

THE PILLARS OF SOFT POWER

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Abstract

Soft power remains a power that is not absolute and difficult to measure, and it has limits to what it wants to achieve. Therefore, this study aimed at exploring the impact of soft power pillars on the international and regional arena on other countries. It basically examined the sources and limits of soft power. The study summarized the sources of soft power in: culture, academic and scientific exchange, scholarships, publishing houses, artistic production, political values and foreign policy. Regarding the limits of soft power are: the nature of interactive, other party's opinion and stance, the targets, the environment, strategy and the dexterity in using soft power. The study concludes that it is not necessary for a country to enjoy all these resources and tools; what determines the sources of soft power is the way it is used and employed.

Keywords: Limit, pillars, soft power, source.

INTRODUCTION

Using soft power requires exceptional skill, significant investment, and patience, since getting results is not direct and may take a long time. Joseph Nye said that the use of soft power is more difficult than the use of hard power because many of the related sources are not under the control of the state, and its impact depends largely on the acceptance of the receiving public. Therefore, soft power sources work often indirectly by shaping the political environment and sometimes take years to achieve the desired results. It does not have absolute influence, despite having some advantages like other types of power. It does not necessarily succeed in achieving its goals and interests even if the party believes that it has sufficient power to achieve the desired objectives. There are many factors that can determine the effectiveness of soft power, which will be explained in the content.

Research questions

The study is based on the problem of

- What is the impact of soft power pillars on the international and regional arena on other countries? Therefore, a number of sub-questions will be addressed such as:
 1. What are the sources of soft power?
 2. What are the limits of soft power?

Research hypothesis

It is hypothesized that the pillars of soft power have a clear and strong impact on some of the policies of states, due to the nature of providing resources and tools that each country possesses and its desire to achieve its goals and interests. Today, countries seek to possess soft power due to its ease in achieving objectives and interests.

Research significance

The importance of the study lies in how to employ soft power, not only in its traditional concept that is measured by military power, but in all its aspects, including military, economic, cultural, and geographical power. Possessing these comprehensive elements gives a state a position in the international system. The study is divided into two axes: the first axis is the sources of soft power, and the second axis is the limits of soft power.

Sources of soft power



Traditional military power is no longer the only factor that determines a state's strength. Innovations, economy, technology, knowledge, culture, values, and other factors have become sources of soft power that states rely on to achieve their interests, national goals, and objectives. This leads to a series of important results that contribute to enhancing a state's power. Economic power and its subcategories, such as scientific power, are among the most important pillars of soft power and are the active element in future conflicts. In addition, symbolic means that include unconventional means that sometimes have a strong impact on the other party, such as ideology, which aims to spread a comprehensive ideal vision of the state and its cultural, historical, and civilizational heritage and the values it carries that serve the interests of the active state in the long term. This is known as the theory of "ideological hegemony" (Nehme, 2017).

Soft power relies on attraction and likability, which lead to cooperation, consensus, and acceptance through moral sources of attraction, culture, political values, and general diplomatic principles. Any aspect that does not involve coercion or compulsion is a source of soft power that works to set the political agenda in a way that forms the preferences of others and makes states choose their policies instead of forcing them. Each society has its own uniqueness and principles that require dealing with it separately. However, some theorists have dealt with its sources as we mentioned earlier. Nye (2017) mentioned that soft power is represented in three sources that theorists deal with: *civilization and culture* when attractive to others, *local values and policies* when applied sincerely at home and abroad, and *foreign policies* when perceived by others as legitimate and having moral authority (Patalakh, 2016).

Culture

Culture is one of the general and comprehensive concepts in sociology. Thinkers and scholars have presented many different definitions, but we will refer to the most commonly used definition. Tylor presented the first definition of culture in 1871, defining it as the complex of knowledge, art, beliefs, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society (Al-Bakri, 2006). Culture is a model of social behavior that different groups transmit knowledge and values through. It exists on many levels, and there are aspects of high human culture that are either national or specific to social classes or small groups. Culture is not fixed and different cultures intersect in various ways. Further research is required to explore the relationship between culture and power (Nye, 2005). Therefore, culture is a set of values and practices that create meaning for society. When a country's culture includes universal values and promotes values and interests shared by others, it increases the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes due to the attraction and obligation relationships created by its culture. It is unlikely that narrow values and narrow cultures will produce soft power. The United States benefits from a global culture (Nye, 2005).

When a country's culture contains universal values and promotes policies that share those values and interests with others, it creates greater attraction and becomes a source of greater soft power and vice versa. There are researchers who mistakenly believe that soft power is limited to popular culture and equate the behavior of soft power with cultural resources that sometimes help produce it. They also confuse cultural resources with attractiveness. The historian, Ferguson (2003) describes soft power as non-traditional power such as cultural, commercial, goods, and political aspects, then he rejected it on the basis that it is soft and weak. However, Joseph Nye contributed to this confusion when he focused on the cultural element in most of the examples he cited in his early writings on the concept of soft power, ignoring the focus on other resources. This led many researchers to link soft power only to the cultural element. However, after defining soft power, especially in his early writing, with the cultural attraction element as a fundamental aspect, Nye modified this approach by including other elements later on. Culture has become an important source of soft power for any country due to its potential to achieve desired results (Bakir, 2021).

When culture is universal and humanistic, it becomes a source of convergence and influence on others. Conversely, when it is narrow, harmful, and unattractive, it becomes a source of conflict. After the Cold War, many changes occurred, including globalization, democracy, the information revolution, technological and cognitive advancement, and the development of communication.



These factors enhance and activate the role of culture as an important and effective form of soft power. The role of culture can be divided into the following:

Popular culture

It is one of the pillars that a country relies on as it represents its history, civilization, and identity. It also represents the exchange of information, ideas, values, systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture that all countries with strategic goals seek to promote in order to enhance mutual understanding and expand the acceptance of their political and economic ideas and plans. Popular culture is one of the components that a country relies on as it represents its history, civilization, and identity. It also represents the exchange of information, values, ideas, traditions, systems, beliefs, and other aspects of culture that all countries with strategic goals seek to promote in order to enhance mutual understanding expand the acceptance of their political and economic ideas and plans. The image of the society or country in which it was born is reflected in popular culture, which is defined as the collection of customs, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors that people use in their daily lives. It is a way of life for a people that includes contractual models of behavior and thinking that are passed down from generation to generation through learning rather than biological inheritance. This requires control by the elite to influence the political process and decision-making environment in this or that country (Muhammad, 2017).

Academic and scientific exchange

Many universities rely on dual exchange agreements with prestigious universities worldwide that are of interest to students and faculty to benefit from their experiences and to ensure opportunities for graduates who are open to different cultures, making it easier for them to integrate into the job market. Foreign universities also work through their branches in various countries around the world to promote the principle of exchange by receiving and sending academics so that both the university and the student can benefit from their experiences in education and learn about the latest teaching techniques adopted in those countries and benefit from them by transferring what is compatible with their university environments (Mahmoud, 2018).

Scholarships

The cultural and academic scholarships constitute another source of the basic soft power, as the graduates of these scholarships often influence the policies of their countries. This includes foreign students and researchers who come to study in universities and educational institutions, carrying with them positive images and good impressions when they return to their countries and occupy high positions that enable them to have an impact. Increasing cultural exchange programs with other countries, launching language education programs in other countries, as language is a key factor in transferring culture, and increasing the percentage of scholarships offered to foreign students to study in the relevant country, educational exchange, and establishing cultural institutes abroad are all part of this soft power (Al-Bakri, 2006).

Publishing houses

The important role of publishing houses goes beyond printing, publishing, and distribution. Publishing houses introduce the ideas of writers, thinkers, and reformers. Without publishing houses, their ideas would remain imprisoned within themselves. But with the advent of publishing houses it became possible to access the output of human ideas and to be open to various theories and orientations, as well as the intellectual and philosophical arguments adopted by thinkers, etc. Therefore, publishing houses seek to connect readers with thinkers and provide them with their ideas that they have built over a period of time. They care about their output and selects the best, making the reader feel assured that every time they come across a publishing house. Readers will read a book that will reshape their intellectual structure and their view of society and life. In general, the importance of publishing houses increases when we know that most writers consider publishing houses as media platforms that enable them to disseminate the results of their ideas. In conclusion, the role of publishing houses is of great importance because of its role in transmitting the culture of society and promoting it. They convey the image of society in the best possible way, including its ideas and beliefs, and bringing it closer to readers and knowledge seekers in other

societies through what it publishes of influential books, novels, and illustrated stories, which makes others desire to imitate that society and resemble it (Abdul-Hay, 2014).

Artistic production

Art is a reflection of the civilization and culture of peoples. Likewise, cinema and art are no longer just an internal affair, but have become a cultural arena for competition between countries to present the best and show the cultures of peoples to others. They are a source of attraction, influence, and persuasion for the culture of a particular country. Films, plays, and music are amongst the most prominent social medias. Therefore, artistic production of countries is an important tool among the soft power tools to convey their culture and demonstrate it to the world in the best possible way through what they produce and release to the world. These productions work to attract, persuade, and influence other peoples with their culture (Abdul-Hay, 2014).

Local/international artistic festivals

They are of special importance for reflecting a country's cultural image. They work on attracting celebrities and influencers to participate in these festivals, enabling them to use their soft power by making their ideas acceptable and appealing. Through these festivals, countries send their values and culture to the world and benefit from the influence that these communications have on the decision-making environment (Nye, 2017).

Political values

Political values are an important and effective form of soft power and play a pivotal role in international relations. The importance of political values lies in the duties, rights, and responsibilities that individuals bear. Therefore, international evaluative issues are an important pillar of soft power. There is a hierarchy of values, and the basis of this hierarchy is the individual's values, followed by the group's values, and then the decision-maker's values, who occupies the top of the hierarchy and influences international interactions (Al-Rafi'i, 2016).

Pluralism, culture, democracy, openness, human rights, equality, freedom of the press, legitimacy, and social cohesion are all political values and an important source of soft power. If they are applied and used sincerely, they will lead to admiration, attraction, convergence, and influence others. Political values are a cognitive pattern that includes a set of basic goals for a state, movement, or political entity that expresses ethics and principles that are intended to be achieved. It also includes unwanted value patterns that are intended to be avoided or fought against. Each value differs from the other, and its order of priority varies from one country to another (Chan, 2019). When political values are applied and used correctly and sincerely both domestically and internationally, the values that a government defends, such as democracy, for example, are reflected in its behavior domestically, in international institutions by working with others, and in foreign policy by promoting peace and human rights. This has a strong impact on the preferences of others, as governments can attract or repel others by the example they set as a role model (Aziz & Al-Khafaji, 2020). Political values may not lead to direct political results unless they are adopted by decision-makers. The decision-maker must be skillful and possess political knowledge and wisdom in dealing with these values in order to achieve goals. Thus, political values are of great importance when translated by a statesman according to his perceptions of the environment into a specific behavioral pattern (Al-Nuaimi, 2010). Three main conditions can be identified for political values as a source of soft power:

1. These values must have a global and humanitarian character.
2. They must be credible and legitimate.
3. They must be applied domestically and internationally.

The political values that a government believes in may enhance or dissipate its soft power, and foreign and domestic policies that appear to be compatible, contradictory, or indifferent to the opinions of others, or based on narrow national reconciliation approaches, may undermine soft power. All countries have their own political values through which they are effective and influential with other parties, whether they are countries or organizations (Al-Khazraji, 2000).

The state political values create a certain image of the state's intentions, goals, orientations, and actions among others who, in turn, act according to their perception of this image. The more a



state's behavior conforms to global, humanitarian, and democratic values, the more effective and acceptable its foreign policy is to others. Conversely, if a state's behavior conforms to narrow and undemocratic political values, it is unacceptable and reprehensible in the international community. Hence, democratic governments naturally allows for the exchange of information and experiences on a wide scale, which often facilitates a rational understanding of the implications of international events and effective dealing with them. Therefore, a state that has effective and important political values is better equipped to deal with international events efficiently. At both the domestic and international levels, the most effective countries are those that have coherence and consistency between their political values (Al-Khazraji, 2000).

Each country can achieve its goals at the international and regional levels through its own model, aspirations, level of prosperity, openness. It places importance on developing a program in foreign policy that attracts and influences others without forcing them to change through military or economic force. This aspect of power makes others want what you want by demonstrating your values in this way. When you win people over instead of forcing them, political values in democratic systems become more attractive because they do not resort to war and aggression. All countries can present their model through their political values, and this is where the importance and effectiveness of these values lie as a form of soft power (Hamdan, 2010).

Foreign policy

Foreign policy can be a primary source of a country's soft power, particularly if it carries democratic values. It can increase the effectiveness of a country's soft power if it is perceived by other countries and peoples as legitimate and morally acceptable. Foreign policy can be seen as the plan that outlines a country's relations with other countries, and planning foreign policy is essential for modern countries as members of the international community, since they cannot survive without interacting with this community. Foreign policy becomes sincere and effective when a state acts towards other international units individually or collectively (Al-Jasour, 2008).

Soft power has been a fundamental phenomenon in foreign policy and international relations throughout human history. Foreign policy is considered one of the important forms and resources of soft power, which relies heavily on the values it represents. Through foreign policy and its style, for example, promoting democracy and supporting human rights, a state can utilize its soft power effectively (Nabil, 2001). Countries try to pursue their national interests in foreign policy, and since soft power relies on the process of attraction to gather cooperation without the use of military threats, economic influence, or exerting pressure. They partly depends on how set framework of the same objectives. Policies based on comprehensive and far-sighted determinations of national interests make them more effective and attractive to others than policies with a narrow perspective (Nye, 2017).

When a country's foreign policy is legitimate and operates within the framework of international law and receives support from international institutions, others will be more willing to follow it. It will face less resistance and will be attractive enough to make others want to emulate it. One of the important forms of exercising soft power in foreign policy is listening to others and consulting them in international institutions, which plays a crucial role in international politics (Nye, 2017). In turn, the role of civil society organizations works in influencing others and achieving existing interests that are based on promoting democracy in its advanced stages through various mechanisms, the most important of which is the civil power of peoples. It details the role of communities and peoples to take their appropriate role in managing themselves and their sources (Al-Jader, 2013).

Diplomacy is one of the most important tools of foreign policy. It directly affects soft power and, in turn, influences and attracts others in the direction desired by relying on public diplomacy. Public diplomacy communicates with and reaches out to others through modern means that make communication and confrontation possible through scientific and technological development. These development have created new opportunities for communicating with the masses and addressing them directly in order to achieve the decision-maker's aspirations (Muhammad, 1992).



Public diplomacy participates in gaining public opinion outside the scope of embassies, official missions, and traditional media for official diplomacy. It uses all its potential, relationships, and communications, such as student unions, youth organizations, women's organizations, labor unions, political parties, civil society and government organizations. Therefore, diplomacy is an important tool in producing soft power by relying on the minds of others and assimilating their concepts and working to develop relationships with all classes and categories, whether official or unofficial, through scholarships, conferences, accessing media channels. Diplomacy helps in achieving foreign policy goals, which in turn is an important form of soft power through the influence it has on other parties. Every country has soft power through which it works to influence and attract others and market its model to others through its foreign policy, which is the official tool used by the state to deal with foreign parties (Nye, 2010).

Therefore, we note that hard power is no longer the only power of the state, but states have relied on soft power and its sources to achieve their goals and interests. There are small countries that do not have the components of hard power, but they have excelled in the sources of soft power they possess, their ability to influence and attract others, and their ability to employ these sources to achieve their interests.

The limits of soft power

Soft power is not absolute, despite its advantages. Like all other types of power, soft power does not have an absolute impact, and it is not necessary for it to succeed in achieving its goals, even if one party believes it has the necessary power to achieve its goals or obtain the desired results. There are many elements and factors that can limit the capabilities of power, and these also apply to soft power. Despite attempts to measure or evaluate the effectiveness of soft power or classify countries that possess it, the issue of power remains a major problem in general. Perhaps this is what makes realists who rely on quantitative measurement to evaluate the size of power and its effectiveness often underestimate the importance of soft power, its role, impact and effectiveness. However, soft power remains a power that is not absolute and difficult to measure, its limits and what it can achieve remain important to know and understand. This ultimately contributes to mastering how to use it optimally. Some of the most important limits of soft power include:

1. The nature of interactive soft power and the credibility of the entity that possesses it.

Aristotle says that the art of rhetoric includes three elements: the personality of the speaker, the state of mind of the listening audience, and the quality of the speech addressed to them (Cope & Sandys, 2010). Among these elements, the speaker's personality occupies the most important position, and not the speaker's opinion about the quality of his speech (Murphy, 2010). If the audience defines the speaker as a credible person, then his ability to attract others' attention, admiration, and persuasion will be easier. This interactive nature of the discourse that Aristotle talked about between the speaker and the audience also applies to soft power. It is an essential matter, which in turn will determine the extent of the state's ability to win over the targeted party instead of forcing it through oppression and coercion (Hwang, 2008).

2. Other party's opinion and stance towards soft power.

Soft power has an interactive nature, and therefore the view of the other party towards the party that possesses soft power plays an important role. Regardless of credibility, what the other party believes is important. If we want to use hard or tough power to seize something from the other party, the image of the first party or what the other party thinks about it does not matter. However, when it comes to soft power, it is different. It is more like a "dance" that requires a partner (Nye, 2019).

3. The level that soft power targets.

Usually, there are three main levels that a state "A" targets with soft power in a state "B". It is natural within these levels that the first level, which includes the political elite, is the most effective in demonstrating quick or direct political outputs in favor of the state "A" compared to interest groups or the general public. However, this does not negate the importance of other levels, even if they operate at a slower or less visible pace. Interests, including business groups, ethnic groups, trade unions, NGOs, and others, may have a good ability to influence political elites

or decision-makers in a way that allows outputs to appear in favor of the state "A. The public can also have a certain impact on the decision-making process through public opinion, protests, referendums, and other methods, in a way that ultimately falls within the same context mentioned above" (Nye, 2017).

5. The environment in which soft power operates.

The environment in which soft power is used also plays a role in limiting or increasing its capacity. For example, the use of tanks in mud or in rugged terrain is not the same as using them in a plain or flat land, although the tank is a fixed element in all the data in the aforementioned places. Moreover, the tank cannot be used in the sky, but only on the ground. These criteria also apply, with a noticeable difference, to the uses of soft power. The environment and surrounding circumstances must be suitable for using this type of force; just as the goals to be achieved must be realistic and reasonable (Nye, 2017).

6. The strategy of using soft power.

The use of soft power resources and tools must be utilized through a general policy or government strategy. This matter should be noted and given importance and care. In many cases, the strategy may not be appropriate or may fail to employ soft power tools and resources (Bakir, 2021).

6. Dexterity in using soft power.


Power, whether hard or soft, has advantages and disadvantages. Using a large amount of any type of power creates enemies and generates resistance and repulsion. Likely, the use of a large amount of hard force, for example, may generate resistance instead of submission, so using a large amount of soft power may generate through the same logic resentment, resentment and anger rather than attraction and co-optation (Hwang 2008).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that soft power needs a deep awareness of the way it is formed and the necessity of differentiating and correct understanding between the sources, tools and limits. This power also requires a good awareness of the nature of its work, how to employ it, the extent of its effectiveness and the limits of its influence. Accordingly, all of sources that have been mentioned, are actually sources of soft power, but it is not necessary for the list of sources to end at what has just been mentioned. It is not necessary for a country to enjoy all these resources and tools, as it may enjoy all of them and may enjoy some of them or possess more than them as well. What determines the sources of soft power is the way it is used and employed.

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