

On Soft Power: How to Measure Soft Power, Actors of Soft Power, Foreign Policy and Soft Power?

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How to measure soft power?

As social power is to a very extent a kind of social capital, the measurement of soft power is, in principle, difficult from the methodological viewpoint concerning social sciences. Methodologically, some indicators are usually used to measure the size of hard power, like geographical resources, economic power, or military potential. Compared with the relatively feasible measures of hard power, soft power is extremely difficult to be measured like the cultural and ideological attraction, or the rules and institutions of international regimes.

Nevertheless, the evaluation of the soft power of a certain state can be available. The crucial four indicators to be used in such measurement of soft power for evaluating the scope of soft power are:

- **Politics:** It means primarily to operate with a responsible democratic system. Other indexes are: the rule of law, corruption, efficiency, human and minority rights protection, the feelings of happiness of the citizens, etc.
- **Economy:** Essentially, it means the recognized degree and attractive economic model of activity. Additional indexes are: numbers of corporate name brands, innovation capability of economic organization, functional financing system, a ratio of contribution to the global economy, the openness of the economic system, quality of products, etc.
- **Culture & social life:** Mainly it is about tolerance of racial and religious differences. Other indexes are: social ladder mobility, divergent cultures inclusion, innovation of the knowledge, popular culture influence to others, internationalization of its native (national) language, the export number of books, magazines, and films, enrolled number of foreign students, attractiveness as a tourist destination, etc.
- **International relations (IR) and diplomacy:** It is above all about the overall national image. Additionally, the following indexes are: low level of the use of the

military power in IR to achieve the national goals, size of foreign aid, leadership in designing international institutions, as high as level position in international public administration policy, multilateralism policy, the influence of the popular opinion leaders, practical effectiveness in solving global policy problems, supply of public goods like ideas, welfare, or security for other nations, etc.

Various actors of soft power

We have to keep in mind, nevertheless, that in the very practical activity, a state authority can't possess comprehensive soft power in all possible areas as soft power is not proportionately disseminated in all areas. As a matter of example, the USA has plenty of social organizations, and, therefore, such a situation enables the USA to build strong social networks around the world which are promulgating American values and ultimately support for the realization of American foreign policy and geostrategic, economic, or other national interest.

Many powerful and rich countries are using multinational corporations to play roles in the promotion of their business culture around the world. The Westernmost developed societies are enjoying all benefits of having prosperous universities and research centers, whose extremely powerful innovation's production is making those countries to be at the top of setting the trend and positive national image. However, on another side, the vacillating attitude to multilateralism of, for instance, the USA, is decreasing the soft power of Washington in addressing some of the global public issues.

Soft power in principle can be diffused to an array of different actors, including institutions, organizations, etc., which may not necessarily be in direct connection with the state authority or its agencies. Consequently, soft power is for sure not monolithic and different from hard power which is mainly in the monopoly of state forces (composed according to their inner hierarchical or/and pyramidal structure), soft power is contrary mainly distributed among various actors and issues areas.

Foreign policy and soft power

Foreign policy and its instrument of diplomacy are today very much using soft power as its useful component. Practically, the state authorities are able to realize their goals in foreign policy by two means: 1) coercive (hard power); or 2) cooperative (soft power). Nevertheless, the first option is not encouraged to be used by the governmental authorities and in many cases is even restrained greatly whether at the level of inner policy and/or domestic political culture or the level of international rules and/or norms. Such situations and practices are *de facto* fostering state authorities to opt for soft power for the sake to realize their foreign policy goals.

Concerning the interrelations between states and their diplomacies, the use of soft power simply means that the governmental actors can increase their influence and it is mainly manifested by the focal goal of state diplomacy in foreign affairs to make friends and cultivate a culture of friendship rather than creating enemies and/or military alliances or blocs. In principle, an actor of virtue will never be isolated as it will all the time have like-minded friends and followers. In other words, a just policy will attract a lot of supporters while an unjust policy will find little.

Many authors noticed the extreme importance of similar cultures for friendship and alliances in IR. The means to accommodate different views and cultures and make all kinds of supporters is more important and necessary compared to the promotion of consistency and uniformity in IR. Regarding the use of soft power by diplomacy, it is strongly suggested that strategy, which historically meant physical elimination of the enemy, should be changed and a new strategy on how to turn enemies and foreigners into friends adopted.

Another form of the use of soft power by state agencies is financing ability, especially in economic diplomacy. On one hand, there is a historically traditional widely accepted economic orientation in foreign policy and diplomacy – to try to alter a policy of another state by using coercive (hard power) economic sanctions.[i] However, as a critical approach is suggested, it is not always effective in the case of direct economic sanctions. Therefore, there is an alternative form of economic measure used successfully after 1945 – official development foreign aid (like USA Aid). Consequently, the state authorities can use their economic resources as soft power within such a framework. For instance, the USA is for very long time played a leading role in this economic soft power area of activity. Washington did gain much soft power by making institutional arrangement frameworks but in the recent future, its economic soft power and financial ability in international institutions may be eroded by its serious and huge fiscal deficits and public debt.[ii]

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Notes

[i] Coercion is the synonym for power. The focal issue of the term is to consist of controlling people by threats (tacit or overt). Practically, it is extremely difficult to make a difference between a threat and other forms of relationships in IR (see more in [Garret W. Brown, Iain McLean, Alistair McMillan (eds.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations*, Fourth Edition, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018, 448]).

[ii] See more in [John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of the Order After Major Wars*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001].

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