
Role of Media in State Soft Power Projection

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ABSTRACT

The role of media in state soft power projection has become increasingly significant in the digital age, transforming how nations influence global perceptions and achieve diplomatic objectives. Moving beyond traditional notions of hard power—military and economic coercion—Joseph Nye's concept of soft power emphasizes attraction and persuasion through cultural appeal, political values, and strategic foreign policies. Media, as a central tool of soft power, enables states to shape narratives, engage in public diplomacy, and enhance their international credibility. The rise of digital platforms and social media has further expanded the reach and impact of state-driven communication, allowing for real-time engagement and broader audience influence. However, the effectiveness of media-driven soft power varies based on factors such as audience media consumption habits, cultural contexts, and geopolitical dynamics. This study explores the evolving role of media in soft power projection, analyzing its potential and limitations in shaping global influence and international relations.

Keywords: Media, soft power, digitalization

INTRODUCTION

Within the field of international relations, the conventional emphasis on hard power, that is, economic and military coercion has long dominated the conversation about how countries affect one another. However, a more complex understanding of global influence has emerged with the advent of "soft power" in the twenty-first century. Joseph Nye coined the term "soft power," which describes a country's capacity to influence international events via attraction and persuasion as opposed to force or financial inducements. According to Nye's fundamental theory, a nation's foreign policy, political principles, and cultural attractiveness all play a significant role in gaining influence and accomplishing diplomatic objectives (Nye, 2004).

Soft power has become an essential instrument in the complex field of international relations for nations looking to increase their influence

internationally without using force or financial inducements. The significance of attraction and persuasion through diplomacy, cultural exchanges, and international engagement is emphasized by Joseph Nye's idea of soft power. By utilizing cultural appeal, political principles, and strategic foreign policies, this method enables governments to alter global perceptions and advance their objectives (Dubinsky, 2019).

Media has changed dramatically in the digital age, changing the ways in which knowledge is produced, shared, and used. Social interaction, journalism, and entertainment have all undergone radical changes as a result of the introduction of new communication technologies, such as social media platforms and digital storytelling (Wang, 2015). Social media has emerged as a vital instrument for public policy implementation, government communication, and educational endeavors.

The media is a flexible tool for soft power projection, enabling countries to explain their policies, values, and culture to audiences abroad. Media, whether via social media or traditional broadcast channels, gives nations the ability to construct narratives, participate in public diplomacy, and establish credibility on the international scene (Rahman, 2019). It is crucial to remember that the efficiency of media in implementing soft power might differ based on the particular instruments employed and the aspects of public diplomacy they cover. The effectiveness of various media techniques can be impacted by factors such as the target audience's media consumption habits, cultural backdrop, and the current geopolitical atmosphere. Media is a powerful tool for implementing soft power, allowing countries to communicate their policies, values, and culture to international audiences. It allows nations to construct narratives, participate in public diplomacy, and establish credibility. However, the effectiveness of media in implementing soft power depends on the specific instruments used, audience habits, cultural background, and geopolitical atmosphere.

ORIGIN OF SOFT POWER

The conventional type of foreign policy instrument has been hard power. The power used to determine the capability, force and strength of state but some academics believe that in contemporary times soft power has emerged as the component of national power. Soft power has begun to emerge in the twenty-first century. Numerous academics have examined soft power as a means of influencing behavior in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 (Schneider, 2005). Ever since then the dimensions of foreign policy have changed and created a new sphere of interest and research in name of soft power (Arndt, 2005). Soft power has been added to the international relations term to explain the state strength and power besides the conventional hard or military power. This had lead to explain other measures which enhances its prestige in international relations and makes it easy to achieve the national interest (Chong, 2005).

Joseph Nye is credited with giving rise to the idea of "soft power," which refers to a nation's capacity to influence others without the use of force or money. "The ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment" was Nye's original definition of soft power which included "culture, values and foreign policies" (Nye, 2004). Subsequently, Nye expanded his definition to include "the capacity to influence others via the co-optive methods of advancing the agenda, convincing, and generating favorable attraction in order to achieve desired results." (Nye, 2011)

DEFINITION OF SOFT POWER

In the context of international affairs, soft power is defined as a nation's capacity to influence other nations to act in accordance with its wishes without resorting to coercion or force. Rather than the power of force or money, it is the power of attraction and persuasion (Dubinsky, 2019).

Another definition of soft power is a nation's capacity to use appeals to foreign policy, politics, and culture to draw in and coopt rather than compel (Martino, 2020). Although there is continuous discussion on its efficacy and applicability, it is acknowledged as a crucial facet of international relations and statecraft, with several nations utilizing it to accomplish their foreign policy objectives and enhance their global reputation. Yet Dubinsky and Martino defines the term as the power named soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies (Dubinsky, 2019).

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTION OF SOFT POWER

Soft power is widely used for the projection of power on national and international level (Klimeš, 2018).

Although soft power may be used to improve a nation's standing and influence abroad, its efficacy is frequently constrained by internal political goals and the techniques used for assessment and projection. The random flux in international politics is always tricky and need new trends to deal with state (Rawnsley, 2014). Each state has different ability and capability to entertain its national interest. Traditionally super power would have the ability to force weak nations whereas on bilateral terms coordination was essential but small power would always run for the convincing method to attain interest. In contemporary time, with the projection of soft power even the small states attain interest in the best possible way. Therefore United States, China, UAE, Taiwan, and other states highlight the variety of strategies and difficulties involved in projecting soft power, both domestically and globally (Zhang & Wu, 2019).

DIGITISATION OF MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The introduction of social media and the Internet has made information more widely accessible, leading to a change in communication

from one-to-many to many-to-many (Stamenkovic, 2012). By empowering people and groups to express their own narrative and points of view, this shift has upended established media hierarchies and increased the diversity of voices and opinions in public conversation. Thus providing a platform for a variety of viewpoints and challenging widespread media structures, social media and the internet have completely changed communication and expanded the range of public conversation.

Users may now easily produce and consume content in a more varied and dynamic media landscape. But this change has also caused difficulties for established media, including newspapers, which had to change to be relevant in the digital era. Traditional media outlets now have to adapt their business models and content strategies to effectively compete in a crowded and changing media landscape due to the quick speed of technological innovation and changing consumer preferences (Hassan et al., 2018). But this change has also caused difficulties for established media, including newspapers, which had to change to be relevant in the digital era.

As well social media is becoming a helpful instrument for government communication when it comes to determining support for policies and public opinion. By providing immediate communication and input, governments may better understand community issues and modify policies to satisfy the needs of the public (Wahyunengseh and Hastjarjo, 2021). Public policy execution was successful in part because of government communication. Social media platforms owned by the government are a tool for gauging public opinion and support for particular programs. During the COVID-19 outbreak, for example, the Indonesian National Board for Disaster Management used social media to disseminate regulations relating to disaster management and measured citizen interactions by examining comments left by users. This highlights the importance of internet platforms as instruments for providing real-time input, especially during emergencies.

DEFINITION

Term "social media" refers to a broad spectrum of communication. It is characterized as a collection of connections, actions, emotions, empiricism, and brand-consumer interactions where there are experience sharing and multidirectional communication using sophisticated communication technologies. The term "media" should be used to refer mainly to conventional information-transmission mediums like radio, television, and newspapers. The word also describes the methods used to provide the information to the media, such as written press, radio, television, and photography. But each of these mediums also engages users, bringing them together in specific social groups focused on a given problem, in addition to spreading information.

KINDS OF MEDIA

The term media refers to a wide range of print and electronic media, each having unique characteristics and themes covered. These media forms collectively play a significant role in shaping public opinion, providing information, and influencing cultural and societal norms across various platforms (Kepplinger, 2008).

Based on the technology employed, the material they convey, and the transmission method, media can be roughly divided into four categories. Here are the main types of media:

1. PRINT MEDIA

A type of traditional medium where information is printed out on paper like booklets, pamphlets, brochures, periodicals, and newspapers. Newspapers are daily periodicals that cover a variety of subjects, including sports, entertainment, and news. Periodicals with a particular hobby, industry, or topic in emphasis are called magazines. Books are prolonged pieces of writing on a variety of topics. Whereas journals are the scholarly or expert publications containing in-depth analyses and research findings (Pavlik, & McIntosh, 2018).

2. BROADCAST MEDIA

Media that reaches a large audience through airwaves is referred as broadcast media. For instance radio, television, and movies. Television creates the content that is both visual and audible that is broadcast via channels; includes sports, movies, TV shows, and news. Radio airs audio programs that are sent over the airwaves, such as talk shows, music, and news (Campbell & Fabos, 2017).

3. DIGITAL MEDIA

Digitally produced, accessed, altered, and shared media that is often shared online. Websites are digital platforms that contain text, photos, videos, and interactive components among other kinds of material. Whereas social media comprises of websites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter that let people publish and exchange material. Streaming services are websites (like Netflix and Spotify) that provide audio and video material on demand. Podcasts are usually episodic, audio programs that may be downloaded or streamed (Jenkins, 2013).

4. OUTDOOR MEDIA

Media that is viewed by viewers when they are not at home. Examples include posters, billboards, advertisements on buses and taxis, and sponsorships of events. Large outdoor advertising constructions are known as billboards. Bus, taxi, rail, and other vehicle advertisements are referred to as transit advertising. Posters: printed images put on display in public areas (Brennan, 2014). By focusing on viewers in natural environments, these out-of-home media formats improve exposure and interaction with commercials and promotional material.

CONCLUSION

Joseph Nye coined the idea of "soft power," which emphasizes a country's capacity to influence others via attraction and persuasion as opposed to force or payment. Soft power has emerged as a key component of international relations and includes cultural attractiveness, political principles, and foreign policy. Even though it is becoming more and more important in contemporary diplomacy it is frequently disputed whether it can succeed without the backing of elements of physical force.

Soft power projection is intricate and multidimensional; nations use a range of tactics to improve their influence and status internationally while managing the interaction of internal and external variables. To conclude, a country's soft power strategy heavily relies on political principles, foreign policy, cultural and ideological concepts and the media. Political ideals increase a nation's legitimacy and attractiveness on a global scale, influencing other countries via attraction as opposed to force. A country's foreign policy, which reflects its principles and culture, uses soft power to engage the world and non-confrontationally advance its goals. Whereas media today serves as the important medium of soft power. Especially in the digital era, media serves as an essential instrument for disseminating cultural values and influencing attitudes across borders.

The way information is generated, exchanged, and consumed has undergone a fundamental transformation due to the growth of social media and advances in digital technology. The transition to digital media has brought up both new opportunities and challenges in a number of fields, such as public policy, journalism, and social interaction. Compared to traditional media, digital media has broadened the communication landscape and enabled a more dynamic and user-driven approach. Specifically, social media platforms have become indispensable to contemporary communication because they allow information to be disseminated widely and in real time while also opening up new avenues for interaction. These platforms influence both private and public communication by facilitating a variety of behaviors and interactions that might not be possible in face-to-face situations.

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