

THE POWER OF SOFT POWER OF CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Power is defined as “the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events to get desired outcomes”. It can be done by threatening or by using wealth, if the person or the country is rich enough, or else if the person or the country has good reputation among counterparts can attract others towards it and get the work done. There are several ways in which others behavior can be affected. In the political world, it can simply be defined as the possession of capabilities or resources that can influence outcomes. In International political scenario, a country is considered to be powerful which has, relatively large population, territory, natural resources, economic strength, military force, and social stability.

It requires skillful and strong leadership & well structured strategy to utilize the resources in desired manner for getting desired output. But often, Leaders are underestimated and strategies fall short of, like in the case of Hitler & Saddam Hussain.

KEYWORDS: *The Possession of Capabilities or Resources, Utilize the Resources in Desired Manner, Changes in China’s Attitude*

INTRODUCTION

Suddenly, this conversation on Power started because of changes in China’s Attitude in recent years in International politics. Now, we will discuss and analyse the changes China has been showing. Power is commonly of two types in International Politics i.e. hard power and soft power. Resources of power cannot and should not be judged without knowing the context of it. Hard power means majority use of force or influence through force or financial terms. Like Military interventions, economic sanctions or trade barriers etc. whereas, Soft power is cooperation or mutual consent with cultural, historical or diplomatic influence. In today’s International scenario, soft power trend is rising. It is becoming popular among nations. In other words, Soft power is the demand of present time. In the assessment of power of the country internationally, culture, ideology, institutions, education and technology play important role now a days whereas, geography, population etc have very minimal role.

Prof. Joseph Nye of Harward University has developed this concept of Soft Power. He has described it as, the ability to attract and co-opt rather than by coercion, using force or giving money as a means of persuasion. One of the features of soft power is its non-coerciveness. Soft power count on cultural values, political values, foreign policies, education, governance, values, ideas, and visions & likes. Soft power is not merely the influence, but it has ability to attract, it is more than just

persuasion. Chairman Mao Zedong said, “Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and moral.”

It has been more than two millenniums; the idea of soft power has been advocated by ancient Chinese elites. In ancient Chinese philosophies, ideas on soft power can be found. Under the influence of these ancient Chinese philosophies, earlier Governors of China tried to defuse security threats internally through moral government like Benevolent King. In the views of Chinese scholars and policy makers, to increase China’s comprehensive national strength and regain the country’s status as a leading world power, soft power is an essential component. In ancient China’s Military Strategies, the emphasis was on management of the international diplomatic relations rather than military conflict. The ideological elites of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) believed that soft power is a major tool with which Western countries implemented their strategies of ‘peaceful evolution’.

To keep going on the socialist path, to uphold the people’s democratic dictatorship, to uphold Marxism Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, CCP launched nationwide campaigns for ‘spiritual civilization’ and emphasized on the importance of adherence to the ‘Four Cardinal Principles’, in order to discredit Western political concepts.

To realize the dream of becoming a global power, China is using soft power as a mechanism, especially since China’s hard power resources lag, far behind the world’s major powers. In China, in the debates about soft power, special attention is paid to the national prestige. National image/prestige is defined as the evaluation of a country in the eyes of the international community. It is the result of combined action of public communications and execution of foreign policy. The national image/prestige gets directly influenced by the attitude of governments, international organizations and public opinions, and impact the formulation and execution of government policies. It happens with the increase in the frequency of information exchanges and the complexity of international relations. As China has made rapid progress in its modernization process, the ascendancy of China’s hard power resources (economic power and military power) has become more and more obvious.

Now, as China has economic power and military power, they are more prone to incorporate components of soft power, which can be applied over all around and promotion of national image/prestige of China. Soft power is a complex concept, in which formation and transition of power depends on various components. The development of soft power is seen as a dynamic process with great uncertainty and mobility. A country’s culture, government, diplomatic tactics, educational culture takes relatively short time in developing, unlike nationality and ethics, and so can be influenced to change.

China’s Cultural Soft Power

Since Deng Xiaoping’s initiated the policy of ‘open-door’ in the 1980s, traditional cultural products like acupuncture, martial arts, herbal medicine, regional cuisines, literature, religious practices, etc has witnessed renewed popularity around the world.

China’s modern art, cinema, pop music, acrobatics, and dance have also found new audiences in the West as well. For Example, in the year 2000, the French Chinese novelist Gao Xingjian became the first Chinese to win a Nobel Prize for

Literature. Chinese motion pictures such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* were among the non-English-language films to earn more than \$100 million in the history of the American box office. Between the year 1980 and 2004, China was among the world's highest growing tourist destinations, it increased by more than 19 fold— from 5.7 million to 109 million. This kind of growth shows global attractiveness of the country and indicates cohesiveness of the Chinese culture. China is also attracting visitors in other areas like education. The enrollment of foreign students in Chinese universities has seen a steady growth. Foreign students seeking admissions to study Chinese languages, arts, history, medicine, and agricultural sciences is increasing. China has ample cultural resources and so is a booming economy, with its rapid economic development, it is inflating its share of world trade and also growing its diplomatic competence. According to a recent survey, 38 percent of human resource and financial directors in Europe, Australia and New Zealand foresee Chinese language to become the most valuable business language, other than English in near future.

As Joseph Nye said, that “culture is more likely to attract people and produce soft power in situations, where cultures are somewhat similar rather than widely dissimilar”. Therefore, China's progressive foreign cultural policy is more successful in its neighboring countries. So, Mandarin Chinese is been dynamically promoted by the state's leadership in Singapore, and see it as a way to simultaneously reduce inter-ethnic communication barriers.

China's Political Soft Power

It is rightly said, that a country's soft power depends on the country's internal performance. A country's image/prestige is perceived and enhanced by the way the country implements its political values. It has important implications for the advancement of country's foreign policy objective. To get to the general consensus, the term Value is difficult to define. Still, it says, “Value implies a code or a standard which has some persistence through time”. Joseph Nye defines Political Values, as an important component of soft power that is important to a country's foreign policy, but cannot be imposed on other countries. According to Nye, “Political values like democracy and human rights can be powerful sources of attraction, but it is not enough just to proclaim them”. To increase the charisma of political values, it is important to successfully implement them in-house, in order to extend its values in the world. For example, American feminism, open sexuality are profoundly subversive in patriarchal societies.

China's Political Soft Power in its Modernization Process

After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), 10 years of chaos and stagnation, most of the Chinese have progressively moved forward to incorporate modernization in their lives, in its broadest sense. That is, realization of necessary and desirable goals, and its realization on continuous reforms in every aspect of life in China. The modernization process followed in China has greatly changed the social and political values in today's China. The process has increased China's acceptability in domestic and global scenario.

China's Soft Power of Foreign Policies

It was in early 1970s, when Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai initiated contacts with the US and engineered China's entry into the UN. There is the general consensus that China had moved from rejection of the international status quo to gradual acceptance. Post-Mao leadership of China has adopted a less confrontational, more sophisticated and confident, and constructive approach toward regional and global affairs, in the harmony with its reform agenda. After re-structuring its foreign policy, China has achieved to the high levels. The restructuring not only pushed up its reforms but also opened its doors to a new era. It created relatively favorable international environment for its domestic economy, it also gradually changed its national image to favorable worldwide, and started to project China a soft power in the international showground.

Territorial disputes with its neighbors were the most sensitive aspect of China's foreign policy. China demonstrated more flexibility and lowered its nationalist tone, in solving such disputes with its neighbors, including Russia, Vietnam and India, with whom he had fought with over territory in the Mao Era. In October 2004, China and Russia signed the "Supplementary Agreement on the Eastern Section of China-Russia Boundary Line". That means, the borders of both the countries, China and Russia will become a line of peace, friendship, cooperation and development between people of the two countries. At times, it has even put China in direct competition with American policy goals.

To project & maintain its image of Soft Power is not going to be an easy task for China. Its ambitious foreign policies will not only increase the risk of conflict between China and other economic powers, especially Japan and the US, but will also harm China's efforts to establish a moral image and project its soft power. China's continuous efforts to manipulate public opinion and instill nationalism as a political tool of legitimizing its own core values may mitigate against China's constructive involvement in international affairs.

On the whole, components of soft power include Film industry, Internet, Cultural events, Exchange programs, Education, Music, Literature, Sport, languages, public diplomacy that are applied by China. In South Asian Region, China has applied of Soft Power and has grasped perception over diplomacy, foreign assistance, trade and investment, and China has succeeded to spread a perception in the market that China is a vast & potential market.

Soft power should be used in raising the economy of country. China has also adopted various factors to South Asian region such as, accommodating foreign policies, participating in regional organizations, providing foreign assistance and increasingly boosting its economic ties. To confirm a relation to China's involvement in South Asia, the old Chinese proverb "yang wei zhong yong" (make foreign resources, goods and technology will help China become strong and powerful) ¹² is adopted by Chinese.

China has a rich culture, and this makes their main tools for using soft power by exchanging and having cultural engagement in and around, mainly in South Asian Region. China has accomplished in a great extent in dealing with cultural programs e.g. the 2004 Sixth Asian Art Festival, where more than 1000 artists participated with 500,000 spectators.

China has established Confucius institutions in Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Maldives etc., which all brings the soft power to play a role. PRC offering a numerous scholarships to the South Asian students for the study of Chinese language and culture, higher learning in science, medicine and technology research in China.

Chinese and Indian Governments have signed Agreements to strengthen mutual cooperation in the field of education.

As China is rising, global interest in Chinese language is also surging. Foreign students also illustrate a growing fascination with China. Chinese language is seen as indispensable tools for understanding China, its commerce and business transactions, and lending a good and new carrier for people around the world.

China has succeeded in promoting its art, literature, films, fashion, martial arts and cuisine in South Asia. China has also been encouraging private visits by political figures of different countries, journalists and academics as part of its public diplomacy initiatives. This is followed by a brief analysis of the main tools they use to improve China's soft power, as well as the clear limits and obstacles in this endeavor. When in early 1993, Nye's concept of soft power was introduced by scholars in China, in the same year Wang Huning, a professor in the elite Fudan University of China suggested that culture could be a major source of China's soft power. Clearly, soft power has become a trendy term for publicists, scholars, officials and even entrepreneurs in China. Despite these achievements, China faces numerous constraints.

This article defines soft power as the international appeal and attraction of one nation's culture, values, social system (or political system), and developmental model. It is reported that the Chinese leadership decided to develop China's philosophy and social sciences, because they were components of China's soft power. Soft power, comprising culture and ideology was becoming increasingly important in the competition among nations. China should thus cultivate its own soft power. The aim of China's soft power was to gain international recognition and respect. China could utilize the quintessence of its traditional culture. However, in its quest for soft power, China would be obstructed by the cultural hegemonies of the United States, which attempted to impose its popular culture and political values on the other nations. As China's international engagement has become more sophisticated, so too it has developed more sophisticated tools of soft power.

Wang Yizhou and Wang Jisi from the Chinese Academy of Social Science urged further discussion on the inconsistencies and theoretical problems inherent in the concept. Shi Yinhong from the People's University raised the question of the Taiwan issue as a pot. Next, Shi Yinhong from the People's University raised the question of the Taiwan issue as a potential complicating factor for China's rising. In China, soft power has become one of the most frequently used phases among political leaders, leading academics and journalistic, what is most striking is the importance that Chinese leaders unequivocally assign too soft in China's international political strategy.

In today's world, China internationally promotes a mean based culture to maintain friendly relations with the other nations while avoiding hegemony and political disputes, doing so, also open up markets to foster common prosperity of cultural exchanges to unite the hearts and mind of people of all races. It sacrifices some of its interests in order to maintain a stable international environment, and it focuses on how to successfully solve its numerous domestic problems.

Furthermore, China's Soft power increases whenever it embraces heterogeneous values rather than maintaining cultural homogeneity. The short fall of Chinas practice of the means is perhaps best illustrate in the process of building a "new world order". World order is currently evolving from an old system to a new one, and is still in reconciliation as well as conflict between the two halves economically, the north and south politically. The might at right and culturally, the west and non-west under such circumstances, developing and developed countries are both calling for the new order, but with definitions of what this entails.

Thus, education- together with a rituals and family- is one of the three major institutions that people can use to cultivate their virtues, with few exception, China have stressed the importance of education. Traditional Chinese education which was based on Confucianism, reaches its final, but highest stage during Qing dynasty. At a time education lost its function of projecting, Chinas influence neighboring countries.

It essentially becomes an instrument for the court to maintain the Empire's internal order. It essentially becomes an instrument for the court to maintain the Empire's internal order. Chinas traditional sphere of influence is in Asia, but as Chinese economic grows, it need more resources from other part of the world. Its foreign policy objective focuses more on Africa and Latin America. According to li (1998), Chinas' foreign policy in the developing has several major objectives like systematically bring together support from the third world countries, counter Taiwan's diplomatic efforts to gain formal ties with Taiwan.

Minimize direct confrontation with the West and emphasis cooperation to achieve. As China's international engagement has become more sophisticated, so too it has developed more sophisticated tools of soft power.

China's tools assistance to Africa is difficult to quantify, both because Beijing does not publish through statistical and because, it remains clear on what percentage of announced aid actually qualifies as aid.

CONCLUSIONS

Soft power has always been a key element of leadership. The power to attract, get others to do what you want, to frame the issues, to set the agenda—has its roots in thousands of years of human experience. Skillful leaders have always understood that attractiveness stems from credibility and legitimacy. Power has never flowed solely from the barrel of a gun; even the most brutal dictators have relied on attraction as well as fear. If Yasser Arafat had chosen the soft power model of Gandhi or Martin Luther King rather than the hard power of terrorism, he could have attracted moderate Israelis, and would have a Palestinian state by now.

Although there are some disputes about the speed and extent of this global phenomenon, much attention has been paid to the question of whether China's growing power portends a threat. Even politically conservative countries like China admitted the importance of "soft" instruments. In 2007, the chairman of the People's Republic of China used the term coined by J. Nye in his speech to the Communist Party of China, and stressed the urgency of building China's cultural "soft power", in order to meet domestic needs and increase international competitiveness.

It means that, the concept in whole is vital as it can bring significant results, though there are also certain cultural restrictions which affect its efficiency. Most China observers point to China's territorial and demographic size, its modernizing economy, and its increasing defense budget as evidence that China may become a revisionist power capable of dominating Asia and challenging American interests. the possession of capabilities or resources

Based on the above study on China's soft power, it is evident that China has achieved impressive gains in its overall level of soft power, since it began its 'reform and open door' policies at the end of the 1970s. In terms of foreign policy, China's new strategies and policies which are usually termed collectively as 'new diplomacy,' have increased China's involvement in international agenda-setting. China has made progress in developing its soft power resources and its ability to convert its resources into desired foreign policy outcomes. China's thrust of soft power has enabled it to restructure its geopolitical

alliances in ways that will aid in its rise as a global power.

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