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International Relations and the Role of Soft Power

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Abstract The concept of power is one of the critical aspects of IR. "Soft Power" has developed as a substitute for comprehending the complicated connection between nations and how nations utilize various non-coercive tactics to convince foreign actors. In contrast, "Hard Power" has long occupied the center of scholarly conversation. Nye suggested the idea to signify the transition from stance to appeal in the middle half of the 20th century. The center of this paper is the role of "Soft Power" in international relations (IR). The research has used various theorist notions to examine how power discussions create intense debates and disputes. Then, we looked at the Nye power framework linked to the altering character of the international order. Furthermore, we will investigate the notion of "Soft Power" sources and their implications for IR.

Keywords: International Relations, Soft Power, Non-Coercive Tactics, Hard Powers

Introduction

Power has been at the center of the theoretical debate within the international relations discipline. Renowned theorists have explained the nature of power and its consequences on government action. Dahl describes power as the "connection between people" in which one person can dominate others. In a similar vein, Hart (1976) defined power as "authority" over a variety of "stakeholders," "funds," and "actions and consequences." Based on these justifications for the historical inter-state power dynamic, the optimists were the source of this line of thought. The concept of power has evolved and changed due to several philosophies introducing their distinct viewpoints on the term. It is essential because of the rising geopolitical complications and the distribution of power within international entities. Power is necessary to trigger change. No doubt that improvement can be made when there is no power, but it will take a significant amount of time and fighting to make even a little difference. The presence of power makes it simple to create, amend, destroy, and implement modifications.

Likewise, "Soft Power" is a national power focusing on intellectual and social attention. It is employed by parties in international relations to achieve their desired objectives, whether intentionally or unintentionally. "Soft Power" includes much more than cultural relevance. It also includes political views and philosophies, socioeconomic and educational systems, and lawfully governmental laws perceived positively by other countries and people. A nation's "Soft Power" is

boosted when other entities are influenced that its ideas or laws are valid, if not acceptable. "Soft Power" is a conceptual term that assumes more significance and importance. Many nations know how important it is to interact in global politics of appeal, authenticity, and reliability by utilizing "Soft Power" techniques and strategies. This is because, to attain a country's goals, a state's goals and objectives may only sometimes be compatible with those of different countries. In addition, creating a logical framework to understand how "Soft Power" supplies and techniques are created and applied has proven challenging for academics and politicians. This is because each state typically uses "Soft Power" to pursue various goals based on its standing and impact on the global stage.

Furthermore, research on "Soft Power" research frequently focuses on the world's largest countries' "Soft Power" capacities. Even Joseph S. Nye, who thoroughly designed and created the term "Soft Power" in the early 1990s, has believed to have published about the advancement and use of "Soft Power" by powerful states (Lee, 2011). He claims that big countries use their "Soft Power" to firmly preserve their world dominance, while less powerful nations struggle to compensate for their "hard-power deficit" by building up their soft-power assets. Looking at East Asia nations, we can see practical examples of how "Soft Power" will be applied in various ways to achieve various national objectives and supplement hard assets. Japan was the prior state in East

Asia to accept the idea of using "Soft Power" for its national and international policies, especially in light of the legal restrictions on using conventional "Hard Power". China has drawn both close neighbors and far-off nations to transform its reputation from one of danger to one of altruism. Although these nations have made real strides in developing their "Soft Power" with their enormous efforts, they have yet to achieve "Soft Power" that is in line with the grandeur of their economies.

The Origin of Power

Let's look back at the works of Aristotle, Plato, and Machiavelli; social scientists have been interested in the topic of power for many years. Although the issue has received a lot of attention, there are still significant scholarly disagreements over the concept and characteristics of power, which makes the subject challenging and ambiguous. Identifying whom power is being discussed while discussing it is crucial. Arendt (1970: 44) said that power relates to a community and only persists as long as the collective remains coherent rather than explaining it as a single entity. Dahl (1957: 203) recommended referring to the objects in a power interaction as actors. The term "actor" is broad and can describe individuals, teams, tasks, positions, authorities, nation-states, or other human masses.

One of Max Weber's (1947: 152) most popular terms of power in social science is the possibility that one actor within a social interaction would be capable to execute his will without objections. In Weber's view, power arises from a recipient's attributes, capabilities, and capacities and is a zero-sum game. The Weberian notion, though, was subject to a lot of critiques. Martin (1971: 243) drew attention to the fact that Weber did not describe power but offered a concept for contrasting actor qualities. Additionally, the author claimed that Weber avoided the potential of power relations that were beneficial to both parties by incorporating dispute into his concept and only viewing it in zero-sum terms (Martin, 1971: 243; Raimzhanova, 2015).

Talcott Parsons (1967) provided a paradigm of power that was seen as a centralized hub rather than a bone of contention. According to Parsons (1967: 208), power is the technique to ensure that members of a process of the mutual organization carry out legally binding commitments when those liabilities are justified in light of the system's objectives and when, in the event of intransigence, harmful restrictions are presumed to be

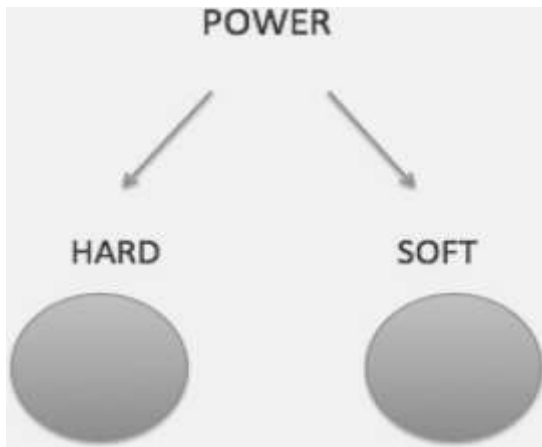
in place. In this light, Anthony Giddens (1968: 264) said that, along with other factors, the Parsonian approach dismisses the hierarchical nature of power and treats power as if it were always lawful and presupposes agreement in addition to positions of authority.

In conclusion, there are severe definitional issues with each of the two main lines of thought in this examination of power, the Weberian and the Parsonian (Martin, 1971: 244; Raimzhanova, 2015). These are primarily illustrations of how power discussions elicit spirited discussions and conflicts. This brief talk aims to highlight how complex and essential the idea of power is in social science. Although their extensive adoption, there has yet to be a consensus on their fundamental meanings, with many theorists offering their peculiar formulations of power (Bierstedt, 1950). Gallie (1956) affirms that because there are opposing ideas and meanings for what power is, it is fundamentally a contentious issue.

Nye's Framework of Power and IR

The understanding of power began to change as international relations became a discipline steadily. The employment of abstract shapes of power, such as society, doctrine, and organizations, has been reinforced, according to Joseph Nye (1990: 167), who stated that this is due to the shifting character of the international order. Technology, knowledge, and economic expansion are becoming just as important—if not more so—than location, demographic, and available technology due to increasing social mobilization. On the other hand, according to Baldwin (2012: 15), the significance of armed force has historically been overstated, while the significance of civilians' sources of power has historically been understated.

Nye divides power into two categories: "Hard Power" and "Soft Power." The article will use Nye's definition of power as the capacity to influence others to bring about the worth considerably by the user (1990:154). Also used as a foundation for the analysis in this research are Nye's types of power. There are two unadulterated types of power: hard and "Soft Power."



[Fig.1 Nye's Power Diagram](#)

The earliest type of power is "Hard Power" which is related to the idea of anarchy international order in which states do not acknowledge any primacy and are instead forced to concentrate on power politics. "Hard Power" is the capacity to get one's aims by coercive measures or threats. "Hard Power" has traditionally been assessed based on factors including total population, area, location, environmental assets, armed action, and industrial might. Whereas, The basis of "Soft Power" is the ability to influence the priorities of another without getting violent, the threat of force, or pressure, but rather by using tacit knowledge such as an appealing character, heritage, political beliefs, organizations, and guidelines that are regarded as morally sound or having authority (Nye, 2008: 95). The foundation of "Soft Power" is credibility.

According to Steven Lukes' third aspect of the power argument, "Soft Power" originates in several areas (Lukes, 1974; Raimzhanova, 2015). Dahl (1961) is credited with introducing the concept of power when he said that the actor who prevails in a debate or other situation has power. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) disagreed, claiming Dahl's method ignored a second "face" of power symbolized by the concealment of certain topics, thus preventing their consideration. According to Baldwin (2012), the second picture is the power to set policy. According to Lukes (1974), the third aspect of power is the capacity of actor A to influence actor B's interests, ambitions, or ideas to persuade B to do something B would not normally do. The first two angles of power state how using power to force a person to act against their choice is possible. On the other hand, the third side of power explains how people may be controlled by altering their needs.

Another illustration is the division of power into three classifications (1946: 108): armed power, economic power, and power overview. "Hard Power", by definition, comprises military and economic might, but "Soft Power," according to Nye, is the ability to influence public ideas. Legitimacy is an essential soft force to reaffirm. "Soft Power" is defined as the capacity of a nation to genuinely entice and persuade others by applying its traditions and beliefs. One significant major component of American educational "Soft Power" is the Fulbright program. Another illustration is the American "Soft Power" of Hollywood and Broadway. Even though cultural appeal, theology, and international organizations are not novel forms of cooperative influence and "Soft Power" (Nye, 1990a: 167; Raimzhanova, 2015), "Soft Power" is just now beginning to gain conceptual and applied acceptance; as a result, the theory urgently requires a thorough investigation.

The Concept of Soft Power

"Soft" power is in opposition to "hard" power in the idea. A nation can entice people with its concepts, beliefs, and philosophies. This type of power is comparable to formless power seen in things like art, philosophy, and welfare structures. Political power, cultural and educational influence, and diplomatic power are all examples of "soft" power. The political system, strategic objectives, societal stability, national cohesiveness, national management structures, and the capacity to plan and conduct politics are all components of political power. A nation's "soft" power, which develops over a long period of time through the long-term historical growth of its people's philosophy, traditional beliefs, foreign influences, the system of governance, industrial regime, etc., is critical as a source of its global influence. Each "soft" power component in this process is influenced by cultural heritage because every culture has its own course for growth. "Soft" power emerges in this revolving, conflicting, yet forward-moving process that carries the traces of its own unique national history (Raimzhanova, 2015).

Although "soft" power is an illusive force, it is accurate. Its inception, growth, and stability are influenced by the country's historical backdrop, precisely the domestic and global context. Only a "soft" power that follows the general trend of events can grow slowly. In contemporary civilizations, the "soft" power is almost the advancement of science, technology, the economy, and

the information society. With the development of new methods and instruments for international interactions, "soft" power grows. The media is now a dynamic and influential tool thanks to the growth of information technology. As more sophisticated media have entered the global culture, their influence on foreign politics has grown significantly and has become a sign of a government's national psyche (Haneş & Andrei, 2015).

The "soft" power has a significant ability to fight and expand. As the digital revolution spreads and the Internet society grows, "soft" power transcends geographical, economic, racial, and temporal boundaries to advance society and significantly impact human behavior and standards of living. Disputes and contentions inevitably result from competition and rivalry in the global society where more "soft" powers engage. In any case, in the paradoxical world promoting, "soft" powers simultaneously entice and advance one another. When they connect, they typically develop a collective identity, adapt to one another, share knowledge, and emulate one another. Thus, "soft" power, centered on international influence, has played and will remain an important part in the change of international relations and the world setup (Ikenberry & Nye, 2014).

Soft Power and IR

"Hard Power" was the norm for most of existence, particularly until the beginning of the Cold War period. The term "Soft Power" was first used in the 1980s by Joseph S. Nye Jr., who theorized its significance, even though individuals had already acknowledged the value of concepts and culture as effective influencing instruments to implement policies. Nye (2004b) asserts the distinction between hard and "Soft Power." He stated that "Soft Power" is the capacity to obtain what you want without using threats or bribes. When you can influence others to want what you desire, you will not need to spend as much money on carrots and sticks to sway them in your favor. A country's army and economy might give rise to its "Hard Power" or capacity for coercion. "Soft Power" results from how appealing a native culture, political beliefs, and laws are. Our "Soft Power" is strengthened when others perceive our policies as being justified. According to Nye (2004a), a nation's "Soft Power" may be gauged using its society, political principles, and foreign relations as its three key elements (p. 11). It essentially turned to the ability to persuade as a substitute for the pressure through military techniques that "Hard

Power" typically depended upon when "Soft Power" was understood broadly (Wilson, 2008, p. 114). If a state's actions were perceived to be legitimately allocated by the world community or by specific countries it wished to recruit, the influence would be even strengthened.

The "Soft Power" of the United States was highlighted by Nye in his writing, which compared it to other growing powers like China, Brazil, and other European nations. He then engaged in extended discourse on the shifting democratic values, favoring appeal and persuasion. He used Norway as an indication of a weak military power participating in peacekeeping operations in several East Asian and Middle Eastern nations, demonstrating Norway's adept multinational negotiation abilities (Nye, 2004a, 10). China, one of the top-growing nations in Asia and the entire world, has also been taking considerable measures to expand its global power by using various "Soft Power" tools. A group of specialists appearing for the Center for Strategic and International Studies (2017), including Nye, remarked on China's ascent, claiming that the country's prosperity was because the government projected a favorable image of its economy and culture through mainstream media (Haneş & Andrei, 2015).

Many authors have identified multiple factors to analyze states' effects on "Soft Power." For example, the "Soft Power" 30 studies (McClory, 2018; Karki & Dhungana, 2020) issued in 2018 assessed countries' "Soft Power" using Enterprise, Cultural, Digital, Government, Engagement, and Education index values (Karki & Dhungana, 2020). Despite natural calamities such as Brexit, the United Kingdom ranks first due to its cultural impact and worldwide interactions through its broadcasting industry. Similarly, Japan rose to fifth place due to its technological breakthroughs compared to the other countries and its concentration on its businesses and sociocultural factors, as evidenced by the global popularity of Pokémon and other comparable characters. Several nations, such as Sweden, flourished due to chances for development and investment under its socialist democratic values. Conversely, the Netherlands scored top of the list for its high-quality universities and colleges and the involvement they generated. It is worth noting concerning the report that what defines "Soft Power" for one person may not be an appealing resource for another.

Furthermore, "Soft Power" has never been a constant instrument for power monitoring. While the United States remains the most powerful state in terms of the defense budget, its potential to impact through "Soft Power" has been challenging to assess. One could argue that the downturn of America's liberal portrait since the election of its new Leader is due to his widely disliked foreign policy policies and actions, such as withdrawing from the Paris Agreement in 2017, his suggestion to ban the entry of Muslims from several nations, and publicly springing up correct remarks, to mention a few. So, although compression force has been easily understood as consisting of set markers of military capabilities and economic strength, one of the fundamental critiques of "Soft Power" has been that it is vague in its accuracy (Raimzhanova, 2015, p. 7). While many experts have attempted, the origins of "Soft Power," such as society, are, at best, multifaceted. A study by the University of Edinburgh (2017) revealed that "Soft Power" could be adequate through intercultural linkages, connectivity, audience involvement, and staging techniques (Singh & MacDonald 2017, p. 16). As a result, political influence has been imagined in a range of methods as a means of measuring state influence. Each system has its criteria, but some parts have stayed constant, such as a country's cultural reach over the world in diverse contexts and its geopolitical might, which it employs to accomplish its long-term national objectives.

Conclusion

In recent years, the international arena has seen significant transformations. The interaction of various entities in a global marketplace has assured that nations must employ a variety of strategies to boost their power and achieve their foreign affairs agendas. "Soft Power" has emerged as a critical component in explaining and comprehending these developments. While "Hard Power" has been and will continue to serve as a choice for several major powers in the near future, "Soft Power" may be the primary technique by which certain tiny governments might convince other states to accomplish their goals on a global scale.

Both of the two primary streams of analysis in this investigation of power, the Weberian and the Parsonian, have severe conceptual challenges. All of those are basically examples of how power struggles can spark heated debates and fights. Furthermore, according to Nye, "Soft Power" is depend on three different

elements; its culture - in regions where it is appealing to everybody else, its democratic ideals - whenever it measures up to them both at home and overseas, and its foreign relations - others when perceiving them as legal and possessing moral standing.

National power includes "soft" power as a significant component. In the modern world, there is fierce competition over national authority. Both good and bad consequences can be seen in the growth of national power from "soft" power, which is centered on cultural influence. Its effects on how international relations are developing are becoming more significant. Deeply rooted cultural causes underlie many current global challenges. The deployment of "soft" power in the service of national objectives is becoming more important to countries around the world. Resources with "soft" power are getting more significant in today's international politics. The cultural foundation is tactically important for the growth of a nation's national power, the expansion of "physical" power, and regional and global influence. In the evolution of international interactions and the correlational relationship, "soft" power, which is centered on cultural dominance plays, will assume a more significant and durable function.

Numerous small states have achieved varying degrees of success over the years. These individual accomplishments can fully act as a model for others. The above examples of the states have shortcomings and advantages that can be leveraged to create an actual "Soft Power" template that other little states can follow. Those countries that have demonstrated an absence of "Hard Power" assets to participate on a worldwide platform may need to begin by creating a solid foundation of policy inside their own state and local level interactions to fit their self-interest.

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