ requests for terminating the CIUC was not accepted by the administration of the UC, so their roles in this case have been exaggerated by the media;

Second, the stakeholders who can determine the survival of the CIUC were the administration of the UC and the related faculty members of the CIUC;

Third, the following factors influenced the decision process of the administration and the related faculty members: (1) their limited needs for the CIUC; (2) the poor communication between them and the Hanban.

#### 4. Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above comparative study:

First, in the both cases of the MFI/MFIRE and the CIUC, the opponents' requests for a full faculty voting or terminating the operations of the institutes were not accepted by the administration of the UC, so the influences of the organized petitions have been overrated by the media. Instead, the administration and the related faculty members determined the survival of the institutes. As long as the administration and the related faculty members could make a firm decision, the institutes could survive.

Second, for the influences of Hanban, the CIUC can survive only if the administration of the UC, the related faculty members and Hanban reached consensus. Unfortunately, the poor communication between the UC and the Hanban led to the disappointing result.

Third, the administration and the related faculty members' limited needs for the CIUC caused their limited determination to defend the CIUC in crisis.

In the future, the author will make further studies on the relatively successful cases of Confucius Institute such as the Confucius Institute at the University of Malaya, New South Wales Confucius Institute in Australia and the Confucius Institute at Ritsumeikan University in Japan.

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