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A New Type of Soft Power: Country Branding

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Abstract

In this article I discuss relationship between soft power and country branding. The term ‘soft power’ was coined in 1990 by Professor Joseph Nye to explain how modern states can use positive attraction and persuasion to achieve global influence. Soft Power is a new type and face of Power. That is based on persuasion, seduction and engages. If you want to affect foreign countries, you must have a good image in foreign audience. In this way you can get some economic and political interest on other countries. Some scholars argue that nation branding and country branding as a new type of public diplomacy. According to recent research, (Soft Power 30 A Global Ranking of Soft Power, Portland Communication 2015; Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index 2015; 2016; 2017) Ranking of Soft Power and Nation Branding show similar results. Countries with soft power are higher in national brand value.

I discuss new soft power strategy some country like China, India, Russia that they called ‘new powers of world order’, ‘rising powers’ or ‘alternative Powers’. And the other perception I will discuss some developed and developing countries. . They want to build ‘attractive country image’ with cultural heritage for tourism and economic growth. And I want to discuss USA and EU that they have a good strategy on soft power and national branding.

Keywords: Country Branding, Soft Power, Smart Power, Soft Power Strategy

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1. Introduction

Soft power and competitive country brand of countries are one of the important components of public diplomacy. Countries with effective country brand can also carry out effective public diplomacy activities. The concept of soft power was first used in 1990 by the American Political Scientist Joseph Nye. In his article, Nye focuses on how America will rebuild the hegemonic power of the unipolar world after the Cold War. The debate has been shaped around the question of 'how power has changed in international relations' (Nye, 1990: 152). According to Nye, the American strength on the world is less than the Second World War, 1970s and 1980s, despite the Soviet threat being lifted from the world (Nye, 1990). In this context, the United States needs a new form of political and powers in international politics to restore global hegemony. For Nye, this is soft power. Soft power is a new and different face of power and it is more effective and useful than hard power (Windsor, 2000: 51). The impact of hard power, based on military and economic power, has not completely disappeared. Smart power has emerged in the age of information and communication, a new kind of power that combines soft and hard power.

Countries have to constantly renew themselves in the global competition. Countries have developed tools and strategies that will make themselves superior to in global competition. The most important of these tools are the country's soft powers and the country's brand. Positive images of the countries provide investment, tourism and security to the countries. In this context, the country brand has become an important tool of soft power. The brand values and soft powers of the countries directly affect each other. Countries with high brand value also have effective soft power at the same time.

2. Soft Power

Better understanding of soft power is necessary to know what the concept of power as a political tool is and what constitutes it. Then we can ask, what is power? According to Nye; "Everyone depends on power and talk about it, but few understand it. Just as farmers and meteorologists try to forecast the weather, political leaders and analysts try to describe and predict changes in power relationships. Power is also like love, easier to experience than to define or measure, but no less real for that" (Nye, 2004: 1).

In general, power means having the capabilities to affect the behavior of others to make those things happen. So more specifically, power is the ability to influence the behaviors of others to get the outcomes one wants (Nye, 2004: 2). But there are several ways to affect the behaviors of others. You can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them into wanting what you want (Nye, 2004: 2). Soft power uses second choice. The ability to affect what other countries want depends to be associated with intangible power sources such as culture, ideology and institutions (Nye, 1990: 167).

Hard power and soft power that interact, reinforce and sometimes overlaps (Pallevier, 2011: 99). There are different understandings about soft power, and particularly, about the relationship between soft and hard power: Soft power is an integral part of hard power, soft power is the "soft" or tactical part of power, soft power is an extension of hard power, soft power is linked with hard power, and can only work with the support of hard power, soft power is independent of hard power.



Hard and Soft Power

	Hard	Soft
Spectrum of behaviors	coercion command ← ● ● → indecent	Agenda setting attraction ● ● → co-opt
Most likely Resources	Force sanctions payment bribes	Institutions values; Culture, policies

Sources: (Nye, 2004: 8).

2.1. Tools of Soft Power

The soft power of a country rests primarily on three sources: Its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority.) (Nye, 2004: 12). Culture contains the whole of the values and practices produced by a society. When a country's culture includes universal values and its policies promote values and interests that others share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes because of the relationships of attraction and duty that it creates. Narrow values and parochial cultures are less likely to produce soft power. The soft power of the United States benefits from the capacity of the United States to produce universal cultural values. According to Nye, American soft power is more than military and economic power (Nye, 2004: 12; Brazanszki, 2005). Some analysts make the mistake of treating soft power simply as popular culture: in other words, they confuse the cultural resources with the behavior of attraction. For instance, historian Niall Ferguson describes soft power as “non-traditional forces, such as cultural and commercial goods” and then dismisses it on the grounds that “it's, well, soft” (Pallewer, 2011: 95). Other sources of soft power is political values. Sometimes countries enjoy political clout that is greater than their military and economic weight would suggest because they “define their national interest to include attractive causes such as economic aid or peacemaking”. For example, in the past two decades Norway-a “marginal” country at the international level-has taken a hand in peace talks in the Philippines, the Balkan, Colombia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka and the Middle East (Pallaver, 2011: 92).

The soft power of the countries has been influenced by the foreign policy of the country. For example, the soft power of the United States in the Middle East and the Islamic world has diminished after the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Likewise, it is possible to say that Russia's policy on Georgia and Ukraine has similar consequences.

Cultural events, exchange programs, broadcasting, or teaching a country's language and promoting the study of a country's culture and society are often seen as tool of soft power. However, these activities do not produce soft power directly. What they can do is promote understanding, nature positive images, and propagate myths in favor of the source country (Vuving, 2009: 13).

The soft power tools of the countries have been significantly influenced by the globalization and the information revolution. Globalization is fueled by the information revelation, which has led to an incredible reduction in the cost of computing and communications. Between 1970 and 2000, the cost of computing dropped by a thousand fold. (Nye, 2004). Volunteering and intercultural exchanges also appear to be another kind of soft power that is increasingly used in today's global politics (Wagner, 2014). The export of higher education and education



is also an important soft power tool. We can see that America uses higher education as an effective soft power element. The cold war was fought with a combination of hard and soft power. Academic and cultural exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union, starting in the 1950s, played a significant role in enhancing American soft power. From 1958 to 1988, 50,000 Russians visited the United States as part of formal exchange programs (Nye, 2006: 14). These students have influenced the political system and social life of the Russians. The output of higher education is long-term and influential. According to Nye, “globalization, the information revolution and democratization are long term trends that are changing the macro context of political and organizational leadership in post-industrial societies. Today successful leaders are using a more integrative and participatory style that places greater emphasis on the soft power of attraction rather than the hard power of command. What was once became more effective for male and female leaders alike. The most important skill for leaders will be contextual intelligence, a broad political skill that allows them successfully to combine hard and soft power into smart power and to choose the right mix of an inspirational and transactional style” (Nye, 2006: 21).

The difficulty in defining the nature of the power has made it unclear about the sources of power. The soft power implies that agenda-setting, value creation and attractiveness do not apply to all events. In this context, the soft and hard power is like two different faces of a coin (Cooper, 2004: 15). For example Military success, which is a typical hard power indicator, can be seen as an attractive element for some people and a pressure element for others. Moral values, a sign of soft power in a similar way, can be seen as persuasion as well as pressure for some people (Vuving, 2009: 6).

2.2. Effect of Soft Power

The effectiveness of hard and soft power approaches depends on the accessibility of power resources. The accessibility of soft power resources though depends much less on the size of a state. As the example of Norway shows, small states have definitely the ability to build soft power (Nye, 2004: 111-112).

It is difficult to measure the effect of soft power. However, various studies have been carried out since 2010 to determine the effect of soft power. The most important of these studies are McClory (2015; 2016; 2017) The Soft Power 30 A Global Ranking of Power, The Soft Power 30 Report Portland, McClory (2010) The New Persuaders: An International Ranking of Soft Power. Institute for Government, Trunkos (2013) What is Soft Power Capability and How Does It Impact Foreign Policy. These studies analyze the effects of a country's soft power with an objective and subjective data.

2.3. Soft Power Strategies

After the Cold War, the global political system has been transformed. In addition to military and economic strength, the soft power values of the countries have also begun to appear as political elements. The United States and western European countries are easily adept at these conditions. For the United States, using soft power as a political element is going to a cold war period. European countries have also adapted their cultural and economic powers to the new process.

Today, these countries are updating and diversifying their soft power sources and strategies. For example, the United States public diplomacy is focused on the internet and information communication technologies. The European Union, on the other hand, positions information



as a political element. The basis of this strategy, which is called ‘infopolitic’, is based on new communication technologies. The EU is a leading intergovernmental organization and its success generates among non-members states the desire to participate in the project of European integration. Based on this promising foundation, the EU’s “soft power derives from its readiness to offer a seat at the decision making table (Cooper, 2004: 179-180). This attractiveness assures peace and safety among European states and the process of EU enlargement further strengthens its position at the global level. Thus, the EU’s soft power is beneficial for its member states as well as for the EU itself (Wagner, 2014). Rising powers Russia, China and India are using soft power tools. underdeveloped countries are weak in the field of soft power and public diplomacy.

The soft power tools and objectives vary depending on the political goals and internal dynamics of each country. Soft power elements can be used to attract tourists and investment or influence public opinion. For example, Japan uses ‘the development model’ as a soft power element. This makes Japan a model for their neighbors. It provides a safer and more comfortable circle around Japan (Cooper, 2004: 5). China, the other country of South East Asian, focuses on strong Chinese economy, cadastral culture and peaceful vision. China’s economic competitor India focuses on developing economy, exotic and extraordinary culture, Bollywood films, Indian music and beliefs (Chanakya IAS Academy, undated). The soft power of China and India is seen as a rival to each other.

Soft power is also used to produce positive images and to eliminate negative images. For example, Russia uses soft power to break the perception of 'authoritarian Russia' (Halidov, 2014: 37).

Countries that do not have great economic and political instincts can also use soft power. Some small countries can use soft power tools effectively. Singapore and Switzerland are good examples. Singapore implements intelligent power strategy in relation to with neighbors. It will not threaten neighbors, but it has enough armies to protect itself (PDK, 2015: 12). Switzerland consolidates its soft power with mediator and neutral country image. Some countries, such as Iran, use political and religious values as soft power elements. (Ahadi, 2013: 116-120).

Another important case is Turkish Soft Power. Soft power of Turkey come from Islamic culture, democracy and secular life style. According to Oğuzlu, Turkey’s soft power is based on the good blending of Islamic culture, democracy, secular lifestyle and European values (Oğuzlu’dan aktaran Öner, 2014: 17). Turkey is a Muslim, democratic and secular country. Together with these elements, the liberal economic structure and political stability have made Turkey attractive. Turkey is a Muslim country and ruled by democracy that this strong side of Turkish soft power. (Çavuş, 2012: 28). These values are particularly attractive for the Middle East (Güneş, 2011).

One of the main reasons for the soft power of Turkey is the fact that Turkey is integrated with the world. Turkey is member of important global institute.

3. Smart Power

Smart power is the new form of power. It is “clever combination of hard and smart power”. Smart power is a new and to a certain extent popular concept, wich was coined by Joseph Nye in the USA and is used to describe a new way of dealing with and managing power. Nye, conceptualizes smart power as something lying somewhere between hard and soft



power, a sort of “third way” in the complex jungle of power relations (Pallever, 2011: 33). Smart power is a third type of power generated by the effective use of soft and hard power elements (CSISS, 2007: 7). In fact like hard and soft power, smart power can “applied generally” in a certain sense. It is, to some extent, another ideal-type form of power (Pallever, 2011: 14). Smart power can be considered an attempt to apply a rational method result in a “winning strategy” (Pallever, 2011:15). Smart power is a concept more suited to the expression of public opinion than for the academic world (Pallever, 2011: 17). In this sense, intelligent power is used to create a winning strategy. The growing interest in smart power reflect two contemporary trends, one structural and long-term, the other short-term and conjectural, driven mainly by the policies of the current administration (Wilson, 2008: 112).

The rise of smart power applications is also related to the positioning of the new world as a smarter, more digital and virtual community. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) published the intelligent power series in 2007. CISS has been developed a three-dimensional strategy for the US Department of Foreign Affairs. This strategy is based on defense, diplomacy and internet technology. It suggest to public relations, digital diplomacy, physical and virtual communication (D. Sonenshine, 2015: 16).

4. Country Branding: As a Tool of soft power

Country branding is making a unique presentation that attracts the target audience with the cultural diversity and richness of an country (Johnstone, 2008: 15). The national brand embodies the common presentation of many elements along with the national identity of the countries. Country brand values are the sum of the original and good aspects of the countries. Country branding in recognition of the need to full three major objectives: to attract tourists, to stimulate inward investment and to boost exports. Nation branding can increase currency stability; help restore international credibility and investor confidence; reverse international ratings downgrades; increase international political influence; stimulate stronger international partnerships and enhance nation building (by nourishing confidence, pride, harmony, ambition, national resolve) (Chernatony, 2008: 16). National branding take some comparative advantages for countries. In a globalized world countries must manage and control their branding if they are to compete effectively with other countries. Nation branding concerns the application of branding and marketing communications techniques to reshape the international opinion of a country. Nation branding is in fact a cross-cultural communication process which very much resembles the advertising process: awareness –attraction–preference. The crucial question is what messages are sent under what circumstances, who received them and how the messages are interpreted (Fan, 2008: 8).

Soft Power and national branding are two closely linked concept. National branding concerns how a nation as a whole presents and represents itself to other nations whereas public diplomacy is a subset of nation branding that focus on the political brand of a nation (Fan, 2008: 19) In light of the discussed arguments, one could assume that nation branding is inextricably linked with public diplomacy under the wider spectrum of the concept of soft power. However, as in contrast to traditional soft power tools such as public diplomacy, it makes explicit use of marketing and public relations techniques to reach its aims. Definitely, a new game in international politics is emerging about image and reputation. Nation branding provides the state a useful soft power approach in order to create its desired international influence in the international arena. Nation branding can be an important tool in the development of a nation’s soft power.



A successful nation branding campaign will help create a more favorable image among the international audience thus further enhancing a country's soft power. Branding a nation is much more than just finding a catching slogan or window-dressing but requires the study of a nation's soft power sources in order to exploit them effectively to promote the national image (Fan, 2008: 17).

5. Conclusion

Today, the structure of the power has changed. The use of soft power is increasing along with maintaining the importance of hard power. In recent times, smart power has emerged, a new face of power. This type of power includes the combination of soft and hard power. Soft power is the more effective and efficient concept in contemporary global politics because of its endurance and sustainability. Hard power, however, is less useful today as the global system changes in its disfavor. In addition to soft power, smart power strategies play an important role in the contemporary international system (Wagner, 2014).

Countries use all tools for competitive advantage in global knowledge age. For this reason, they constantly update their soft, hard and smart power strategies. Along with developed countries, developing countries also use soft and smart power strategies. Each country's soft power strategy varies depending on its objectives and resources. However, recent strategies are progressing with a focus on information and technology.

Country brand value is an important aspect of soft power. All countries want to manage country image on eyes of foreign audience. For this reason countries are leading the well and rich aspect of their countries. But countries cannot be marketed like a product. Brand values of countries consist of historic, sociologic and cultural heritage of countries.

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