

## ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation:      Invited Influence: American Private Associations  
in the Modernization of China, 1985-2005 (April 2007)

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“Invited Influence” is an interdisciplinary study of three American private associations, the evolving roles they have played in U.S.-China relations, and the implications these experiences have for understanding the interplay between official and unofficial diplomacy. The specific case studies are: the Hopkins-Nanjing Center for Chinese and American Studies, the National Committee on United States-China Relations, and The 1990 Institute. The first is a two-decade-old transnational, joint venture university. The second is a four-decade-old bilateral exchange and public education organization. The third is a largely community-based, largely Chinese American-led institution that formed as a transnational think tank after the Tiananmen Square tragedy of 1989 and subsequently broadened its agenda.

Through these in-depth case studies, the dissertation confirms and adds

texture to a growing body of scholarship affirming that non-state actors are playing increasingly prominent roles as informal diplomats, complement formal diplomacy in the transaction of relations between nations. It also intervenes in ongoing controversies over *how* and *under what conditions* these private organizations achieve their goals. The central findings are that private American involvement in China's contemporary modernization has been significant, has occurred largely by invitation, and has been substantially shaped by official, semi-official, and emerging civil society institutions in China. With respect to international relations theory, these findings expand such existing models as the "boomerang" and the "double-mobilization" theories. With respect to diplomatic historians' cultural relations theories, they offer an alternative, or complement, to narratives of "cultural imperialism" and "soft power."

In order to develop a comprehensive picture of the three organizations and the broader associational sector to which they and their Chinese partners belong, I drawn on a variety of scholarly discourses (globalization, transnationalism, cultural relations, modernization, civil society) and have used diverse research methods (documentary research, oral history interviews, survey, and media analysis).