SOFT POWER STRATEGY OF CHINA

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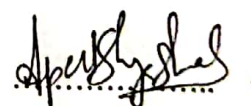**SUVECHHA SHRESTHA**

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it contains no materials previously published. I have not used its materials for the award of any kind and any other degree. Where other authors' sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The power of state at present is not solely based on the military, political and economic potential. A new factor "soft power" has become an important aspect of influence for states in the globalized, interactive and interdependent state of international system. After Professor Joseph Nye coined the term Soft Power, there has been an increased focus on the cultivation and proliferation of soft power by governments around the world.

Over the past few years, China has also taken great measures to strengthen its soft power capabilities. Nye equates power of attraction in international relations with the values of the country as expresses by a country in its culture, its internal and external principles, policies and relations. However, the Chinese soft power seems to be incorporating the economic and development aspects along with the framework of Nye to meet its objectives.

The thesis explores the limits of the concept of soft power by critically examining the reconceptualization of soft power in contemporary China. It seeks to highlight the uniqueness in the Chinese interpretation of soft power compared to the original Western approach. The Chinese soft power is seen as a great opportunity to increase the country's efficiency in attaining its foreign policy goals, improve its international image and overall performance in the global arena.

The vast scholarship on Chinese soft power continue to criticize the resources and understanding of soft power with Chinese characteristics. However, it is important to remember that the concept of soft power in itself is vague. Thus, we cannot say with certainty whether or not China's soft power has succeeded based on the western approach. Although it is true that China still has a long way to go to further increase its appeal around the world especially the West. We also cannot measure the Chinese perspective only with the Western yardstick.

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LIST OF ABBREVATIONS

AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CGTN	China Global Television Network
CI	Confucius Institutes
CNKI	China National Knowledge Infrastructure
CPC	Communist Party of China
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
Et al	Et Alia
G20	Group of Twenty
G77	Group of 77
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Ibid	Ibidem
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MOE	Ministry of Education
n.d.	Not Determined
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PD	Public Diplomacy
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity

PRC   People's Republic of China

Prof.   Professor

R&D   Research and Development

SCO   Shanghai Cooperation Organization

UN   United Nations

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

US   United States

WTO   World Trade Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1)   BACKGROUND

Traditionally, hard power including the military and the economic capacity was regarded as an important tool of foreign policy for all countries. However, in the 21st century globalized world— where communication and technology have occupied a special place, and the relations of states have become increasingly interdependent and complex— the concept of power has evolved both in theory and in practice.

The world leaders have become aware that the image and reputation of a country has become an equally important strategic method to establish influence and leadership in world politics. This idea quickly spread to the rest of the world and became an integral part of the contemporary international politics. The policymakers have now started utilizing tools of culture and public diplomacy to reshape the foreign policy of their country. It has also attracted considerable public and scholarly attention. Every year, many articles are published around the world on soft power. In other words, soft power has gained prominence in both discussion and practice of international relations.

Soft power as a concept was developed by Joseph Nye in 1990s in his book *Bound to Lead*. Here, he says that the world in future is "not merely going to be a world of whose army wins, but also whose story wins" (Nye, 1990, p. 154). He defined soft power as "the ability to get what you want through attraction, rather than coercion or payments" (Nye, 2004, p. 5). He listed intangible instruments of persuasion such as cultural, political and intellectual influence as the sources of soft power.

He also stressed that the interdependent nature of the international system will lead the states to increase the use of attraction and appeal (soft power) in order to obtain their desired objectives rather than the use of merely coercive forces (hard power).

The world has started embracing power of attraction. The increasing importance of soft power in global politics is recognized both in the literature among scholars and in the policy by the practitioners of international relations. It has become popular not just among the democratic states but also among the authoritarian ones. Both great powers and emerging powers have expressed great interest in this form of power. States are trying to implement this concept in their foreign policy practice. It has also taken a good hold within the foreign policy domain of China.

In late 1990s, the concept of soft power was introduced to this growing economy. The discussions about soft power started in China from the scholarly and analytical community. The discussions mainly focused on measuring the effectiveness and future prospects of soft power in China. Nonetheless, by the mid-2000s, the Chinese leaders also began to acknowledge and recognize soft power strategies and decided to put in more efforts to increase China's influence through the promotion of its cultural values and public diplomacy (Economy, 2016).

Soft power can become a key to support the image of peaceful rise of China and its aim of rejuvenation of Chinese Nation. It can also assist China in achieving its national interests, and minimizing the perceived concept of "Chinese Threat". This probably explains the growing interest of the political leadership of China in soft power and public diplomacy.

China adopted Nye's idea of soft power which includes culture, political values, and foreign policy. But during application, the concept has been further widened, resulting in what

is popular today as the "Chinese soft power" (Arif, 2017) or "soft power with Chinese characteristics" (Glaser & Murphy, 2009). The term soft power, or the power of attraction, which is of American origin was re-conceptualized to fit into China's interests, needs, and objectives. It was reinterpreted while taking into consideration the historical, cultural, and socio-political background of China including its growing economy.

China utilizes tools like aid, trade, investments in addition to the traditional concept of culture, political values, and foreign policy. The success of the development model of China and its fast growing economy has also impressed many developing countries. China's soft power campaign targets both domestic and international audiences. Also, in case of China, the government and the government-backed agencies play dominant roles in choosing, implementing and utilizing the sources of soft power.

However, China's initiatives have constantly met with criticism especially from scholars of the West. It is crucial to understand that using the traditional lens to examine the Chinese soft power is not enough. It is important to use a broader and customized perspective to define soft power with Chinese characteristics. Although it is true that universality and widely accepted values become a source of attraction, a limited method will not accurately measure the success of the intangible goods that produce soft power.

The following thesis aims at examining the case of China's soft power strategy. It intends to provide Chinese perception of soft power and how it differs from the popular mainstream concept.

1.2)   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Soft power, or the power of attraction, has become a highly discussed topic in the study of global politics since its theoretical emergence. Since its advent, efforts have been made to further develop the concept. There has been addition of new ideas and perspectives. However, the concept still remains vague and underdeveloped in many aspects.

As a strategy, it has become a popular policy choice not only among the great powers but also the new emerging and rising powers to fulfill their respective objectives and national goals. The wave of popularity has also reached China. Chinese scholars and policymakers are trying to reorganize the theory so as to fit into China's interests, needs, and objectives.

The soft power attempts of China have become a popular topic of discussion both inside and outside of China. However, the discussion is mostly limited to its measurement and evaluation, which is almost always based on the context of the cold war or the US interest. As a result, it can be said that this area of study—about understanding of soft power strategy in China—has not been accurately explored.

There is a large amount of literature on the dimensions and characteristics of Chinese soft power where its application and activities have been extensively explored. However, when it comes to evaluating the success of soft power in China, it is mostly conducted under the framework developed by Nye, and based on comparison with the US interests and objectives. Thus, there has been a lack of successful understanding of Chinese perspective of soft power.

Despite increasing evidence of the country's engagement of soft power, many criticize the concept of soft power practiced in China. But, soft power as explained by Nye is not something

easily measurable. The overall concept of power produced from the intangible resources is vague and has its own limitations.

It is also important to understand that methods used at present to measure the soft power in itself is questionable. The western focused theory cannot properly explain the eastern context in general, and the Chinese context in particular. First of all, it is important to understand the soft power strategy on the basis of Chinese interest and context, only then its effectiveness can be properly studied. In order to understand the soft power strategy of China, it is equally important to study the soft power from the Chinese perspective.

The thesis paper thus seeks to trace out the sources of Chinese soft power and provide a better understanding of soft power strategy in China, and contribute to the soft power discourse.

1.3)   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In understanding about the Chinese soft power the following questions need to be examined:

a. How does the concept of Chinese Soft Power differ from the theory developed by Joseph Nye in 1990s?

b. What are the various tools and techniques employed in Chinese soft power strategy (the cultural, political, economic soft power of China)?

c. How effective has the soft power strategy been for China in achieving its aims and what are the future prospects for the Chinese soft power?

1.4)   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the proposed thesis paper is to provide a better understanding of soft power strategy in China, its applicability and future prospect. For this the following sub-objectives have been set out:

a. To discuss about the concept of Chinese soft power and how it differs from the theory developed by Joseph Nye,

b. To assess the tools and techniques employed in Chinese soft power strategy (the cultural, political, economic soft power of China)/ to examine how China has incorporated soft power strategy into its foreign policy goals,

c. To explore the effectiveness and future prospect of soft power strategy of China.

1.5)   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Soft power has become popular not only among the policymakers and researchers but also among the students of international relations and diplomacy. Both large and small, powerful and less powerful, democratic and non-democratic states have tried to implement the concept. China is one of the many states eagerly trying to adopt soft power in its strategies. This study will contribute to a better understanding of the softer aspect of power in international relations, with a special focus on the case of China.

Even after almost three decades since the coining of the term 'soft power' by Joseph Nye, and a myriad of research in the field, a concrete and well-defined understanding of soft power is not laid out. The concept still remains ambiguous. Further, with various scholars putting out their

own understanding, the actual concept has become more complicated. This is also the issue with the soft power strategy of China.

This study has reviewed various contrasting outlooks about the Chinese soft power: both from the Chinese and the Western side. This study is an attempt to identify how China's soft power is perceived and implemented through comparison and analysis of the available data and literature on the subject. Further, it could be beneficial in understanding the uniqueness of the Chinese soft power strategy and open up a path for further research on soft power or studying Chinese soft power.

This thesis could be a valuable new addition to the existing study of the importance of soft power to states. China's adaptation of the concept explained here could contribute to the understanding of how states adapt and implement the concept of soft power in various context. It could provide information for future researchers and people with interest in studying about soft power or foreign policy of China.

1.6)   LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Power is one of the most complex and contested idea in politics (Barnett & Duvall, 2005). The topic is vast and can be understood from numerous perspectives. The most popular concepts of power today are hard power, soft power, smart power, and sharp power. A well-known idea in global politics is that a country cannot rely solely on hard power or on soft power if it wishes to develop its influence in the system. A truly powerful country is the one who has both hard power and soft power. Hard power and soft power complement each other and have the same end goal of fulfilling the country's interest.

The use of hard and soft power together effectively is the idea of smart power. But the proposed research will not be looking into it. It explores the concept of soft power developed by Joseph Nye in 1990 and study the concept in the Chinese context today. In addition, the following study examines the hard power theory but only to the extent to explain soft power.

The application of soft power in Chinese government policy is in itself vast, so the proposed study might not be able to cover it all in-depth. Also, in the study of effectiveness, only a few of the opinion polls previously conducted is referred because of limited time factors and lack of enough up-to-date secondary data to carry out this section of the research.

1.7)   DEFINITION OF THE KEY CONCEPTS

a) Power: Power is an actor's (here, the actor could be a state or a non-governmental actor), ability to exercise influence over other actors within the international system. In international relations, it can be described as the ability to make others do what you want.

b) Hard Power: Hard power is the use of military and economic means to influence the behavior or interests of other political bodies. It includes coercive means to exercise influence over others.

c) Soft Power: Soft power is the ability to attract and co-opt, rather than coerce. It is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction (Nye, 2008, p. 95). According to Nye who coined the term, the currency of soft power includes culture,

political values, and foreign policies. But in the case of China, they also have been utilizing economic means as a source of attraction.

d) Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics: It is the re-conceptualized form of soft power theory adopted by China that fits its interest, socio-political and historical background. It is based upon the model developed by Nye but it further includes economic instruments like the tools of business and its economic model as a source of attraction.

e) Strategy: A strategy in international politics is a special plan of a state made in order to achieve a desired and important position in the global system. It is a game plan chosen to achieve its goals and objectives, gain the trust of others and attain a competitive advantage.

f) Tools and Instruments: Tools and instruments are the methods or steps implemented by a country to achieve its goals and objectives. They are the means to ends.

g) Culture: Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts (Zimmermann, 2017, para. 1-2). It is the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, understanding, relations, and religion shared by a relatively large group of people. It is often considered a way of life.

h) Public Diplomacy/ People's Diplomacy: Public diplomacy represents the government-sponsored programs intended to inform or influence public opinions in other countries. It is the conduct of international relations by the government to influence overseas publics through public communications media. Today, it has expanded beyond the realm of government to include media, multinational corporations, NGOs as active participants.

i) Political Values: Political values are the political relationships, institutions, organizations, views, and ideas. It results from the transforming, creative, sociopolitical practice of social forces that meet the requirements of social progress and of the development of human personality on the social scale (Kallos & Trasnea, 1982, p. 183).

j) Foreign Policy: Foreign policy of a country is its set of goals that seek to outline how a particular country will interact with other countries of the world. It is usually designed "to help protect a country's national interests, national security, ideological goals, and economic prosperity" ("Foreign Policy", 2017, para.4). Foreign policy allows states to pursue their national interests outside the limit of their territorial borders.

k) Smart Power: Smart power is the combination of both hard power and soft power strategies. It is an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions of all levels to expand one's influence and establish legitimacy of one's action (Dargiel, 2009, para. 2).

l) Confucianism: Confucianism is a system of philosophical and ethical teachings founded by Confucius and developed by Mencius. These ethical teachings emphasize devotion to parents, family, and friends, cultivation of the mind, self-control, and just social activity.

m) National Congress of the Chinese Communist party: It is the general meeting of the Chinese Communist Party that is held every five years.

n) Chinese Dream/ China Dream: The Chinese Dream is a term promoted by President Xi of China since 2013 within Chinese society that describes a set of personal and national ethos and ideals in China ("The Chinese Dream Infuses", 2013). China Dream is about Chinese prosperity, collective efforts, socialism, and national glory.

> "We must make persistent efforts, press ahead with an indomitable will, continue to push forward the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive to achieve the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."
>
> ~ President Xi, 17th March 2013, First Address to the Nation as Head of the State.

o) Economic diplomacy: Economic diplomacy is a form of diplomacy which is concerned with economic policies. This form of diplomacy may also include employing economic resources (like rewards and sanctions) in the pursuit of a particular foreign policy objective. It can encompass all of the major international economic activities of a state.

1.8)   ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The body section of this thesis is divided into seven chapters with each of these chapters further subdivided into smaller sub-sections. This thesis is organized to follow the research design mentioned below and to approach the research problem in the most effective manner.

The first chapter includes the introductory part which lays the background of the thesis. It presents a brief overview of the topic in discussion including the statement of the problem. It introduces the concept the researcher worked on as well as the research questions the thesis addressed. It briefly talks about soft power, its development, and implication in China.

The second chapter contains a review of various available literature and data under the research topic. It begins with discussions regarding the concept of power in international relations and moves on further to discuss the major types of power as labeled by various scholars. Then, it describes the theory of soft power as expressed by Joseph Nye who coined the term. This chapter is particularly important because it is a point of departure for the critical analysis of soft power and the case presented in later chapters. This chapter also touches upon the concept of soft power with Chinese characteristics.

The third chapter consists of detailed explanations of the research design and the methodology of the thesis. This chapter discusses the methods and methodology used in order to develop the research. It continues to give a conceptual framework to the study with its theoretical perspective. It seeks to explain all the theories touched upon in the thesis for approaching the research questions.

Chapters four, five, and six are the core body section that presents an in-depth case of China's soft power strategy. It starts with a historical overview and a brief analysis of soft power

in China. This helps in understanding the development of soft power and its growing importance in modern-day China. This section also explains the role, problems and criticism of the popular "Soft power with Chinese characteristics".

It is followed by more specific explorations about the instruments and means applied by China in its soft power strategy. It discusses soft power not only within the framework provided by its inventor, but also includes the unique features of China in utilizing soft power. It focuses on how soft power is understood within China.

The final part of the body section includes analysis of the Chinese soft power. It provides a comparison between the soft power understanding of the west and the soft power practice in China. It includes views of various scholars regarding the soft power strategy in China. This section also presents the results of various opinion polls regarding the power of attraction and the image of countries in international community.

The final part, chapter seven, concludes the whole thesis with the major findings and conclusion. It presents a comparison between the western concept of soft power and China's re-conceptualized alternative understanding of the concept. This is followed by the extra reference materials and data that can be looked into for further understanding and study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The interaction between political entities, like states, that exist within the international society is international relations. According to Prof. Hans Morgenthau, it is a struggle for, and use of power among states. Padelford and Lincoln define it as "the interaction of the state with the changing pattern of power relationships" (Shrivastava, n.d).

However, the latest trends in defining international relations have expanded to "encompass international system, international organizations, transnational and supra-national agencies, non-state entities, groups, and other relevant individuals" besides states ("Nature, Purpose, and Scope of International Relations" 2019, para.13-14). At the same time, it has also started covering larger areas of relationship— conflictual and cooperative, friendly and unfriendly, power relationship and peace relationship, governmental and people-to-people relationship, etc. (ibid, para.14).

Throughout history, the international society has taken many different forms, nevertheless, the politics of power has always had an important place in the relations between these political units. In other words, independent sovereign states perennially striving to maximize their power and achieve their national interests have constantly been at the core of international relations (Lake, 2008, p.1). For this very reason, states deploy a combination of economy, modern military prowess, diplomacy, and foreign policy.

The state is an important aspect in the study of international relations. The concept of the modern state is said to have begun after the Treaty of Westphalia 1648. Following the two great

wars, there was rise in the number of newly independent states. This pattern continued with the establishment of the UN, and then the decolonization process.

Furthermore, the modern world of "globalization"—widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness—increased the interactions among these states (Bojang, 2018, p. 3) and it led to the creation of relations and interdependence among states and therefore foreign policy. The foreign policy then became an essential instrument through which states "determined and identified the decisions, strategies, and ends of the interaction of a state with another" (ibid, p. 3).

The foreign policy of a country serves its national interests. National interests include objectives, goals, demands, and interests which a state always tries to preserve, protect and secure in relations with other states. States attempt to safeguard their interests through the influence and control of other nation's behavior. Foreign policy plays an integral part in this. States come in contact with each other through their foreign policy.

In this sense, international relations can also be described as an "interaction of foreign policies" (Shrivastava, n.d). In his paper, he mentions various scholars with similar views who consider that the study of international relations is identical to the study of foreign policy and that one cannot understand international relations without understanding the foreign policy of states.

The foreign policy of a country is a set of goals that seeks to outline how a particular country will interact with other countries of the world. It is usually designed "to help protect a country's national interests, national security, ideological goals, and economic prosperity" ("Foreign Policy", 2017, para. 4). The foreign policy allows states to pursue their national

interests outside the limit of their territorial borders. A good foreign policy not only leads a state in fulfilling its national interests but also in acquiring a rightful place among the comity of nations. Today, the relative power of a country within the international system essentially shapes its foreign policy.

2.1) POWER: HARD POWER, SOFT POWER AND SMART POWER

As mentioned above, the study of the concept of power and states forms an important part of international relations. It is extremely essential to understand the concept of power and the way it functions in order to understand global politics. However, the problem is that there exists no comprehensive definition to explain the term 'power'. Different scholars in the field of International Relations have attempted to define power in their own terms. Similarly, it is also necessary to remember the fact that there is no single concept that truly captures the essence of power in international relations, therefore it would be a mistake to try to establish the concept of power based on a single idea.

Power is crucial. It is the driver of any actor's policy. But their actions and behaviors, as Bordachev (n.d.) said, are determined by the structure of the international system. He further talked about the realist claim of the anarchic international environment that defines the actions and behaviors of the actors. Anarchy means an absence of centralized power or authority. Realists believe that in state of anarchy, each state needs to survive on its own and protect itself from others. This self-help concept makes the accumulation of power the main aim of any actor.

Power in international relations is defined in various ways by various people. Power is the measure of influence and control, it is capabilities and status. The most common

understanding of power is 'it is the capacity to do things'. *Oxford Dictionary* defines power as the "capability or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events." Barnett & Duvall (2005, pp. 66-67) has defined power as "a complex and contested concept, in large part because there are important but distinctive ways to understand how social relations shape the fates and choices of actors."

Some consider power as the ability to direct the decisions and actions of others to get the outcome one wants. A country is considered powerful when it has control over the outcomes, events, actors and, issues. Power is described as having the capability to control resources or coming out victorious when in conflict or in fulfilling one's goal. The definition provided by sociologist Max Weber is dominant in the field of social science. He defined power as the "probability of one actor within a social relationship to be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance" (Weber, 1947, p.152; Freund, 1969, p. 221).

In words of Nye, "…there are several ways to affect the behavior of others. You can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want" (Nye, 2004, p. 2). Based on the means used to affect the behavior of others, power can be studied under the category of hard power and soft power. Hard power is the use of coercive strategies to affect the behaviors of others. It uses military and economic forces to pressure others to act in a way which they would not have otherwise acted. (Wilson, 2008, p. 144).

Hard power includes the use of both "carrots and sticks". According to Nye, hard power involves "the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will" (Nye, 2003, para. 2). Here, sticks include the coercive methods whereas carrots

include inducements and payments. Alternatively, Nye assumes that the ability to get what you want through attraction or persuasion instead of coercion or payments is the "second face of power" which he labelled as "soft power" (Nye, 2004, p. 5). In other words, it is the power of attraction and influence.

This theory of soft power was developed by Professor Joseph Nye in the 1990s in his book *Bound to Lead*. It has now become essential not only in the theory but also in the practice of international relations. Singh (2004, p. 7) writes that through attraction a country can gain influence. Nye (2004; 2006) adds that soft power can be obtained through "intangible goods and distinctive features of a country" that generates "attraction". It is mainly achieved through the culture, political values (or ideology), and foreign policy of the country (how it deals with others). It is only possible to attain soft power with a good reputation and positive images.

Table 1: Types of Power

	Behaviors	Primary Currencies	Government Policies
Military Power	Coercion Deterrence Protection	Threats Force	Coercive Diplomacy War Alliance
Economic Power	Inducement Coercion	Payments Sanctions	Aid Bribes Sanctions
Soft Power	Attraction Agenda Setting	Values Culture Policies Institutions	Public Diplomacy Bilateral and Multilateral Diplomacy

Source: Three Types of Power: *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Nye (2004). Page 31.

Soft power differs from hard power in its sources and exercise. Unlike hard power, soft power is a relative, intangible and usually context-based influence (Fan 2008, p. 150). Arif (2017) is of a similar opinion and adds that soft power is not easy to measure or control. Many scholars question the ability of soft power to provide concrete results. They state that the concept is still under development and that the agents and structures of soft power in itself is ambiguous and vague.

Besides hard power and soft power, the term 'smart power' has also been gaining prominence in the study and practice of international relations. This term was also coined by Professor Nye in 2003. In simple words, smart power is a combination of both hard power and soft power approaches to diplomacy. This concept of power emphasizes that a country not only needs to build a strong military but it also needs to invest equally in partnerships, institutions, and activities that would expand its influence and legitimacy. In any given scenario, using solely hard power or soft power will usually prove inadequate. Thus, it can be considered the most effective combination of both hard power and soft power (Nye, 2008).

2.2)   SOURCES OF SOFT POWER

Although the concept of soft power emerged nearly at the end of 20th century, the usage in itself has long existed in history. But with Nye coining the term, the idea got recognition and importance in the global political scenario, which Qazi (2016) considered is more of a "strategic adaptation than the emergence of new phenomena".

Soft power is making others want what you want, which is possible through attraction rather than mere coercion. The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources:

- Its culture (in places where it is attractive to others)

- Its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad)

- Its foreign policy (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)

Source: *Think Again: Soft Power*, By Joseph Nye (2006, para. 2)

As mentioned above, Nye has listed three major sources of soft power— culture, political ideals, and policy. A country utilizes these aspects to enhance its attractiveness and appeal, and to increase its soft power influence upon others.

Many scholars regard culture as an important source of soft power for a country as it produces fascination and admiration from others. Culture is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary* as "the art and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively." Basically, it is the meaningful set of values and practices of a society. It includes the languages, arts, social behaviors, social systems, and customs. Nye (2004, p. 11) categorizes cultures as 'high culture' and 'popular culture'. He explains that culture appealing to the elite classes such as literature, art, language, opera, and education falls under the category of 'high culture' whereas aspects of culture that is entertained by the masses are known as 'popular culture' (Ibid, p. 11).

At present, countries are placing cultural promotions at the center of their diplomatic practices. This process is known as cultural diplomacy. It is taking place in "fields of arts, sports, literature, music, science, business and economy and beyond" ("What is Cultural Diplomacy", n.d.). During this course of action, ideas, values, and traditions are exchanged, the co-operative relations are strengthened, and moreover, the national interests of a country are also promoted (Ibid, para. 4).

Cultures are promoted through personal contacts, visits, and exchanges. In modern times the development of media and the internet has made cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy (reaching out to the public) easier. Stelowska (2015, p. 53) mentions that throughout history, commerce and trade, conquest and, migration also facilitated the spread of different cultures. Culture with universal values produces more soft power compared to narrow and unsophisticated cultures. This is because widely accepted values are considered as more legitimate.

Similarly, political values are another potential source of soft power. The values advocated by the government at home and abroad also influences the preferences of others. A state having attractive political values produces more soft power. The promotion of broadly shared or universally accepted values like peace, democracy, and protection and promotion of human rights are more likely to increase attractiveness of a country (Nye, 2004, pp. 63-65; Ding, 2006, p. 60).

According to Nye, foreign policy of a country also determines its soft power. Usually, the policy reflects the political values and ideologies on which the given government works. The foreign policy guides the relations between countries. All countries develop their policies based on their national interest and aim at building influence. They vary based on time and context. A country is expected to be persistent and coherent in its values and in its policies both at home and abroad.

As a source of soft power, the policy of a country needs to be perceived as genuine and legitimate. Only when the policy of the government are accepted by many, it will generate attraction and influence. Ding (2006, p. 60) adds that countries supporting international organizations, having a multilateral approach, advocating for universal problems and serving as

an active member of the global system within the framework of the international norm are perceived better. In sum, a government's influence could be increased if the target entity admires the important aspect of the country.

2.3)   TODAY SOFT POWER MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

Historically, the concept of power rested solely on the importance of hard power. National power was associated only with the measurable resources of hard power. Raimzhanova (2015, p. 6) linked it to the idea of the anarchic international system—where states do not recognize any superior authority. Well-known historian and theorist Carr (1946, p. 109) also mentioned that military power was the most important form of power in international politics, as it served as both a means and an end in itself.

However, this rigid interpretation of power started to change. In comparison to the earlier eras, increasing emphasis was simultaneously placed in the use of intangible tools of power such as culture, ideology, technologies, institutions, and education.

After 20th century, post-world wars and cold wars, the significance of soft power went uphill with the notion of 'legitimacy' placed at its center. Countries' leaders realized that using merely force, coercion or violence does not necessarily guarantee sustainable success. Hard power alone is not sufficient for any country in the world today. In order to maintain influence and create an enabling environment to meet its objectives, its image elsewhere, its ability to shape the preferences of others, and the legitimacy in its policies play an equally significant role.

This popularity also resulted from the increasing cost of production and maintenance of hard power resources. Instruments of hard power had become not only costly but also dangerous

for the modern great powers. The use of military options seemed less plausible as the result of the increasing interdependence—mostly economic— in the international system (Nye, 1990, pp. 157-159).

Moreover, with the wealth, power and information being even more widely diffused than ever, the world became increasingly multipolar and hyper-connected. The rise of democracy, development of internet and social media, and mass international contacts have led to a greater diffusion of influence and therefore a greater role of soft power. Likewise, many of the major challenges of present times like terrorism, climate change, and infectious diseases are global in range and require global solutions (Dubber, 2015). In these cases, soft power and influence will definitely play a significant role in building the global coalitions required to tackle these challenges.

Furthermore, given the nature of current challenges, soft power has become more critical than ever to secure a country's national interest. Building friendship and understanding between the public enhances a state's security, reinforcing peaceful co-existence. It supports the strengthening of diplomatic ties, the sharing of knowledge and expertise, the smooth conduct of commerce, and the co-operation on shared areas of interest. It also fulfills a practical role in strengthening institutions and civil society and stimulating economic prosperity which is vital for the development of states (Dubber, 2015, para. 10).

If we look at the so-called rising powers of today like Brazil, India, and Turkey, we realize that their growing status recognition is the result of their rapid economic growth, active role in regional organization, global diplomacy and their foreign aid programs rather than their military achievements and capacity (Ambrosetti 2017, p. 145). With this, the popularity of the

concept of soft power among academics and politicians in government policy and diplomatic strategy is on the rise.

Although soft power has become the buzz word in the field of international relations today, evidence of its practice can be seen throughout history and has existed for centuries. States have been using soft power in their relations with others for centuries. The attention towards the concept and usage of soft power increased mostly during the Cold War period and gradually evolved thereafter. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union were in pursuit to attract allies. By the end, the US came out victorious. Many claim that it was possible not only because of its military and economic prowess but rather because of its rise in soft power.

2.4)   THE STORY OF AMERICAN SOFT POWER

The Cold War ended with the victory of the United States. It was then identified as the sole superpower. The US was strong in its hard power with the highest spending on its defense budget, but it also possessed quite a remarkable amount of soft power resources that assisted in building its reputation and attractiveness. Soft power in international politics arises from intangible but very real factors like "dominant values, internal practices and policies, and the manner of conducting international relations" (Blatt, 2004, para. 44). He added quoting Nye that "the US has always wielded significant soft power due to its ability to inspire the dreams and desires of others" (ibid).

Today, the world looks up to the US for its technology, scientific development, and its ideals—like democracy, freedom, and human rights. Likewise, the popularity of American

popular culture, music, movies and television series and its way of doing business has added to its reputation as a superpower.

The idea of using information and culture for the purposes of diplomacy began in the US during the office of President Woodrow Wilson with the establishment of the Committee on Public Information in 1917. Succeeding Presidents followed this path and pushed for the utilization of soft power in domestic politics as well as international relations. By the mid-1900s, the government was seen actively working with the film industry in order to "shape Hollywood into an effective propaganda tool" (Rosenberg, 1982; Nye, 2004, pp. 2-3).

However, an excellent example of soft power deployed by the US is "The Marshall Plan". Following the end of World War II, war-torn Western Europe was in tatters. So, the United States poured billions of dollars into the recovery of Europe to prevent it from falling to the influence of the communist Soviet Union (Wilde, 2019, para. 1). The Marshall Plan included humanitarian aid, aid for food and medical care, reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructures, rebuilding transportation and communication networks and public utilities, and outright monetary grants.

During the Cold War, America used the power of attraction to bolster its image as "the leader of a free world and a superior alternative to Soviet authoritarianism" (Honigberg, 2018). The international community found America's promises of freedom, human rights, democracy, and equality very appealing. If the US wishes to remain the bedrock of the liberal international order or ensure the sustained existence of this order, "it must recommit itself to strengthening its soft power capabilities" (Honigberg, 2018, para. 7).

American Professor Joseph Nye theorized the concept of soft power in the early 1990s. He argued that with the military power becoming less relevant in the international system, states needed other forms of power like soft power. He used the theory to study the particular case of the United States. The soft power strategies in the US today include not only various disaster assistance programs but also educational exchange programs, its cultural aspects like movies, soft drinks, fast-food chains, and many others.

The openness in its policies and its position in the international trade and business policies have repeatedly impressed other nations. But most of all, the US has successfully acquired itself the title of the leader or a superpower because others consider its policies and values universal acceptable and most of all legitimate. It has been promoting freedom of expression, and leading advocacy for democracy, liberty, and human rights. The US has successfully utilized the soft power and public diplomacy resources to its benefit and to gain legitimacy over its policies and objectives.

If we look at the writings of Nye, he has sensibly also recommended that the US should double its current efforts at public diplomacy and raise its profile. Emphasis and facilitation of soft power would help the US image to improve with less cost but many benefits. Following the US, many rising powers have recognized the limits on the hard power in the globalized world of information and have been developing their own soft power resources to gain influence.

2.5)   WILL SOFT POWER REPLACE HARD POWER?

However, this phenomenon does not mean that hard power has lost its worth. Soft power alongside hard power is important for any country if it wishes to influence and to play a

dominant role in global politics. After all, both soft power and hard power work together to meet the same final end. They both contribute to achieving the aim by affecting the behavior and performance of others (Nye, 2004; Fan 2008, p. 150). Nye in his book has provided an array of examples demonstrating hard power reinforcing soft power or losing soft power. In other words, hard and soft power are related. Nye adds that the distinction between hard power and soft power is "one of degree, nature of the behavior and tangibility of the resources". (Nye, 1990, p.267; 2008, p. 7)

Soft power plays an assisting role in hard power and vice versa (Yagci 2018, p. 69). Soft power helps a country boost its strengths and minimize its weaknesses. Economic power, which is considered an important aspect of hard power, also plays an important role when promoting soft power. Like, for example, to support media broadcasting and cultural institutions both inside and outside the country. Glaser & Murphy (2009, p. 20) quotes Chinese scholar Renwei who argues that "if hard power is a constant value, soft power should be a variable or multiplier, which could magnify comprehensive power or significantly weaken it."

Although many consider soft power as a method to fill a void left by diminishing hard power, Dubber (2015, para. 17) writes that, "... precisely because it is not coercive, soft power on its own will not always be enough, and nor should it be seen as sufficient on its own to replace reduced hard power".

Machiavelli in his book *The Prince* wrote "...it is better to be feared and respected than to be liked or loved… if you cannot be both". However, Nye (2004) believes that winning hearts and minds is always important, but it is even more so in a globalized age of information. The nature and scale of the world's current security challenges demand deployment of both hard and

soft power. This is why policymakers are gradually more focused on the benefits of combining and aligning soft and hard power. This brings us to the concept of smart power. Nye describes it as the "ability to combine the hard power of coercion or payment with the soft power of attraction into a successful strategy" (Nye, 2010, p. 9). This integrated concept acknowledges military strength, expanding influence and establishing the legitimacy of the policies.

2.6)   LIMITS OF SOFT POWER

All powers have their limits and soft power is no exception. Soft power like any other type of power depends on the time, place, and context. What is acceptable or attractive to one might be repelling to the others. For example, public in most nations did admire the US for its technology, music, and movies but the remaining also expressed their dislike towards the growing influence of America in their country. "There is much that soft power can accomplish when appropriately employed, but also much that it cannot do" (Blatt, 2004).

Also, soft power comes short for its dependence upon the receivers, and the interpreters. When it comes to soft power, the receiving audience are just as important as the agents. Thus, it is important to also take the preferences or opinions of the target audiences into consideration. It revolves around the concept of legitimacy and credibility. In order for soft power to successfully come into play, countries on the receiving end must take the sources as legitimate.

Another limitation of soft power is that it does not really produce immediate payoffs. Accumulation of soft power is usually costly, difficult, and time consuming. It can take months, years and even decades to establish a good image and influence. And there is no assurance that the desired result can be obtained. Moreover, the public perception is volatile and can change

quickly. Similarly, soft power can also be self-constraining at times. When a certain image is formed, the audiences expect certain behavior from the concerned states.

The concept of soft power is mostly criticized for its vagueness. Despite continuous popularity and constant modification, it still does not have a single clearly defined meaning. The concept in itself is still under-developed. The agents, structures, and resources of soft power is also ambiguous and vague. These confusion often result in the idea being misunderstood or misused. It is hard to prove that the behavior of the target country is the result of the given state's soft power.

Unlike hard power, soft power is a relative, intangible and usually context-based influence (Fan 2008, p. 150). Arif (2017) is of a similar opinion and adds that soft power is not easy to measure or control. Many scholars even question the ability of soft power to provide concrete results. Nonetheless, what soft power has and can accomplish is significant, varied, and even surprising, so it is foolish to ignore the soft power aspects in international relations.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1)   RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis is based on a qualitative research design. The data and information collected and presented are all secondary data collected from published scholarly and newspaper articles, relevant books, official documents and reports, survey reports, different books, journals, speeches, interviews and so on. The research has more of an explanatory and descriptive nuance with a focus on an in-depth case study of China's soft power strategy.

3.1.1) Qualitative Research

The qualitative research design is concerned with establishing answers to the "how" and "why" of the phenomenon in question. Qualitative research helps gain a richly detailed understanding of the topic. Thus, it ideally suits the above-mentioned research questions. The qualitative approach is useful than a quantitative approach to carry out soft power analysis, mainly because of the fact that there is still no agreement on how to measure soft power. Qualitative research aims at understanding events by focusing on the diversity of societies and cultures and the motivations that underlie human behavior.

However, qualitative research has received a lot of criticism for not producing precise and measurable outcomes. It is often considered "less scientific" than quantitative research. Nonetheless, the qualitative approach is widely used in the social science disciplines, which by

their very nature tend to be more subjective and less exact. Qualitative research rarely produces clear-cut findings or results. Sometimes it generates more questions than answers. However, it usually involves a critical interpretation of facts or ideas and provides an in-depth analysis of observed phenomena.

3.2)   THEORETICAL ANALYSIS:

3.2.1) Soft Power Theory and Joseph Nye:

In 1990, Joseph Nye Jr. coined the term soft power and defined it as the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without using force or coercion. In words of Nye, soft power is "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments" (Nye, 1990, p. x). He further writes that soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies.
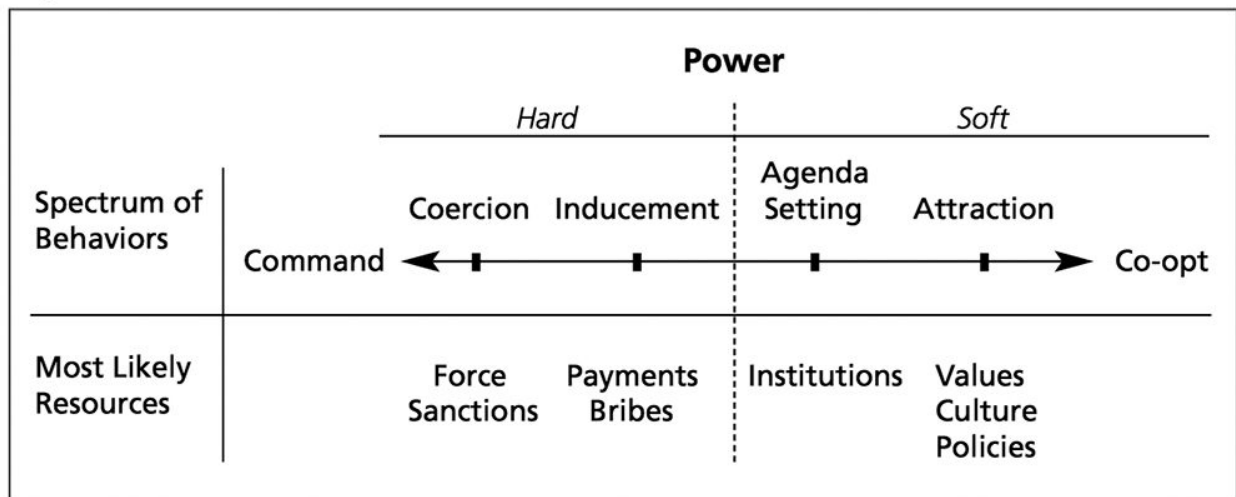
Figure 1: Comparing hard power and soft power. Adapted from 'Soft Power: The means to Success in World Politics' by Joseph Nye, 2004,

This is also known as the "second face of power" (Nye, 2004, p. 95). Nye believed that in world politics hard power was losing its place so it was important to set the agenda and attract others, instead of forcing them to change by threatening them with military force or economic sanctions (Nye, 2004, p. 5). This power of shaping the preferences of others, he adds, displays itself when country A admires country B's values, its level of prosperity and openness and then wants to follow its example, without the presence of sticks and carrots.

This concept soon gained popularity in the interdependent world where the traditional concept of hard power was losing its legitimacy. It became popular not only in the field of international relations but also in other social sciences.

Nye's introduction of the concept of soft power opened a new horizon in understanding some of the hidden aspects of international relations such as non-violent and non-coercive ways of influencing others. The concept itself is not based upon well-developed theoretical framework (Lee, 2009, p. 2). Nye himself writes that soft power does not contradict the international theory of realism. "Soft power is not a form of idealism or liberalism. It is simply a form of power, one way of getting desired outcomes" (Nye, 2011, p. 82).

3.2.2) Soft Power and Liberalism

Liberalism dominated the international relations discipline since its foundation until the post-war years when Realism emerged. Liberalism proposes three major solutions to the problems in international politics. They are democracy, economic interdependence, and international institutions.

Liberals argue that democratic states never go on war against other democracies thus are more peaceful. Democracy was one of the major values promoted by the US where the concept of soft power developed. Economic interdependence is also crucial in the theory of soft power. After the end of Cold War, the use of military force was particularly criticized. Nye also writes that the use of hard power in the modern-day would be more costly because of the growing interdependence between states and the process of globalization. These two aspects are also regularly discussed by liberal theorists.

International institutions are a great place for states to communicate with one another, promote their political values, and advocate their policies. It helps a country to enhance its soft power. The US promoted its political values like democracy, freedom, open market, human rights and others through the UN, WTO, and UN agencies.

The concept of soft power thus seems to be closer to the concept of liberal theory that emphasizes co-operation and power of ideas. Soft power is relevant to the three solutions that liberals purpose as a solution to war (Gomichon, 2013, para. 6).

3.2.3) Soft Power and Constructivism:

The theory of constructivism seeks to demonstrate how the core aspects of international relations are socially constructed, that is, they are given their form by ongoing processes of social practice and interaction. Alexander Wendt (1999) writes that "the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature".

Constructivism does not have the state as its major focus, it has provided space for the individual in international relations as well. Actors, usually leaders and influential players, continually shape and sometimes reshape the very nature of international relations through their actions and interactions (Theys, 2018).

Constructivists conceive research as a matter of interpretation rather than explanation. It prioritizes the understanding of social context and goes on to include the effects of ideas and beliefs on world politics. It demonstrates that reality is always under construction and opens the prospect for change. This theory argues that meanings are not fixed and it changes over time depending on the ideas and beliefs that actors hold.

Constructivists assume that identities of the states are valuable and that they depend upon the historical, cultural, political and social context. This might help in understanding the reconceptualization of soft power by different countries like China and Russia. The soft power strategy adopted by these states does not match the western standard. At the same time, this theory also helps one understand the criticism and power of appeal in the international system. This can be explained by the social norms that are central to this theory. This idea creates an expectation that some kinds of behavior and action are more acceptable than others (Theys, 2018).

Constructivist in international relations also recognize the power of ideas and norms, which is quite similar to soft power. Even though constructivist discussions of power in international relations contains many elements of what Nye calls soft power, constructivist ideas are not developed into a systematic merge of separate constructivist discussions of ideational power.

CHAPTER IV

CHINESE SOFT POWER: SOFT POWER STRATEGY OF CHINA

The popularity of soft power spreading around the world also reached the Asian Giant of China. Both scholars and decision-makers in China are trying to measure the effectiveness of soft power and find a concept that is most suitable for the country. Many have based their research on the framework laid by Nye, while some others have worked to further develop it into what they call 'Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics'. Even though China has been putting substantive efforts to soften its image, the result of various opinion polls reveals that it is not getting back fully desired results.

4.1)   DEVELOPMENT OF SOFT POWER STRATEGY IN CHINA

Many leading scholars mention that the idea of soft power—achieving what you want through attraction— can be traced back to the history of Chinese philosophy. (Huang & Ding, 2006; Ding, 2010, p. 262; Avery, 2015, pp. 8-9). The notion that power can be attained from "morality, benevolence, good governance and winning of hearts and minds" was evident in the Confucian and Daoist School of thought (Avery, 2015, pp.8-9). Many of these are in line with the concept developed by Professor Nye.

In the early stages of the formation of modern China, we saw the focus being put mostly on building up hard power. Especially the period between the advent of China's Communist Party and Deng Xiaoping's 'Open and Reform Policy', Harriet (2013), writes that "Chinese diplomacy was ardently focused on high politics, neglecting the grassroots level and any notion

of soft power." It was only after the 1990s that the Chinese leadership realized the limits of hard power and a need to transform their approach to foreign policy and find a working alternative.

The 1997 Asian Economic Crisis was a decisive point for Beijing in the employment of soft power when it refused to devalue its currency in line with other Asian countries. The devaluation would have created further devaluation for other Asian nations and they would have to suffer a huge negative impact on their economies. China took the smart step by standing up for other Asian nations and it greatly boosted the region's attitude and approach towards China (Kurlantzick, 2007, p. 36, Harriet, 2013).

The success of this step led the leaders to recognize the benefits of transmitting the image of being a "stable, reliable and responsible economic power". This brought a realization that national strength is not necessarily an index of international image and that international position and the international image went hand in hand in this globalized world. China believed that this image would aid to maintain and secure a peaceful international climate where countries were willing to stand aside and witness the peaceful rise of China.

Culture became the primary source for China to soften its image and enhance its attraction in the international stage. Lee (2003, p. 2) in her book *Soft Power Made in China* mentions that the Ministry of Culture first mentioned the term 'cultural power' back in 2005. But, it was only explicitly referenced in the national government policy for the first time at the 17th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2007. Former Chinese President Hu Jintao expressed the importance of culture for the "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation" (Albert 2018, para.4).

"The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will definitely be accompanied by the thriving of Chinese culture… We must enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country… We will further publicize the fine traditions of Chinese culture and strengthen international cultural exchanges to enhance the influence of Chinese culture worldwide."

—Former Chinese President Hu Jintao addressing the 17th National Congress of CPC

This notion has since then been continued by the succeeding Chinese President Xi Jinping who wishes to develop a good image of China abroad.

Regarding the theoretical aspect, Avery mentions that article *Culture as National Power: Soft Power* written by Wang Huning in 1993 was the first article in China about soft power. But it was only after 2007, that the number of articles about "soft power" grew in large numbers on the *China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI)* database, which he claims is the largest and most comprehensive source of Chinese academic journals. He further adds that more than half of the articles on soft power contained the word 'culture' in their titles (Avery 2015, p. 8; Arif 2017, p. 96).

Over the last few decades, China has been concentrating on improving its image by relying more on its "soft power" tools. Although the government efforts began with the promotion of culture, China today has successfully stretched its horizon of appeal to include much more.

This quest to develop a suitable form of soft power for China is still ongoing. Many Chinese academics followed and adapted Nye's theoretical framework and emphasized culture as the core of China's soft power. It has helped strengthen China's soft power and its image

outside its border. Others have extended the soft power concept developed by Nye to include aid, trade, and economy along with the promotion of traditional Chinese culture and values to present understanding from Chinese perspectives. China has steadily expanded its cultural and diplomatic influence globally, especially in the developing third world countries, to accompany its economic progress (Pan. 2006, para. 1).

4.2) WHAT CHINA SEEKS FROM THIS APPROACH?

Since the beginning of the 21st century, China has shown remarkable progress with its growing economy, well-developed military and increased presence in the international arena. This has developed hopes and dreams for other countries but at the same time, it has contributed to the formation of an environment of fear and distrust regarding China.

The balance of power theory from the realist school of thought also discusses about the threat theory. When a country grows stronger in its military and economics, other countries are bound to perceive it as a threat. Especially the countries at the center of the system consider it a threat to their position and the system. They find it intimidating and want to punish it. So it is only natural for China, to minimize the perception of threat towards it. Soft power definitely could be an appropriate measure to balance it out.

China has realized that only economic and military power will not guarantee it an influential position on the world stage. It is equally important to incorporate soft power into its strategies to clear the cloud of doubts and make others believe that its rise constitutes no threats to them. According to Glassier and Murphy (2009, p. 22), China has been leveraging its soft power strategies not only to build a comprehensive national power but also to rebalance its

growing hard power, and refute the China threat theory. The Chinese perspective considers soft power as a helpful tool to improve its image in the world and counter the view of the world that sees its rise as a threat (Ding, 2006, p. 236; Glassier & Murphy, 2009, p. 11).

Likewise, China wants to develop an image of a peacefully rising nation with desirable soft power offerings and to establish economic ties so as to secure its energy needs. The utilization of soft power resources would assist China in presenting its perspective and its side of the story. From the advent of incorporating soft power into its strategies, China has expressed its desire to cultivate regional connectivity, develop good relations with other countries including its neighbors, and above all to prove that its rise is peaceful and it aims of building a harmonious society.

Some scholars like Zhang Guozuo (2017, pp. 52-53) also argue that China seeks to encourage domestic stability and strengthen the regime's control through its soft power strategy. Beijing is seen exercising its efforts to retain and justify its position internally and is concerned more about its soft power application within the country rather than its influence outside.

Many articles also strengthen this argument mentioning that besides strengthening its voice and influence in the world, China aspires to encourage a sense of pride in the country and a sense of nationalism within Chinese living in China and overseas (Lee 2018, p.32). It will contribute to the realization of "the Chinese Dream of Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation", "win friends and gain influence", and to "build regional and geopolitical alliances across Southeast Asia and beyond" (Huang & Ding, 2006, p. 22; Arif, 2017, p. 94).

China's increasing efforts to utilize its soft power resources are often considered a part of its grand strategy. Its constant engagement in Africa and Latin America is part of the strategy to

"tap emerging markets, shape global governance norms and expand its influence" (Nantulya, 2018, para. 3-4).

President Xi at the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) Congress in October 2017 called it "soft power with Chinese characteristics". He expressed that "China will be a global leader in national strength and international influence." This shows his plan on focusing not only on hard power but also on soft power. China wants to improve its capacity to tell its own stories, present a multidimensional view to enhance its cultural soft power (Peng, 2017).

The strategy of incorporating soft power into its foreign policy started in the 2000s. As stated by Arif (2017), China's interest in soft power developed as a result of its demanding domestic interests (para.1, p. 96). Since the early 2000s, China has developed a plan to convert its economic power into cultural influence (Lee, p.3). A balance of hard and soft power resources will allow China to enjoy flexibility in its relations with others and maintain an advantageous position in international competition.

CHAPTER V

INSTRUMENT OF CHINESE SOFT POWER

The most evident strategy used by China to enhance its attractiveness in the global front is the use of 'soft power' and 'public diplomacy'. Most studies about the Chinese soft power focus on the framework provided by Nye which explains its usage under three elements: culture, political values, and foreign policy. Under this pattern, Avery (2015, p. 14) categorizes Confucius Institutes as the symbol of language and culture, the expanding Chinese news media and China's development model as the projections of Chinese values, and finally the peacekeeping operations as one of China's evolving foreign policy.

However, there are contemporary writings that have tried to develop onto this theory and create a soft power concept that fits China. It is often described as "Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics". Here, they have also included its economic development model as one of the major tools of soft power. One such scholar is Kurlantzicks who has classified the tools of soft power with Chinese characteristics under two categories: culture, and tools of business. Culture includes arts, language, values, education, and cuisine. Whereas, tools of business include investments, trade, aid as well as the appeal of the Chinese economic model (Arif 2017, p.96).

5.1)   CULTURE

China's traditional culture, cuisine, philosophy, architecture, medicine, and martial art always had a strong impact around the world. Chinese scholars like Yu Xintian states that soft

power comprises thoughts, ideas, values, principles, institutions, and policies, and all of these cannot be separated from a country's culture (Glaser & Murphy 2009, p.13). China has a long history of traditional culture and civilization in Asia which it can use to enhance its soft power (Huang & Ding 2006, p.26).

Today, the power of culture is "becoming an important component in integrating national power and international competitiveness" (Glaser & Murphy 2009, p.15). Chinese scholars and decision-makers have pressed extreme importance in building culture as the core resource of soft power. Former Chinese President Hu Jintao had time and again stressed on the need to strive for soft power through culture.

"The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will definitely be accompanied by the thriving of Chinese culture."

- Hu Jintao at 17th National Congress in 2007

The current leadership in China has followed the same path and emphasized principles such as the "peaceful rise" of China and its vision of a "harmonious society". In 2014, President Xi emphasized the need to "…increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's message to the world," and called for "a stronger national effort to link China's popularity and attractiveness to its impressive rise" (Miller, 2014; Albert 2018, para. 4). In order to fulfill this objective, China has expanded its funding in the area of cultural resource development and promotion, both at home and abroad.

Even in the book *Soft Power Made in China,* the author mentions that the 10th Five Years Plan (2001-2005) of China proposed a strategic call for culturally "going global" (Lee 2018, p.

3). This move of introducing and incorporating the term 'Cultural Industry' in Chinese government strategy opened up a path for the export of cultural products. There are different ways a country can promote its culture among others. Some of the methods employed by China are Confucius Institutes, Scholarship and Exchange Programs, Tourism, Media, etc.

5.1.1) Confucius Institutes:

The Chinese language is an important source of soft power and China has conducted various activities to promote it throughout the world. One such way is establishing language and culture institution known as Confucius Institute (CI). It is established by the Chinese government and operated in collaboration with foreign universities and educational institutions. CI are managed by the Hanban—a public institution affiliated with Chinese MoE. The first Confucius Institute was established in 2004. Since its commencement, it has been responsible for teaching and promoting Chinese language and culture internationally and providing information about China to foreign audiences.

With increased interest of global foreign public in learning Chinese language and culture, by 2017, it was recorded that 525 Confucius Institutes and 1113 Confucius Classrooms at primary and secondary schools existed in 146 countries (Hanban, n.d.; Lee 2018, p.3). According to *Statistica*'s Website it increased to 548 Confucius Institutes and 1193 Confucius classroom by the end of 2018 (*Statistica*, 2019).

But most often these institutes and classrooms have come under criticism for having strong political agendas, use of propaganda, undermining academic freedom, and discouraging discussions on controversial topics like Tibet, Xinjiang and Tiananmen Square protest.

5.1.2) Popular Culture and Technology:

Lately, China has also entered the realm of global popular culture. The pop culture products of China like its music, dramas, movies, and fashion have gained fair amount of global popularity. Although it might not be as popular as its other Asian counterparts, these products of modern China have been gradually successful in gaining significance alongside the traditional sources.

Similarly, Chinese brands like Lenovo, Huawei, Alibaba, Xiaomi, Hisense and many Chinese game manufacturers have secured a good place in the tech market around the world.

In recent years, Beijing has also been paying more attention towards promotion of Chinese culture overseas. The Chinese Government spends huge amount annually for celebration of Chinese Lunar New Year and other Chinese festivals in foreign land through their embassies and consulates. Under the sponsorship of Chinese Embassy, the host countries have been organizing other various cultural events, exhibitions, expos etc.

China has also hosted various international summits and competitions within its territory. This method, often called "Host Diplomacy" in the field of international relations, includes holding of numerous governmental and non-governmental conferences, conclaves, summits and forums. Some of the successfully hosted events include the Olympics 2008, Shanghai Expo 2010, Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation meeting, and others. These events usually bring in leading figures, global think tanks, and influential non-state actors from around the world.

5.1.3) Tourism:

The promotion of culture and values can also result from travel and tourism since they encourage mutual interaction among people. Travels can be either for refreshments or for business purposes. According to *Travel China Guide 2018* statistics data, 'inbound tourism' number reached up to 141.2 million with an increase of 1.2% from the year before, grabbing a place in the list of countries with the largest number of tourists. Chinese people are also famous tourists around the world.

International Tourists				Inbound Tourism Expenditure				Outbound Tourism Expenditure			
Inbound (Thousands)		Outbound (Thousands)		$ Millions		% of Exports		$ Millions		% of Exports	
2011	2017	2011	2017	2011	2017	2011	2017	2011	2017	2011	2017
57581	60740	70250	143035	48464	32617	2.4	1.3	72585	257733	4.0	11.7

Table 2: *World Development Indicators: Travel and Tourism* (The World Bank Website, 2017).

5.1.4) Public Diplomacy

The basic concept of Public Diplomacy is "influencing the foreign publics" to garner support for one's policies. It is one of the key soft power instruments. Paul Sharp (2005, p.106) describes public diplomacy as the "process in which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented".

China often feels that it is wrongly judged by the international community when it comes to its growth and practice. China has a long history of using public diplomacy (PD) tools to bolster its status internationally and tell its story to the world (Cluster et al., 2017, p. 1). The Chinese leadership is making constant efforts to effectively utilize public diplomacy tools in order to change the negative perspective the world has of China and to project an image that they believe will do more justice to reality.

The new public diplomacy does not have well-defined roles and responsibilities for actors in international relations. Also, the actors themselves aren't limited to just the state as in the traditional concept. But the story of China, in this case, is different from the rest which is why many consider it to be controversial. The public diplomacy strategy is still very much limited to the state governed policies and unlike others, China openly considers propaganda as a serious tool of public diplomacy. Lejli (2011, p. 4) writes that external propaganda has a "positive connotation" in China and is aimed at "advertising Chinese achievement and selling the country's image worldwide". It is often associated with activities like "news release, general shaping of ideology, and advertisements".

5.1.5) Education and Exchange Programs (International Students in Chinese University)

Exchange programs are central to China's Public Diplomacy Strategy. China is steadily increasing its support for cultural and educational exchanges. Beijing has significantly extended its exchange programs to include academic, language and cultural exchanges, political training for foreign government officials and media training for foreign news correspondents (Zheng 2009, p.4).

"We should expand cultural exchanges with other countries. It is a bridge connecting the hearts and minds of people . . . an important way to project a country's image…and to promote Chinese culture and its appeal overseas."

Wen Jiabao "*Our Historical Tasks at the Primary Stage of Socialism and Several Issues Concerning China's Foreign Policy*" (2007).

Efforts made in the field of education can be understood under two areas. One is through the Confucius Institutes abroad which has been explained earlier (See *Section 5.1.1)* and second is through the educational programs within China. China is making efforts to attract more foreign students to study in Chinese Universities. These programs not only allow international students to experience Chinese language and culture, but also help further in promoting and establishing a good image of China among the new generations. This creates a "ripple effects"— when the international students return to their home country and advocate on behalf of the host country (Soft power 30 2018, p.33).

In 2010, The Ministry of Education of China launched the *Study in China Plan* and expressed a desire to make China an "attractive destination for degree-seeking international students" (Choudaha 2015, para.5). China aims to attract 500,000 students by 2020. To make it successful, the government has implemented various policies like bilateral partnerships, more courses, and programs in English, additional scholarships, and easier access to the job market for international students.

China is also trying to level up the quality of education it provides to students by upgrading the universities and providing the latest research facilities and qualified academics.

Most of these scholarships and financial assistance from the Chinese government target students from Africa, South Asia and the Middle East (Zheng 2009, p.5).

According to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, a total of 492,185 international students from 196 countries were recorded with a 0.62% increase compared to 2017. Among them, Asia constitutes 59.95% (295,043) followed by Africa with 16.57% (81,562). 12.81% of the total international students received Chinese government scholarships. (MOE PRC, 2018)

China has become one of the countries with the largest investment in research and development. According to UNESCO Report *"How Much does your Country Invest in R&D?"*, it is recorded that China spends 451.9 billion of US$ in PPP ranking second after the US in the expenditure, but lies further down if the percentage of GDP is considered.

5.2)   VALUES

Values are basic beliefs that guide or motivate the attitudes and actions of a country and its people. China today has been trying to establish a link between its traditional cultural values and modern creative norms in order to seem more attractive to the outside world. That is to say, China wants to create a fusion of its traditional values with its concrete realities (Inkster, 2018). The political values of any country consist of two major aspects. First, the domestic values that depend on how the government rules its domestic public and second, is the international values which include policies that a country applies when dealing with other countries. They are both conceived as essential in any country's soft power strategies.

The values mostly highlighted within China are benevolence, righteousness, honesty, integrity, social harmony, need for self-improvement, moderately prosperous society and readiness to sacrifice oneself for the nation. (Inkster 2018, para.16).

At the center of Chinese values, today, lies the core socialist values which are the official interpretation of Chinese socialism promoted at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012. These core values are categorized under three levels namely national values, social values, and individual values. National values include prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony. Social values include freedom, equality, justice, and the rule of law. And finally, individual values include patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship.

Domestic policy of China is focused on building a "spiritual civilization and socialist core value system" with the goal of establishing a harmonious society that will make China an attractive model not just for its own people but also for others around the world (Glaser & Murphy, 2009, p. 24).

Certain values that China portrays do not align with some of the current existing values of the Western liberal democracy, in particular, the Chinese concept of natural hierarchical order and the subordination of individual rights to the interests of the collective ones. Thus, it has become quite a challenge for China.

5.2.1) CONFUCIAN VALUES

Chinese heritage and civilization are the primary basis of Chinese culture and values, and ultimately of its soft power. There are many attributes to Chinese civilization, yet Confucianism is highly emphasized because it had dominated Chinese society over a long period of time up

until the Cultural Revolution. Later, it was revived again and incorporated into practice as Confucianism allowed China to develop an identity based on Asian values. Confucianism also projects universality in the East Asian region since most of these countries are familiar with the Confucius values (Ullah 2015, Page 43).

Confucian values are not only followed within China but also included in China's diplomatic principles, for example, good neighborly relations, harmonious world, prosperity to all, and people to people relations among others.

5.2.2) Media:

China has been trying to promote its culture and values through media such as radio and television. China has successfully established various 24-hours television and radio broadcasting stations with international coverage. Xinhua, China's official news agency, operates with around 170 bureaus around the world. It delivers news in eight different languages— Chinese, English, Spanish, French, Russian, Portuguese, Arabic, and Japanese— for global coverage. Similarly, CGTN, a Chinese news channel service, is aimed at the overseas market whose content is in English. Other media like China Daily, Global Times, and China Radio International have also become the voice of China.

While many claim that these media outlets are a source of Chinese Propaganda, China asserts them to be a medium of connection to the world and letting the world have a better understanding of the "real China". Arif (2017), in reference to President Xi Jinping's speech of 2014, assesses that China can achieve its soft power goals through good global communication.

"……new media can play this role (building a good image of China) by increasing creativity and presenting reliability of China's publicity ……and China's story, voices, and characteristics should be well explained."

- President Xi Jinping Speech (2014).

5.3) FOREIGN POLICY AND DIPLOMACY

Soft power is manifested in a state's ability to work for international institution-building, agenda-setting, mobilization of coalition and ability to fulfill its commitments (Su, 2007). In addition, under the political category, soft power can also be enhanced through participation in multilateral diplomacy, foreign aid and assistance programs, activities of the international system, and peacekeeping missions.

5.3.1) Foreign Policies:

Chinese policies like opposition to using force and economic sanctions, preservation of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in others internal affairs, and peaceful co-existence resonate with many nations. China has been as of late emphasizing on notions like "building a harmonious world", "mutually beneficial cooperation" and "common development" which might allow other nations to warm up towards China and help build a friendly and peaceful image. (Glaser & Murphy, 2009).

China claims to have prioritized peace and development as the need in the international arena. It also asserts that all countries should shoulder common but differentiated obligations required to solve global issues such as climate change and poverty. China pursues common

security through dialogue and co-operation along with its good neighbor policy (Zheng 2011, p. 79).

5.3.2) Diplomacy:

China has adopted more of a sophisticated diplomacy. Lately, China has been focusing on training more skilled and refined diplomatic corps. On a higher level, China is popular for its numerous high-level meetings, visits and exchanges and even more so for hosting many of the leaders from smaller developing countries.

There are about 147 Foreign Embassies and 180 Consulates placed in the territory of China. China itself is in total counts near 161 embassies and 67 consulates spread all over the world (Embassy Worldwide, n.d.).

China has been actively engaging in various multilateral institutions. China is a member of the UN Security Council, a founding member of BRICS and also successfully sought entry into existing regional groups in the central and the south like APEC, ASEAN, SCO, G77, G20, WTO, IMF, Forum for East Asia and many others. The participation in the multilateral and regional forums, and organizations allows China to expand its international influence while promoting and supporting its own interest. China wishes to boost its international legitimacy and convey an image of a responsible stakeholder that plays by the rules. Many scholars have mentioned that this is even more so now that the leading country US has stepped out of its role (McGiffert, 2009).

5.3.3) Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Aid:

China is also quite active in peacekeeping missions. China is well-known for sending out doctors and medical personnel in Africa and also for its fast responses towards disaster and its spending on humanitarian aid. Reports have shown that China is by far the largest troop contributor of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. But China's importance as a peacekeeper is not limited to just the numbers of personnel, its financial contributions have been equally noteworthy. China also pays 10.5% of the UN peacekeeping budget making it the second-largest contributor of all member states (Zuercher, 2019).

5.4)   MORE THAN WHAT NYE BELIEVES

In recent debates of soft power, some scholars have criticized that the concept developed by Nye as incomplete and not all-inclusive. Glaser and Murphy (2009, p. 20) describe it as a means to "improve the internat94ional standing of the United States". Many Chinese theorists have thus extended the original conceptual framework of Nye to formulate their own concept of "soft power" with Chinese characteristics which include features unique to China and Chinese practices that have attracted interest from the outside world (ibid). These include investments, financial aid, businesses, economic development and most of all the Chinese Development Model and BRI.

5.4.1) Economic Diplomacy:

Foreign aid and investments help spread power and influence. In the case of China, it has been using economic diplomacy to acquire soft power and have a more active role in world affairs (Banik & Hegertun 2017, para. 2). China provides aid in form of completed projects, goods and materials, technical co-operation and human resource development co-operation, medical teams and volunteers, emergency humanitarian aid, and debt relief, budget support, interest-free loans, etc. (Carter 2017, pp.4-5; Aghavni 2018, p.185). Most of the countries receiving China's foreign aid are developing countries in Asia, Middle East, Africa, South East Asia, Latin America, The Caribbean, and Eastern Europe (Aghavni 2018, p.183).

China has increased its assistance and aid in the last two decades. According to the report published by RAND in 2013, China's foreign aid dramatically increased from $1.7 billion to $168.6 billion in 2010 to $189.3 billion in 2011 (Wolf & Warner, 2013). China provides loans and grants with lesser conditionality and interference. Unlike the western donors, loans given by China do not depend upon the type of government that rules. But, they do expect the recipients to offer access to their natural resources that China requires for its development and also presume the recipient countries to adhere to the "One China Policy".

Chinese investments have been particularly appealing to developing countries because it does not come with the "human rights conditions, good governance requirements, approved project restrictions, and environmental quality regulations that are tied to money from Western governments" (Aghavni 2018, p. 184).

China has pledged to spend large amounts of money on projects which are backing up its soft power like the New Development Bank, the Silk Road Economic Belt, the Maritime Silk

Road, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. (Shambaugh, 2015, p. 100). This indicates China's efforts in trying to appeal to the international community through admiration rather than traditional coercion. The growing influence China has over the economy today has become its strongest instrument backing up its soft power ambitions.

5.4.2) Belt and Road Initiative:

The Belt and Road Initiative was proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping and it took shape in October 2013. It is envisaged to "establish new connections, strengthen bilateral relations, improve dialogues and achieve common goals" (Boboc 2017, para.5). It plans on connecting China with the European countries and the rest of the world through the 21st century maritime Silk Road. The ultimate goal is to facilitate trade and investment and promote economic growth.

BRI promotes infrastructure investment, mutual development, and win-win cooperation. It can be considered a good example of a global public good offered by China to the rest of the world. Through this initiative, China has promised to address the deficiencies and vulnerabilities in the global economy, find solutions, and build consensus among countries for their participation. The success of BRI would prove the success of China in utilizing its power resources in agenda-setting and gaining international support for policies. It is an important aspect of soft power capability. (Yacsi, 2018).

From the soft power perspective, China's engagement in this strategy will help improve its image as a responsible and generous state in the eyes of neighboring countries which will enhance China's soft power, and also its attractiveness as a political and economic partner. This

will also provide a means to disseminate culture and ideas. In other words, this project would help China revive its image and role globally as well as regionally. Just as how the Bretton Woods institutions helped the US gain influence over the economic behavior of other states and structural power over deciding the rules, through AIIB and BRI, China can create a similar system and expand its influence on the regional level.

5.4.3) China Model:

The fast-growing economy of China has become a major source of appeal around the world especially among the developing countries. And the most vivid example of this today is the 'Beijing Consensus' which is popularly known as the 'China Model'. Aghavni (2018, p.179) describes this as "an effective ideological product that combines elements of both hard and soft power". This development model combines the liberal market economy and authoritarian political system which is different from the Washington Consensus that most countries follow.

The Beijing Consensus does not believe in a uniform solution for each specific problem. It recognizes the need for a unique approach depending upon each nation's unique challenges. It is inherently focused on innovation, while simultaneously emphasizing ideals such as equitable development and a peaceful rise (Ramo, 2004: 4-5). With the failure of the liberal open market democracy in many places, this has become popular as an alternative development model and has attracted the interest of many countries from Latin America, Africa, South Asia, and former Soviet republics. (Glaser & Murphy 2009, p.22). The authors consider that this has already become a major source of soft power for China.

CHAPTER VI

ASSESSING CHINA'S SOFT POWER: SUCCESS? FAILURE?? OR JUST DIFFERENT???

After Professor Joseph Nye brought out the theory of soft power in 1990, it created a buzz in the field of international relations. Many countries were eager to find their own version of soft power and apply it to their strategies. This concept successfully made its way not only into the study of the academicians and scholars but also piqued the interest of many politicians and policymakers. Following the popularity of the concept, attempts were made to develop methods to measure soft power and rank countries accordingly.

However, the task of measuring the success of countries' application of soft power is quite daunting. Given the fact that the concept is subjective and its interpretation varies from country to country, making its scope unlimited. Unlike the tangible hard power, it cannot be measured based on the defense budget a country has allocated, or the number of arsenal and weapons it possesses. The calculation of economic growth or the resources it possesses does not give the accurate value of soft power to a country. Furthermore, soft power does not reap immediate results.

This makes accurately calculating the soft power capability of a state near to impossible. Ullah (2015, p. 65) in this matter comments that "gauging the success achieved by any of the states in this multi-faceted market of ideas is quite difficult." Yet, efforts are being made to analyze the power of attraction a country possesses.

The methods commonly employed besides the research papers and opinion pieces include opinion polls and surveys that measure the perception of other countries and foreign publics

regarding the country in question. Although not perfect and complete, these methods are popularly used today to evaluate the power of attraction and appeal. It gives a rough idea of the position a country holds in the world view and helps us understand how successful their efforts have been.

When it comes to evaluating the soft power capability of China, scholars are often quite divided. Many scholars like Nye, Shambaugh, Ikenberry, and others believe that despite significant efforts put in by China to increase its soft power capability, the extent to which it has had actual returns is somewhat exaggerated. But there are political analysts like Zhang, Kurlantzick, and Ramo who believe that the image of China is actually improving and that the efforts will reap success in the near future. The remaining observe lack of authenticity in the basis of measurement and claim that it is not the failure in part of China rather the biasness in the definition and methods employed.

6.1)   HOW DOES THE OPINION POLLS SEE CHINESE SOFT POWER?

As mentioned above, opinion polls and surveys are the most prevalent methods in the study of soft power. Even though the assumptions and the process in itself might be lacking in various areas, these methods are widespread and give us a rough idea of what the situation is. Some of the widely accepted survey reports include the Soft Power 30, reports by BBC and Global Attitude projects and others.

6.1.1) The Soft Power 30 Framework:

The Soft Power 30 index is considered the world's most comprehensive comparative assessment of global soft power. The index combines objective data and international polling to build what Professor Nye has described as "the clearest picture of global soft power to date" (Nye 2015, p.7). This is now used as a benchmark by many governments around the world.

The paper with the same title is prepared by Portland in collaboration with the USC Center on Public Diplomacy and Alligator Research to generate newly-commissioned polling data. It includes information from 25 different nations and is designed to estimate the appeal of countries' soft power assets. This polling survey has tried to include audiences from every region of the globe. The paper mentions that the respondents were asked to rate countries based on seven different categories including culture, cuisine, and foreign policy, among others.

The following table gives yearly ranking of China for past four years:

YEAR	2015	2016	2017	2018
RANK	30	28	25	27

Table 3: China's Soft Power Ranking in the Soft Power 30 Framework.

6.1.2) Study by Chicago Council on Global Affairs

The study entitled Soft Power in Asia was produced by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in partnership with the East Asia Institute. The report surveyed people in six countries— China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the United States and their perception of one another and of soft power in the region. Five general areas of soft power— economic,

cultural, human capital, political, and diplomatic— were studied. As per a Chicago Council on Global Affairs report, Chinese soft power has not performed that well as predicted by its "charm offensive" (Whitney & Shambaugh 2009, p.34). The report indicates that China's soft power image in Asia and the United States is more limited than the scholarly and journalistic communities have suggested. Although China has emerged as one of the stronger regional actors in terms of economic power and attractiveness, this has not matched its ability to serve as a regional negotiator, and political and cultural leader (Whitney & Shambaugh 2009, pp.17-18). It illustrates the same story, where the positive perception of people about China has declined over the past few years.

6.1.3) Pew Global Attitudes Projects

Pew Foundation's Global Attitudes Project is another attempt in assessing the effectiveness of soft power. A report released by the US Pew Foundation in July 2013 found that China was looked upon favorably in nineteen of the thirty-eight countries surveyed, excluding China itself.

6.1.4) BBC World Service:

A 2014 survey conducted by the BBC World Service examined how different regions perceive one another. The results showed that the favorability of China was highest in Africa followed by Latin America. Again, North America and European countries were generally less favorable towards China (Osamu, p.48). The Chinese respondents themselves rated highly of

their own country responding that China exercised a positive influence in world affairs. Across the world, excluding China, the average rate of the positive appraisal was 42 percent.

China scored quite well in areas of culture and engagement with other countries. These surveys usually consider the success as a result of its Confucius Institutes and its hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games. However, in the overall soft-power ranking, China was at the bottom. The surveys suggested China may have suffered in the ranking because of the nationalistic tone of its public discourse, overt engagement of government and government-controlled agencies and the lack of human rights and political freedom.

6.2)   HOW ACCURATE ARE THESE OPINION POLLS?

Soft power resources and public diplomacy efforts may vary depending upon the target, efforts may vary to influence the general public or political elites, so these public opinion polls about the image of a particular country may not correspond to the thinking of the policy makers of the same country. Thus, it important to be cautious when inferring successes or failures in light of these opinion polls. Ullah (2015, p.65) mentions that "sometimes there is little or no positive correlation between the investments made in public diplomacy and international perception of that state." This might have been the case of China too.

As the data of different polls have indicated, the perception regarding China is different in different parts of the world. China may have had the chance of achieving goodwill in developing countries due to their economic interests or impressing their elites through the 'Chinese development model,' but achieving a positive perception in the West still remains an uphill task for Chinese public diplomacy.

These overall surveys may suggest that China's soft power has failed to deliver, but yet we cannot draw this conclusion with certainty, as we do not know what would have been the world's perception about China if China's soft power efforts had not been in place (Ullah 2015, p.69). Just as how there are no significant relation between China's soft power tools and positive perception building in the international community, there is no significant effects of China's rise on the negative perception building among the international community.

6.3)   SUCCESS STORY FOR CHINA

Various literature suggests that China has achieved some level of success in enhancing its appeal around the world. Based on the UN voting behavior, CSIS reports that the balance of power has shifted from the United States and European Union to China and Russia, because of their norms and belief in respect of national sovereignty and non-intervention policy.

Besides the above-mentioned stance of China in world politics, the impressive economic performance of China during the past few decades has undoubtedly made politicians and the public around the world want to follow its footsteps. After all, pulling half of its population out of poverty following its rapid economic and infrastructure development is an extraordinary feat that many developing countries wish to achieve.

Likewise, the popularity of the "Beijing Consensus" is definitely growing and many countries are regarding it as a possible alternative to the popular Washington Consensus in the 21st century. Similarly, the growing number of Confucius Institutes and classrooms around the world and the number of international students in Chinese Universities surely indicate the success of Chinese efforts in its cultural promotion. This, directly or indirectly, does impact the

perspective of the new generation towards China. In any case, countries have started seeing China in a positive light or at least have given China a chance to prove itself.

Many scholars consider this positive impact of China a result of the power vacuum created today by policies of the new US administration (Peter 2018, para.7). In contrast to American policies of "anti-globalization, anti-immigration, anti-environmental and trade policies under Trump administration", China's economic success, massive infrastructural development, cultural heritage, its forward-looking actions and investments under the BRI project will continue to increase its soft power appeal in future (Biswas & Tortajada, 2018).

China has also effectively extended a new level of engagement with an emphasis on its soft power aspects to portray itself as a responsible global power that posits no threats to others. Many developing countries have shown interest in its Belt and Road Initiative as well. To date, more than sixty countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, accounting for two-thirds of the world's population have signed on to the BRI projects or have indicated an interest in doing so. The list in Top China Travel website article "One Belt One Road Initiative" includes 64 countries.

6.4)   WHAT LIMITS CHINA IN ITS EXTENSION OF SOFT POWER?

Kurlantzick (2006) writing about China's Charm Offensive mentioned a gradual increase in the positive image of China especially in sectors like commerce and education in many Asian and African nations. But in his recent series of blog posts, he seems to have become "doubtful" of its success. He notes that "despite the fact that Beijing has upped its soft power

efforts since 2007, its soft power appeal has not grown" instead it has declined (Kurlantzick, 2017).

Robert Thomas (2017) comes to a similar conclusion and argues that China's investment in soft power, at least at present, is not paying off. Many western critics also claim that China lacks real influence. In their words, the soft power of China is not soft in itself.

The results of various opinion polls and scholarships reflect that China is not yet able to create any major impact on global public opinion towards itself despite the constant engagement and considerable efforts. Although the exceptional economic growth has impressed some developing countries, the neighboring countries and the Western powers have taken its rise as a threat to itself and to the existing liberal world order. The expansion of its influence in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, has escalated China threat theory putting its aim of positive image around the world at risk.

China during the 1950s remained somewhat closed off from the rest of the world. It was during the Deng Xiaoping's period that China adopted reforms and opened itself to the world. The opening up of China with its socialist values and economic growth in the existing liberal world order was seen with suspicion. The values that China had to offer were very different from what the world believed in and practiced. Above all, the giant with a growing economy and strong military including the uncertainty of its intents was received with reservations and fears by other countries.

One of the topics often popular in discussions regarding Chinese soft power is the limitations to its success. Tom Harper (2016) in his opinion piece claims that key obstacles in China's path towards winning the hearts and minds of people are the language barriers and the

fearsome reputation China has earned for itself. China has been in constant disagreement with many of its immediate neighboring countries regarding its borders.

This has been further strengthened by its inability to maintain a balance between its talk and actions and its aggressive military posture among its neighbors as seen in the case of the South China Sea. Likewise, the portrayal of western media and reports of the poor human rights situations and lack of freedom within the country has also developed a negative perception of China.

The western scholars have emphasized that China's posed intentions are vague and their actions lack transparency. Arif (2017) is also of a similar opinion and adds China could work its charm on other countries if it is willing to reform itself and prioritize human rights approaches and administrative transparency. The western part of the world who believes in the core of democracy, freedom, and human rights are definitely not happy with the growing interest of developing countries in the idea of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The BRI project has also been under severely criticism. The project has confronted various setbacks, and failures. The ambition of setting up a better image of China through BRI project seems have a bleak future with "countries across continents getting into debt trap and internal troubles rising" (Chaudhary, 2019). Critics have described these as Chinese "debt-trap diplomacy" as in case of Hambontota port in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka was forced to lease out its port for 99 years after failing to repay the Chinese loans.

Many countries are pushing back against the proposed Chinese infrastructure plans while others are sounding the alarm about already completed but flawed projects. The risk lies not only on the economic and financial viability but also the social and environmental impacts. The lack

of transparency, increasing back door diplomacy, rise in corruption, during the process appears to be limiting the soft power of China.

The major focus of Beijing's soft power strategy is towards countering the China Threat Theory and improving its image abroad. China wishes to develop a "comprehensive and coherent national soft power" but it is not being achieved because most of their soft power policies are primarily "reactive" and "ad hoc" (Glaser & Murphy 2009, p.10).

Robert Thomas (2017) quoting Joseph Nye also writes that the problem in China's effort is that it has only been focusing on the cultural aspects and cultural diplomacy and neglecting the remaining two aspects of political values and foreign policies. Rather than putting all its efforts on promoting its culture, soft power as a whole requires putting efforts on all the indices of soft power equally.

The New Public Diplomacy Theory prioritizes the role of non-state actors along with the government. But in the case of China, all of its public diplomacy efforts include interference from the government. The non-state actors and businesses are not independent in themselves. Most of these agencies that perform public diplomacy and soft power strategies are government-led agencies. China's top-down approach in building soft power has undermined the chance for the contribution from civil society and the grassroots level. This in addition to relying on overt censorship and propaganda has led to the failing efforts of China (Thomas 2017, para.3).

6.5)   IS IT JUST DIFFERENT?

There are another group of scholars whose opinion differ from the mainstream. They do not fixate on evaluating the efforts as black or white. They assert that the evaluation of soft

power practiced today is "neither accurate nor valid". The concept of soft power and its assessment presents a strong "definitional mismatch" when it comes to its definition and composition. (Qazi 2016, para.11).

Measuring and analyzing soft power capacity and effectiveness is not as easy as that of hard power because of its abstract and subjective nature. Furthermore, in the case of China, its soft power strategy is somewhat different from what Nye had laid out. The structure put forward by Professor Nye excludes both military and economic resources, however, the Chinese adaptation seems to list everything, except the military power, within soft power.

Nye denied the use of economic aid or investments as sources of soft power. Nonetheless, aid, investment and trade can become an effective tool of soft power when their purpose is to create a positive image of the donor country and influence the receiving country's attitude instead of using it as a form of reward to change the receiver's behavior, which Nye labels as "carrot". The usage can be aimed at creating a positive image, which in turn can enhance the attractiveness of the donor. In addition, China has been repeatedly claiming its investment and aid as mutually beneficial co-operative relation and denies the accusation of hegemony.

Many political analysts also consider soft power as a strategy that helped the US to address the concerns regarding the unprecedented levels of conventional power the US has achieved that was raising concerns after the end of the cold war. Soft power successfully helped reassure other actors, and justify its superior status in the changing external context. Being the pioneer, U.S. will remain entitled to evaluate, judge, label and rate others for their performance in the field (Qazi 2016, para.10). And this is what is happening today with Chinese soft power as

well. The limitation and achievements regarding soft power is measured with US as a main reference point.

The observers today quantify soft power in relative terms, in comparison to the US. The idea of soft power may have emerged only near the end of the last century, but its constituents have long existed. All states, throughout history, had their respective cultures, ideas, political values, and foreign policies. In other words, the term in itself may have been new but what it represents was not something completely non-existent in the past. Thus, Qazi (2016) believes that the coinage of the term is more of a "strategic adaptation" of the United States rather than the "emergence of a new phenomenon."

The soft power of a country greatly differs from that of another. So it is only correct that they are examined differently. Scholars, like Kivimaki, criticize the mainstream analysis of soft power which is done using "American yardstick" and are "biased towards the American world view" (Kivimaki 2014, p.423). He condemns that these methods are not suitable to evaluate the soft power strategies of other countries, including China.

The results produced by models of western origins that revolves around the western system cannot produce results that are accurate enough. A better way would be to consider country-specific cases and objectives during analysis. In the case of China, the Chinese way of doing things, how the Chinese system functions and what China aims to attain should be considered.

Since soft power is defined as 'an ability to persuade other powers to do what one wants them to do,' soft power for China should be the ability to persuade other powers to do things that China wants them to do and things that will benefit China. This might differ from what the West

wants and does. Hence, before handing down the verdict, evidence must be drawn from an "analysis of soft power specific to China's needs and, not America's needs" (Kivimaki 2014, p. 423). Maybe if we are to juxtapose China's strategies with its own values and objectives instead of considering its soft power capabilities in terms of US values, we may see a different pattern of success.

6.6)   HOW DOES CHINA DIFFER?

Beijing claims that their foreign policy does not seek to persuade other countries of the benefits or superiority of the Chinese system and to adopt them in their own domestic affairs, as the United States attempted to do. Xi Jinping's explanation of Chinese foreign policy is that it is designed to build an understanding of Chinese culture in other countries rather than promote it. (October 2013). He explained the need for cultural cooperation and people-to-people exchanges as part of the Cshinese aim of 'letting the awareness of a community of common destiny take root in the neighboring countries'.

The major difference between the soft power strategies of China and the one described by Professor Nye is in the economic aspects. The structure put forward by Professor Nye excludes both military and economic resources, however, the Chinese adaptation of soft power seems to incorporate everything, excluding 'just' the military power. Moreover, economics is not only included within the strategy of attraction, but it has actually become the most fundamental, durable and influential feature of this power in China.

The role of the state in soft power is also maximum in China. The soft power diplomacy like the public and cultural diplomacy are mostly managed by the state-run agencies or the

government itself. Many articles also claimed that the over-involvement of the government has not allowed the soft power of China to grow per need. China's elaborate strategies of attraction may not be seen positively by many but there are some who contend that its successes are already visible and that Chinese way may prove effective on the long run (Carminati, 2018; Kurlantzick, 2007; Ding, 2008)

However, to correctly analyze China's soft power, we need to shift our attention from China's rapid economic and military growth, and rather focus more on how China is achieving that growth. In the part of China, it needs to maintain a balance between the Chinese and international trends. While expressing in its own way, China must also bear in mind that the only favorable way of communication is that which can be understood and accepted globally.

China should continue its endeavors to be a responsible stakeholder to achieve its peaceful rise in a way that can satisfy the international community.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The idea of using non-coercive power in the spheres of global politics is not new. It has been in practice for centuries. However, as a structured theory in international relations it came into existence only after Joseph Nye coined the term "Soft Power" in the late 1990s. Soft power as defined by Nye is the ability to attract and co-opt, rather than coerce. It is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. The currencies of soft power he mentioned include culture, political ideals and foreign policies which others find attractive.

According to Nye, the increasingly interdependent nature of the complex global system today had resulted in hard power (use of coercive forces) to experience a gradual loss of significance. States started prioritizing the use of soft power and attraction to obtain desired outcomes. Since the introduction of the term, soft power has become increasingly popular among scholars, politicians and even journalists.

The popularity of the soft power in China is seen in both the academics and the politics. China as a rising power has been increasingly seeking to develop and wield its soft power to advance its agenda and interests in global affairs. Officially, Beijing incorporated the concept of soft power into their strategies for national development and foreign relations from the 17th National congress in 2007, when former president Hu Jintao stressed the need to enhance Chinese culture as the country's "soft power".

Following the steps, the current President Xi Jinping has intensified the soft power push in the Chinese. During the 18th National Congress of the Communist party of China in 2014, Xi

remarked that "… we should increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's messages to the world…" Today, the concept of China's Soft Power can be seen everywhere from the government papers to the media, and the conceptualization and application has also gone beyond the traditional domain.

Despite the popularity of the concept and immense research on the topic, it still lacks a concrete definition and understanding. The lack of a well-defined and universally accepted definition and clear sources of soft power are the blind spots that makes the concept ambiguous. It might be because the nature of soft power in itself is subjective. This in addition to the vagueness of the concept has developed various understanding and perspective of soft power.

Different countries are applying the concept in different ways that suits them, depending on their unique historical background, cultural traditions, specific political values and other such factors. China is one such example, who has interpreted and reorganized the concept to fit its own worldview, interest and values.

The case of China helps us deepen our knowledge of the changing concept of soft power, its features, and its limitations. In the past few decades we have seen eager efforts from the Chinese side to rebuild its international image and improve its position in the global politics through the application of soft power concept developed by Nye. At present, we have also seen China trying to develop its own approach to soft power based on its cultural and political values that significantly differ from the west. This has become popular around the world as "Chinese Soft Power" or "Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics." Here, many aspects of the Nye's soft power has been re-conceptualized to fit China's political values, culture, and strategic objectives.

The soft power theory developed by Nye considers culture, political values, and foreign policy as the currencies of soft power. When these currencies are perceived as legitimate, the capacity to shape behavior and motivate the actions of others is developed. Beijing has incorporated the framework developed by Nye to use the attractiveness of its culture, political values and foreign policy to boost up its image abroad. In the case of China, the sources implied include culture, socialism, media, and public diplomacy to name a few.

In addition, China has also adopted the use of economic resources, like trade, financial aids, and investments, which does not fall under the category of soft power by Nye. This is where Chinese Soft Power differs from Nye's concept of Soft Power. Moreover, the government is in control of public diplomacy and soft power strategy in China.

> "…As long as force… stays out of the equation, the means employed to reach the end goal are of lesser importance. If China can reach its goal... without harming anyone…claims against the authenticity of its soft power might be left baseless… while Chinese soft power will continue to increase..."

> \- Qazi (2016)

The history of China shows its richness in culture, values, and soft power attributes. But during the 1950s, China decided to close itself off from the world and build a modern strong China and focused on the development of hard power sources. But this was until, Deng Xiaoping's Open and Reform Policy. Since after opening up again and the introduction of the term soft power, soft power has become a priority for China for reviving its glory and improving

its image around the world. China wants to develop a good image in the international community, and counter the China Threat Theory.

Beijing believes that through soft power the world would come to understand true China and learn the Chinese side of the story. China has also been officially pushing on soft power to rally popular support for the CCP and promote a sense of national pride among the domestic audiences.

In recent times, Chinese Soft power has attracted considerable attention both in China and abroad. It has become a popular topic of discussion in the field of political studies and international relations. Many have been trying to assess the success of this reorganized concept. Many compare it with the US, and measure it in the traditional guidelines. Since the origin of the concept was based on the US, it was only given that western biasness would fill the discussions and analysis of soft power in the application of soft power in other countries.

In analyzing the success and failures of the power of attraction and appeal of China in the world today, there has been divided views. Some consider that despite the grand efforts of China in its soft power strategies, it has little to no returns. While some others assess that China has been successful in developing a positive image in many developing countries through its soft power approaches. If we look at the number of tourists and foreign students in China, the growing numbers of Confucian Institutes abroad, the increasing popularity of Chinese attractiveness can be evident. But if we look at the various available opinion polls and survey, they show that the results still aren't satisfactory.

We cannot say with certainty whether or not the soft power strategy of China has succeeded. First because soft power in itself is not easily measurable. Soft power is often

described as vague, confusing and designed with US in mind by the Western thinkers. The case of China in particular shows that the effectiveness of Chinese approach is different in different parts of the world. China has achieved goodwill in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America due to its economic success and Chinese development model but achieving a positive perception in the west still seems to be an uphill task for China's soft power strategy. United States and European countries have been questioning the political values, the development model, intent, transparency, and the present condition of human rights in China.

Nye (2013) states that for China to succeed in soft power strategy, they will need to match words and deeds in their policies, be self-critical, and unleash the full talents of their civil societies. For soft power to work, a country's narrative should be consistent with its conduct. The way for China to further develop its soft power strategy is to reform itself and prioritize human rights approaches and administrative transparency.

It is interesting to study the Chinese view on the western concept of soft power. However, comparing Nye's theory to the empirical findings concerning reconceptualization of soft power in contemporary China, has opened directions for further research.

To conclude, the tools utilized by China or any other country, and how they are perceived by the foreign publics is not uniform. They are largely shaped by cultural and geopolitical undercurrents that are highly context-specific. Moreover, the concept of soft power is ambiguous just as the content is subjective. This makes the task of measuring soft power of any country difficult. The approach of soft power is unique to each country so when it comes to analyzing soft power it should not be limited.

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APPENDIXES:

Appendix A: From Soft Power Resources to Desired Policy Outcomes

From Soft Power Resources to Desired Policy Outcomes
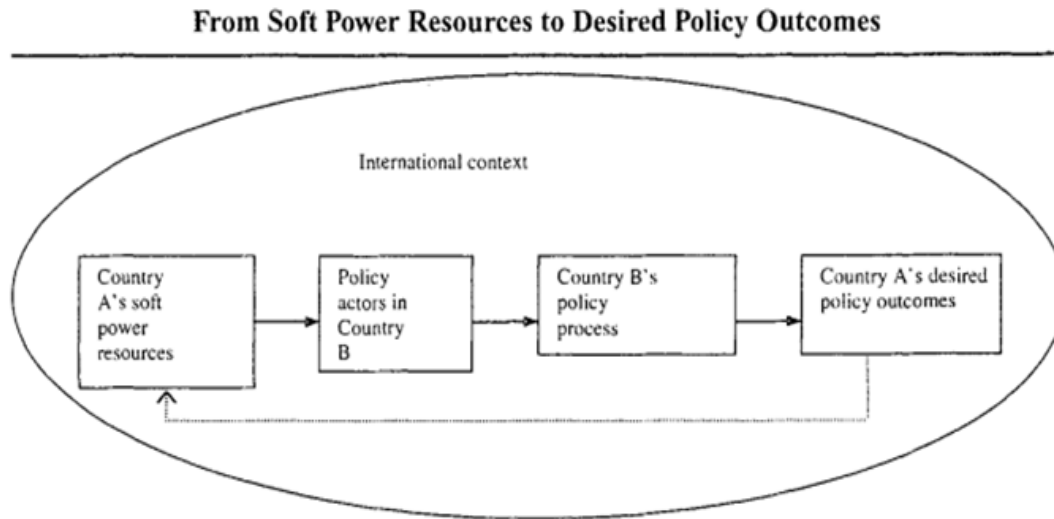
Source: Ding & Huang, Dragon's Underbelly: An Analysis of China's Soft Power

Appendix B: An Integrative Model of Soft Power

Source: Xin Li, Building China's Soft Power for a Peaceful Rise

Appendix C: The Soft Power Index

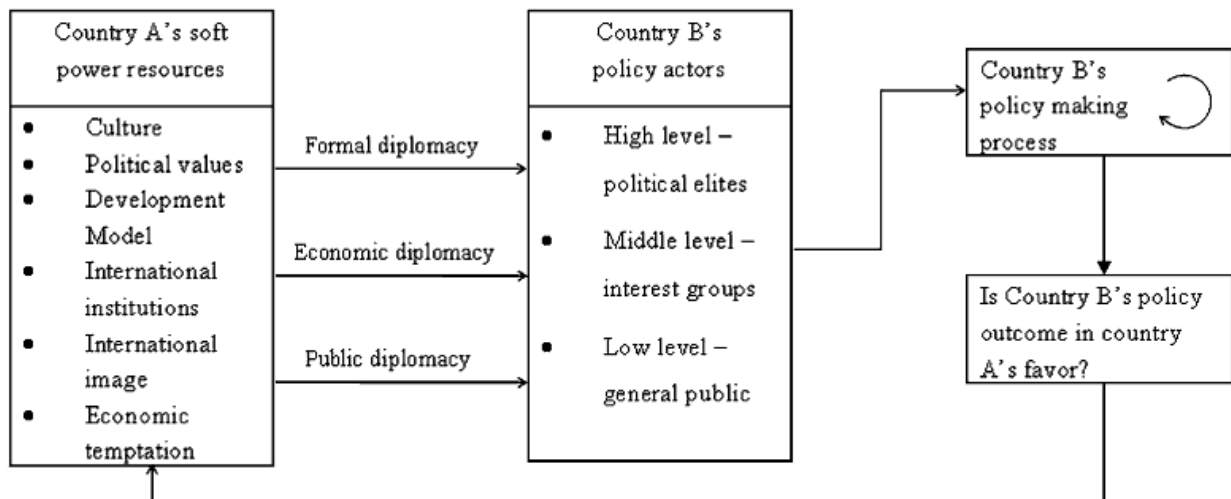| Survey Countries	U.S. soft power	China soft power	Japan soft power	South Korea soft power
United States	—	.47 (3)	.67 (1)	.49 (2)
China	.71 (1)	—	.62 (3)	.65 (2)
Japan	.69 (1)	.51 (3)	—	.56 (2)
South Korea	.72 (1)	.55 (3)	.65 (2)	—
Indonesia	.72 (2)	.70 (3)	.72 (1)	.63 (4)
Vietnam	.76 (2)	.74 (3)	.79 (1)	.73 (4)

Source: Whitney & Shambaugh, Soft Power in Asia

Appendix D: Ratings of China's Soft Power

Survey Countries	Economic	Human Capital	Cultural	Diplomatic	Political
United States	0.52	0.55	0.56	0.40	0.34
Japan	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.44	0.41
South Korea	0.57	0.64	0.54	0.51	0.48
Indonesia	0.73	0.74	0.62	0.69	0.71
Vietnam	0.70	0.80	0.77	0.67	—

Source: Whitney & Shambaugh, Soft Power in Asia

Appendix E: Views of China's Influence

Views of China's Influence

By Country, 2017

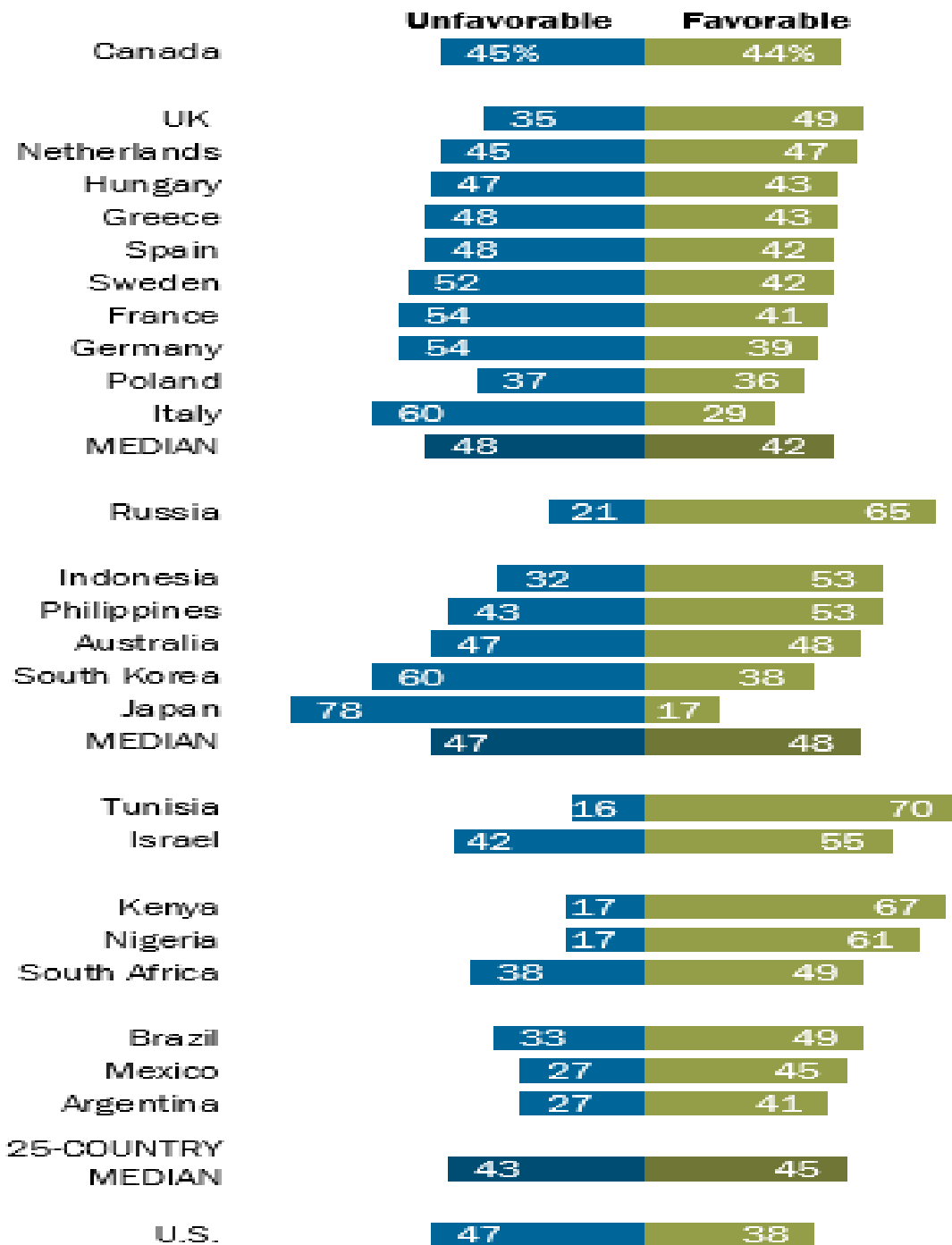| Country	Mainly positive	Mainly negative
Canada	37	51
USA	22	70
Mexico	55	26
Peru	49	34
Brazil	45	38
UK	37	58
Greece	37	25
France	35	60
Germany	20	35
Spain	15	68
Russia	44	23
Turkey	29	54
Nigeria	83	9
Kenya	63	27
China	88	10
Pakistan	63	12
Australia	46	47
Indonesia	28	50
India	19	60
Global average (China excluded)	41	42
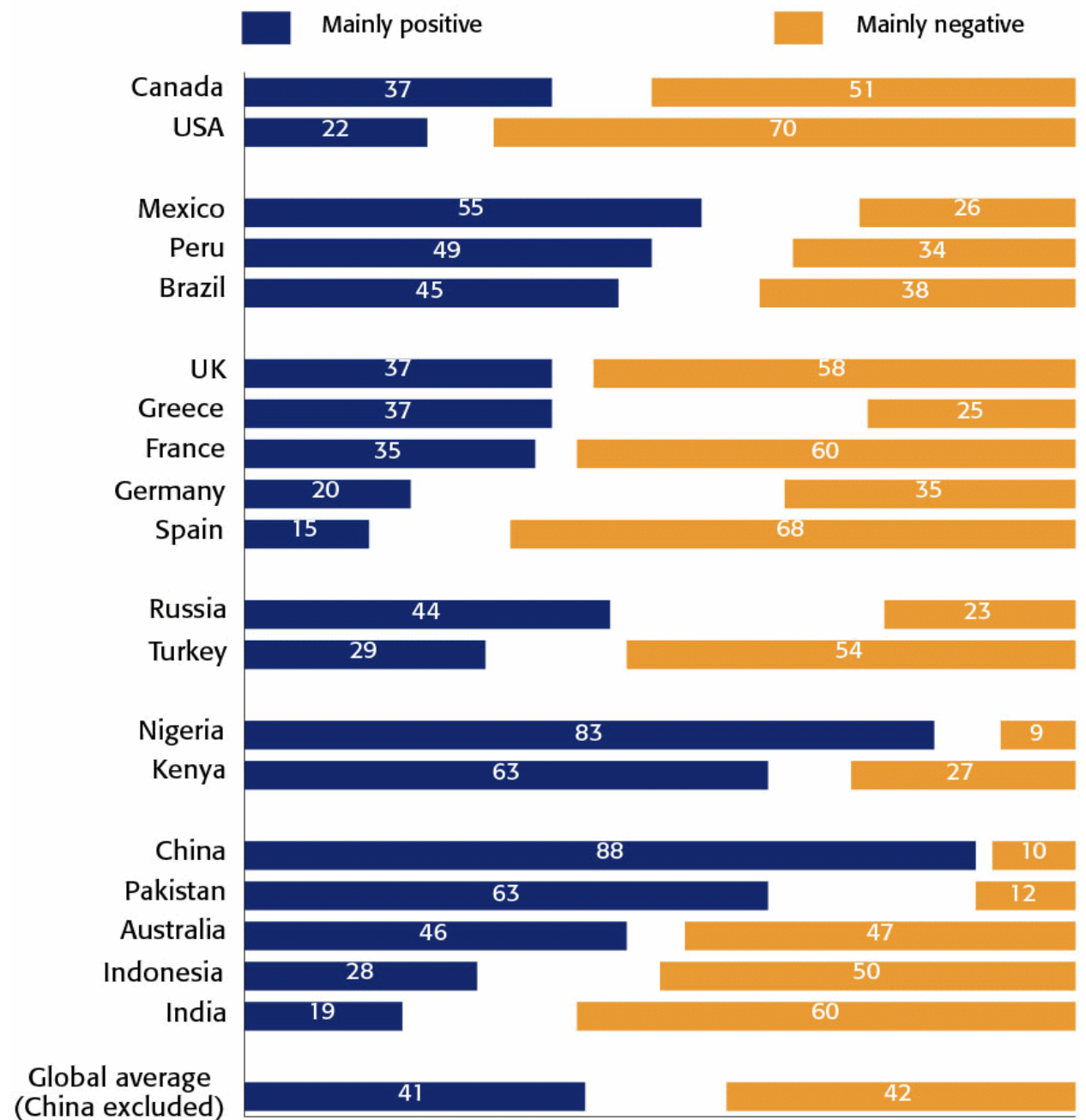
BBC3147_M1M2_china

The white space in this chart represents "Depends," "Neither/neutral," and "DK/NA."
Source: BBC World Opinion Polls

Appendix F: Views of China

	Unfavorable	Favorable
Canada	45%	44%
UK	35	49
Netherlands	45	47
Hungary	47	43
Greece	48	43
Spain	48	42
Sweden	52	42
France	54	41
Germany	54	39
Poland	37	36
Italy	60	29
MEDIAN	48	42
Russia	21	65
Indonesia	32	53
Philippines	43	53
Australia	47	48
South Korea	60	38
Japan	78	17
MEDIAN	47	48
Tunisia	16	70
Israel	42	55
Kenya	17	67
Nigeria	17	61
South Africa	38	49
Brazil	33	49
Mexico	27	45
Argentina	27	41
25-COUNTRY MEDIAN	43	45
U.S.	47	38

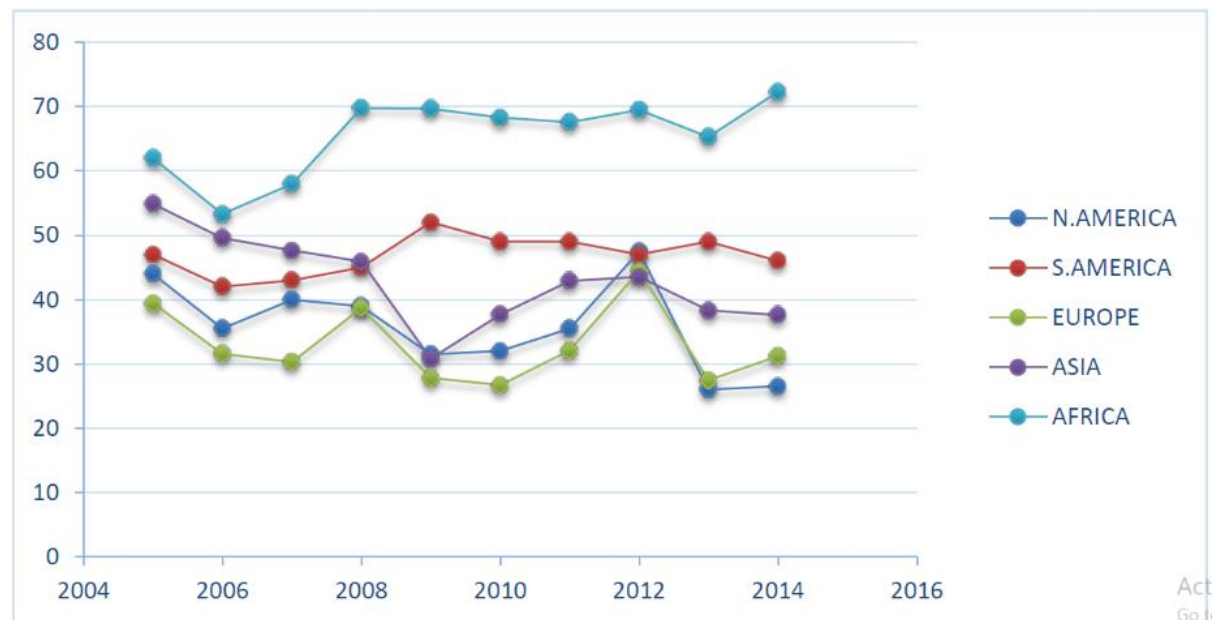Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q17b.

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Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey

Appendix G: China's Positive Image in the World over the Years
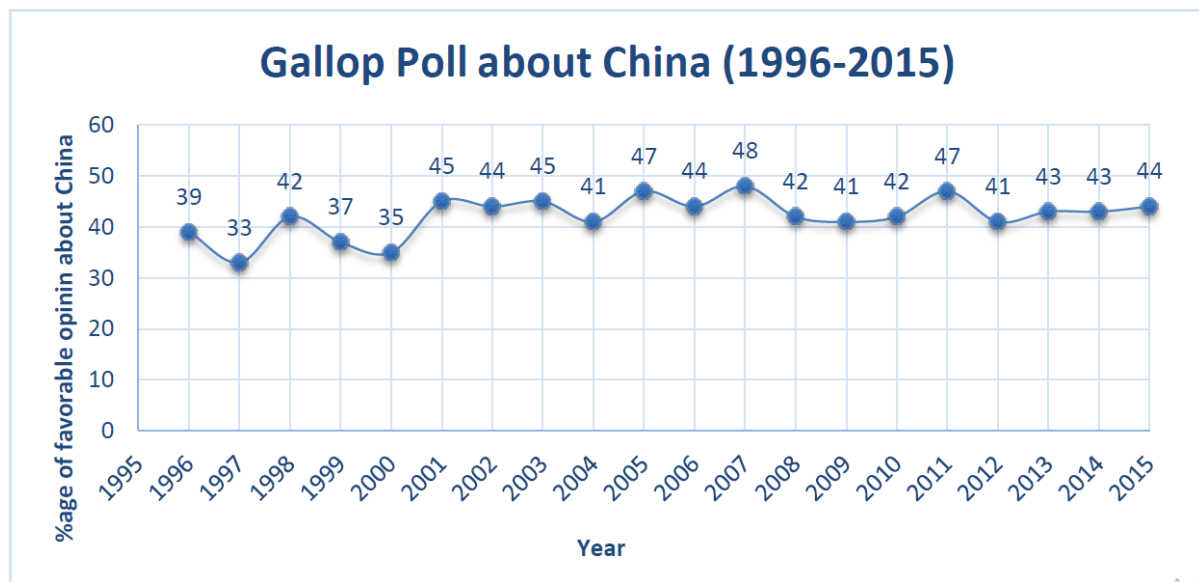
Source: Gallop Poll

Appendix H: Region –Wise Views about China

Source: Chaudhary, S. U., China's Soft Power: Changing The World Perception

Appendix I: Soft Power 30 (McClory, 2018)

Engagement		
-development aid overseas	-permanent missions to international orgs.	-embassies in a country
-visa freedom	-memberships of	-embassies abroad
-audience size of state broadcaster	-environmental treaties signed	-consulate general abroad
-cultural missions abroad		-environmental performance
		-asylum seekers

Government		
-UN HDI	-shadow economy	-capital punishment
-good governance	-societal violence	-income inequality
-freedom	-homicide rates	-gender inequality
-trust in government	-government accountability	-press freedom
-economic democracy	-government effectiveness	-think-thanks

Culture		
-tourism (tourists)	-visitors to the world's top 100 art museums	-size of music market
-foreign correspondents from abroad	-quality of national air carrier	-Michelin starred restaurants
-language popularity	-UNESCO World Heritage Sites	-films appearing at major film festivals
-Olympics medals	-top 10 albums abroad	
-FIFA ranking (men)		

Education		
-top global universities	-education spending	-foreign students
-PISA performance	-tertiary enrolment	-scholarly publications

Enterprise		
-global patents	-economic freedom	-foreign investment abroad
-business competitiveness	-R&D spending	-unemployment rate
-corruption	-small, medium-sized firms	-business start-up cost
-innovation	-doing business	-high-tech exports

Digital		
-Internet users	-Facebook followers abroad to the foreign ministry	-Facebook engagement abroad of the foreign ministry
-Internet servers	-to the head	-of the head
-Internet bandwidth	-government online service	
-mobile phone users	-e-participation	
-fixed broadband users		

Source: Yun Seong Hun, Critical Look at Soft Power Measurement.