



CHINESE SOFT POWER

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Annotation: *This article analyzes soft power politics in Chinese foreign policy. China's soft power policy began at the beginning of the 21st century and has achieved a number of achievements so far. We can see the main soft power in the field of education, culture and technology. It also analyzes a number of aspects that serve as a basis for Uzbekistan's soft power policy.*

Key words: *Soft power, Joseph Nye, Brand Finance, Confucius Institutes, mass media.*

Introduction

In the globalized world, developed countries export industrial products as well as soft power tools to the outside world. As a result of globalization, the reputation of the states in the international arena is no longer evaluated by the military and economic potential, but by the global image of the states. One of the best ways to improve a country's image is through the use of soft power. Investments in the production and distribution of soft power tools around the world have increased several times over the last decade. In particular, the People's Republic of China is also developing soft power tools. China's main instruments of soft power can be seen in terms of education, technology, culture, and humanitarian aid.

The term "soft power" was first coined by Harvard University professor Joseph Nye in his 1990 book "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power". He later developed this concept in his 2004 book "Soft Power: The means to Success in World Politics" and his article "Soft Power and US-European Relations". In politics, "soft power" is the transformation of the interests of one country into the interests and desires of other countries. In this case, the idea offered by one country to the other ultimately serves the interests of the first.

Currently, there are many soft power research centers around the world. They annually analyze and rank the global soft power of countries. One of them is Brand Finance. It is the world's leading independent brand valuation and strategy consultancy. Founded in 1996, the head office of the center is located in London. The main task of the center is to conduct research in all areas and compile annual rankings. Brand Finance publishes the Global Soft Power Index based on a survey of more than 170,000 respondents from over 100 countries to gather data on global perceptions of all 193 member states of the United Nations. On February 29, 2024, the annual soft power ranking of 193 UN



member states was announced for the fifth year. According to the new ranking of the Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index, the US and the UK are the most influential countries in the field of soft power. China is the fastest-growing nation brand this year, rising in the ranking from 5th to 3rd. Each country is scored on 55 different indicators on a 100-point scale and is ranked from 1st to 193rd. The growth of China's position shows that its soft power is increasing.

The development of soft power in Chinese politics began at the beginning of the 21st century. In 2004, China's leaders, including former President Hu Jintao, emphasized that China should strive to increase its soft power, and in 2007 the idea of "cultural soft power" entered the mainstream debate. This was the first public declaration of the use of "soft power" in China's foreign policy. Since then, China has been actively trying to develop soft power tools. The emphasis on "global advocacy to gain greater support in the international arena" has increased since the Hu era. President Xi Jinping has invested heavily in "external propaganda" through the media, publishing, education, arts, and sports in order to create a positive image of China around the world.

In recent years, China has significantly increased its influence abroad by using education as a source and instrument of soft power. This has been done by using two main approaches. Firstly, by establishing Chinese educational institutions in different countries of the world. Second, by offering attractive programs and support through scholarships for students from around the world to study at Chinese universities. For this reason, in 2017, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued a formal document stating that the purpose of their education reform initiative at the international level is to make it possible for Chinese soft power to serve the national interest. One of the main Chinese educational instruments, which have an annual value of around \$10 billion, is the establishment and operation of the Confucius Institutes, which operate in around 120 countries around the world through about 500 centers. These institutes are established by the state and their main purpose is to familiarise foreigners with the Chinese ideological approach and its culture by offering them various services such as Mandarin language courses or training in cooking Chinese food, and calligraphy. In the Asian continent, China is the most popular and attractive destination for international students. Most of them come from South Korea, Thailand, Pakistan, USA, Russia and Japan. To attract more foreign students, the Chinese government provides more than 10,000 scholarships to students from countries interested in studying in China through the Silk Road Scholarship Program.

As another form of soft power, the role of mass media is also high. Xinhua, the main government news agency, has 170 foreign bureaus. China Daily and Global Times publish English-language publications around the world. In 2016, CCTV, the state television news service, was broadcast in more than 70 countries. These information resources are currently competing with Western



mass media. Xinhua Agency has become a major news agency in the world. These channels disseminate information that promotes the image of China and restricts the spread of harmful information such as Uyghur politics and human rights violations. This situation can also be seen in social networks. Tiktok platform can be a bright example of this. Tiktok has become the fastest shared and downloaded platform since its launch. Research on Tiktok content has revealed its influence on soft power. The focus on lifestyle makes the platform almost completely de-politicised. For example, no political videos appeared in the researcher's daily scroll through 20 top 'For You' videos. The most political hashtags observed in the 'Discover' section related to humanitarianism rather than geopolitics: they called on users to fight racism in football, care for the planet, and bring attention to global hunger. This aspect enhances China's humanitarian image in the world. Also, an analysis of the top 20 videos under the search terms "Tiananmen Square" and "Xinjiang" showed that the CCP's soft power has been significantly exercised through content moderation. The two search terms were chosen because, while both are sources of conflict between the CCP and the Western world. The TikTok algorithm showed videos supporting the CCP line at the top of the search, despite the lower number of likes and publication dates. A video criticizing the CCP over student protests in 1989 appeared at number 12 with the most likes. The most popular video criticizing the treatment of Muslims in Xinjiang appeared only in the 16th place in the feed. This kind of content modernization is being done in other social networks as well. Through this, China's image in the world is being improved.

What are the potential of "soft power" and the importance of "soft power" in Uzbekistan at present time? It is considered as the time has come to develop a "soft power" strategy in Uzbekistan's foreign policy. Till today there wasn't such strategy. We have the resources, but no mechanism to develop such a power strategy. Until now, Uzbekistan has not fully applied the "soft power" model in foreign policy. Therefore, if we talk about the potential of "soft power", there are several student and teacher exchange programs with the aim of spreading the Uzbek language and culture in Central Asia. Cooperation programs have been established with the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies in Uzbekistan, the Bishkek State University named after K. Karasaeva in Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, which ranks 851 in international rankings, and the National University of Tajikistan. He also established cultural ties with the Azerbaijani state. In 2023, the Center for Uzbek Language and Culture named after Alisher Navoi opened in Azerbaijan. The center runs courses and projects in the Uzbek language and crafts. Uzbekistan's soft power potential is not limited to Central Asian countries, but has also reached countries such as the United States, China, Germany, Russia and Italy. Uzbekistan can show its "soft power" in education, culture, sports, economics, tourism and other areas. Culture, by ensuring of which the regularity of classical music and dance festivals and



concert programs in Uzbekistan. It is possible to promote musical culture more widely by improving the quality and compelling content of Uzbek music and songs and social networks, and creating modern audio programs. It is known to everyone that at present time projects dedicated to the musical traditions of Azerbaijan, an active country in this field, are becoming popular. Tourism, Uzbekistan has its own rich and unique history. This is one of our achievements in the tourism sector. But there are a number of things that need to be done. One of them is the improvement of monuments in Surkhandarya, Navoi, Tashkent regions and other regions, except for the cities of Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva, attracting tourists and creating a comfortable tourist environment.

Conclusion

In the information age, the soft power policy of states is growing more and more. One of them is the growing role of China as a source of soft power. Its advanced economy is developing new instruments of soft power. China's soft power is increasing especially in information, education, culture, technology and humanitarian spheres. Uzbekistan also needs to develop a soft power strategy. All necessary resources are available. Our main soft power is our rich history, culture and cuisine. By developing these areas, we can improve our image in the world.

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