

## Soft Power in Action: How Foreign Aid Shapes Global Perceptions and Influences International Relations

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Received 17-10-2024

Revised 19-10-2024

Accepted 30-11-2024

Published 02-12-2024



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### Abstract:

Soft power and foreign aid alter worldwide perceptions and international relations, according to our study. Soft power, according to Joseph Nye, is a nation's ability to achieve its goals by persuasion rather than force or money. Foreign aid boosts donor nations' global image, diplomatic relations, and culture, according to this study. Effective overseas help can transform donor nations' views, it claims. State aid can build goodwill, confidence, and dependencies that promote recipient countries' goals. Case studies suggest that foreign aid boosts soft power in the US and China. This study examines how foreign aid boosts soft power. It promotes worldwide public diplomacy to achieve national interests. The donor nation's legitimacy and morality affect these methods' efficacy. Altruistic global humanitarian aid boosts soft power, but self-interested or conditional aid may damage it. This study addresses soft power foreign aid limits. It persuades, but its effects are indirect and incremental, making instant results difficult to judge. Authoritarian regimes effect international relations. These countries may weaken soft power via disinformation or propaganda. This research shows how complex foreign aid is as a soft power tactic in modern geopolitics. It examines how help affects global perceptions and international relations to show how governments might use aid to gain power in a changing world. For lasting relationships and diplomatic aims, states using soft power through overseas aid must promote sincere involvement and cultural exchange. This research enhances soft power and international development discourse, allowing nations to influence the world using foreign aid.

**Keyword:** Soft power, foreign aid, international relations, the US, China

### Introduction:

Since the dawn of humanity, people have endured the devastating impact of conflict. There is a widespread belief that violence is an inherent part of our genetic makeup, comparable to basic biological needs such as eating and sleeping, but in this instance, it is an unbearable biological urge (Pinker, 2011). Even more unfortunate is the widespread notion held by a dominating perspective in international politics that argues that violence is the solution to our problems

(referred to as Realism). Realists prioritize the survival instinct above all else, making the threat of violence the most powerful deterrent to war. Paradoxically, according to this perspective, peace can only be achieved through battle, thereby requiring humanity to rely on their most basic instincts for survival. In the era of nuclear weapons, we have significantly increased the level of danger that poses a risk of complete destruction to the entire world. Presumably, this Mutual Assured

Destruction (MAD) scenario should instill fear and caution in any rational leader when considering the use of extensive military force. We sincerely desire this to be accurate. Therefore, our expectations rely on the capacity of leaders to cooperate and handle their responsibilities effectively. Undoubtedly, humans have the capacity to improve and should not rely on tactics that encourage our most admirable qualities (collaboration and mutual regard) by means of our most basic instincts (intimidation and conflict). It is challenging for a rational individual to envision achieving a state of sustainable coexistence when faced with the imminent threat of global destruction. Throughout history, nations have often pursued their existence by relying on primal drives such as military might, territorial expansion, imperialism, and dominance. Therefore, they have equated national influence with the resources necessary to sustain a military force. They can only achieve security by having the ability to impose punishment. This ability to impose punishment is reinforced by what we can refer to as hard power.

Fortunately, in a completely opposite context, the concept of soft power has provided us with a pathway towards a more promising future for both humanity and the planet. Soft power seeks alternate avenues to exert influence on global issues. Security cannot be achieved by our most negative actions, motives, and resources associated to war. Instead, it is attained through qualities and behaviors rooted in a friendlier and more sociable stance. Great visionaries have long held the expectation that diplomacy would play a crucial role in rescuing us from power politics. However, soft power has proven that there are crucial prerequisites for diplomacy to operate efficiently. Therefore, the visionaries were focusing on addressing the symptom rather than addressing the underlying cause. Soft power is a driving force in diplomacy and is closely linked to almost all positive and forward-thinking approaches in handling international relations. Soft power refers to the ability to influence and acquire the admiration or support of other nations. Put simply, it means being seen as a positive example or

earning the respect and trust of other countries. Realists anticipated that other nations would reluctantly comply and cooperate, if necessary, through more forceful methods. Soft power is perceived as a mechanism that fosters collaboration and adherence in a more harmonious setting. Although states can achieve their foreign policy objectives through the use of force, they also have alternative resources that enable them to address their requirements with less hostility and opposition. Historical evidence consistently shows that the utilization of force has proven to be ineffective and even harmful for the nations employing it (Walsh, 2021).

The concept of soft power has provided us with a superior approach. The concept of soft power took a while to develop, but its delayed emergence can be attributed to the fact that it disregarded fundamental principles of power analysis in the fields of political philosophy and international politics. It actually embodies blatant heresy in this regard. The term originated from Joseph Nye's ongoing scholarly focus on neoliberal research. In the realm of global affairs, the emergence of complex interconnectedness has resulted in a shift in the nature of power, making it less forceful, more interchangeable, and less palpable (Joseph S. Nye, 1990). Soft power refers to a diplomatic approach that allows a nation to achieve its foreign policy objectives without resorting to conflict. The field of international politics has historically been dominated by a Realist worldview, which equates power with real resources. These resources, such as military might, wealth, and natural resources, are seen as means to enforce conformity, also known as hard power. The notion that states may prioritize their interests through the use of soft power contradicted two fundamental assumptions in the Realist perspective: firstly, that nations should primarily depend on the use of force for their security, and secondly, that there is a constant clash of interests among nations. Soft power fosters obedience by achieving results without resorting to violence and with few conflicting interests. Soft power arises from the admiration, reverence, and regard that nations with particular attributes

receive. Soft power is predominantly characterized by its ethereal nature. Realism views any intangible limitations on security risks as entirely unreliable. The Realist vision is characterized by its strong emphasis on material capabilities as the primary determinant of national security. Although intangible constraints like as laws, conventions, and goodwill may have some utility, they should not be given primary importance in a nation's arsenal of power. Moreover, Realism adopts a perspective on international politics that prioritizes the interests and actions of nation-states and is based on logical reasoning. Realists prioritize power politics among states, therefore, they assign less importance to other kinds of influence that arise from the broader demographic of civil society. However, a significant number of the mechanisms by which soft power functions occur specifically within this particular demographic and are influenced by non-rational ideational processes. Moreover, Realists never held power in a situation where national interests coincided. Power has consistently been significant in situations involving conflict and confrontation. In addition, Realism's inclination towards positivism in terms of knowledge made any process that could not be quantitatively evaluated (such as soft power resources) questionable (Chas, 2023).

The concept of soft power was delayed in its development due to many factors. Disregarded fundamental principles of power analysis in the fields of political philosophy and international politics. It actually embodies clear heresy in this regard. The term originated from Joseph Nye's ongoing scholarly focus on neoliberal research. The emergence of intricate interdependence in global politics has resulted in a shift in the nature of power, making it less coercive, more interchangeable, and less palpable. Soft power refers to a diplomatic approach that allows a nation to achieve its foreign policy objectives without resorting to conflict. The field of international politics has been primarily influenced by the Realist paradigm, which has equated power with actual resources. These resources, such as military might, wealth, and natural resources, are seen as

means to enforce conformity, also known as hard power. The concept of nations prioritizing their interests through soft power contradicted two fundamental assumptions in the Realist perspective: firstly, that states should primarily depend on the use of force for their security, and secondly, that there is a constant clash of interests among nations. Soft power fosters obedience by achieving results without resorting to violence and with few conflicting interests. Soft power arises from the admiration, reverence, and regard that nations with particular attributes receive. Soft power is predominantly characterized by its ethereal nature. Realism views any intangible limitations on security threats as entirely untrustworthy. The Realist vision is characterized by its strong emphasis on material capabilities as the ultimate determinant of national security. Although intangible constraints such as laws, conventions, and goodwill can be beneficial, they should not hold a primary position in a nation's arsenal of power. Moreover, Realism adopts a perspective on international politics that prioritizes the role of states and emphasizes logical decision-making. Realists prioritize power politics among states and hence assign less importance to other types of influence that arise from the broader demographic of civil society. However, numerous mechanisms by which soft power functions occur specifically within this particular demographic and are influenced by non-rational ideational processes. Additionally, Realists never perceived power as being evident in a situation in which there was a convergence of national interests. Power has consistently been significant in situations involving conflict and confrontation. In addition, Realism's inclination towards positivism in terms of epistemology raised doubts about any process that could not be quantitatively evaluated, such as soft power resources (Khanna, 2019).

Regarding the subfield of political science that examines power, known as political theory, there has been a tendency to overlook a significant topic from the realm of international politics. The concept of soft power originated within the framework of state power and global politics, while

political theorists mostly focused on regional and conceptual levels. They found it difficult to apply it to the specific units relevant to international affairs. Furthermore, the concept of soft power contradicted the traditional framework of conflicts of interests, as well as the established field of international politics scholarship, which was based on the study of political power theory. Soft power is a mechanism via which nations who are being targeted develop a desire for what the soft power represents, by generating good emotions, the desires of the nation.

Traditionally, the study of political philosophy and sociology has asserted that power is the ability to compel someone to do something against their will. The notion of soft power is additionally incongruous with Dahl's requirement of temporal disjuncture (Dahl, 1957). According to Dahl and following scholarly work on power, every instance of a power dynamic may be understood as a sequence of stimulus and reaction. In this process, a cue or extraction event occurs first, followed by compliance from the target actor. The lack of uniformity in the temporal sequence was a cause of concern for traditional academics. If there was a significant delay in the response, the impact of the power would be unpredictable. The trajectory of soft power can be highly unpredictable. Encouraging obedience does not produce a sense of urgency to take action, resulting in delays in responding to gentle persuasive influences. Once a pleasant affect is generated, compliance or accommodations may occur spontaneously, without any external stimulation. Often, there is no deliberate initiation of stimuli in several instances. Therefore, the correlation between cause and effect in a soft power connection will be unpredictable and inconsistent.

The emergence of soft power in the realm of international studies was the outcome of the intersection of academic tendencies and historical events. From the 1970s onwards, ideologies like neoliberalism and constructivism started to question the dominant position of Realism in the field of study. This academic trend emerged as a direct result of significant changes in the nature of

global politics. Their conceptions of action based on norms, cooperation, and economic exchange emerged as a feasible alternative to the bleaker notions of war and chaos. Soft power emerged in the new liturgy as an additional benign element that contributes to a more organized and peaceful coexistence in the international political sphere. These historical changes resulted in a more gentle and lenient society, and academic research tracked the course of these occurrences. Initially, increased economic integration reduced security threats by effectively creating captives across borders. The increased economic interconnectedness among nations dramatically amplified the social and economic consequences of conflict and disputes. Moreover, the interdependence was further intensified by the rapid pace of globalization, resulting in stronger and faster connections between cultures and economies. Consequently, this increased the potential vulnerability to shocks in international relations. Furthermore, the nuclear standoff mitigated the security issue by reducing the potential for escalation in war, hence decreasing the amount of threat faced by the globe. Furthermore, the expansion of democratization has contributed to increased security by promoting the democratic peace process, which limits the use of force in resolving international conflicts.

Furthermore, during this century, there was a significant rise of an international governmental super-structure (comprising international organizations and regimes) that prioritized non-violent means of resolving conflicts over the use of force. Ultimately, the increasing importance of economic prosperity as a political concern, often known as the emergence of a state that prioritizes economic protection, has made leaders increasingly hesitant to incur the significant expenses associated with military action. As a result, they have adopted a more passive approach in their foreign policy decisions (Frieden, 2020).

The concept of soft power has not been adequately explored in theory, as explained above. Furthermore, Realist researchers and political theorists have shown a lack of attention and disregard for the notion, resulting in a scarcity of

serious analysis and formal modeling. Several existing categories of power analysis have been suspended. The concept of structural meta-power is more extensively developed and therefore provides a more valuable theoretical framework for comprehending the process of soft influence. Meta-power, as a phenomenon in social relations, suggests that social interactions are ingrained in larger structures that dictate the overall direction of those interactions. The determination of which individuals possess power and the extent of their authority cannot be achieved solely by assessing the outcomes of direct competitions. Direct encounters yield limited information. The dominant power dynamics are shaped by the influential forces that establish the boundaries of the competition. In a game or contest, the outcome of the direct competition does not provide much insight into who holds power within the game. The true power lies with the entity that determines the rules and nature of the game. In the widely accepted framework of power, known as the faces or dimensions of power, meta-power is evident in the last three faces, where underlying power dynamics are at play (Ohnesorge, 2021, Lukes, 2005). Gramsci study on hegemony is a widely recognized example of how capitalism exerts its dominant influence (Gramsci, 1988). According to his perspective, capitalism has justified its existence by establishing institutions that have reinforced the power of a social and economic ranking system. Contests between classes take place inside formal organizations, such as the state and the law, which safeguard the interests of the dominant classes in society. Lukes argues that social relations occur within larger power structures that establish the boundaries for direct conflicts between competing individuals or groups (Lukes, 2005).

Their appeal as a role model for their own activities, policies, guiding ideas, and lifestyles. The ways in which nations demonstrate their admiration might vary greatly. Their high regard for others may result in increased cooperation with states that rely on soft power. It could inspire inhabitants of such countries to purchase a greater

quantity of goods from these influential nations. Alternatively, it might potentially foster the direct imitation of political and economic structures employed by influential nations with significant soft power. The effect of soft power states is clearly evident and substantial. These nations operate within a framework where they have both direct and indirect control over the attitudes and behaviors of citizens and government officials. Ultimately, the foreign relations of states that rely on soft power are deeply rooted in their traditions, institutions, and belief systems, which are closely aligned with their most important objectives. The outcomes of direct battles between states on the soft-power scale provide limited information about their relative power endowments. For instance, countries that have adopted a neoliberal foreign economic policy may have a disagreement with a nation like the U.S. regarding indirect investment. However, this divide will still be within the context of relatively open capital markets. The argument will revolve around the extent of regulation rather than the presence of regulation. On the other hand, soft power differs significantly from most forms of meta-power in that it has a weaker foundation in conflicts of interests. Traditional power theories, in their several forms, have a strong foundation in situations with clear conflicts of interests. Indeed, the concept of power is typically perceived as significant primarily within such situations. Power plays do not occur when nations do not engage in conflicts based on opposing preferences. In the context of soft power, preferences and interests are there, but they tend to align more closely compared to conventional approaches to power. When compared to traditional notions of power, soft power is more capable of causing cognitive transformation.

However, the correlation between interests and subsequent behaviors and policy dispositions can be intricate. Interests might vary in their degree of convergence. Affect can show in various configurations of interests. At a more basic level of emotional influence, countries may hold high regard or admiration for nations with soft power, but they may not necessarily align with their beliefs

or goals in terms of international affairs. Deferential behavior in this context would be influenced by an emotion that is not a result of assimilation. At a more advanced degree of emotional influence, such as absorption, the emotional influence could also be expressed as respectful behavior. However, in this particular situation, the deferential behavior arises from shared goals or purposes. Therefore, behaviors and policy dispositions may not always align with comparable structures of interests. Compliant nations may choose to prioritize the preferences of a soft power nation as a sign of respect, even if they may not necessarily share the same objectives. This could include making diplomatic concessions that they consider to be expensive. However, complying activities could also arise from a convergence of interests, such as agreements among liberal states with a common goal of promoting free trade. Therefore, it is necessary to thoroughly assess and contextualize the connection between interests, goals, policies, and actions. In addition, the capacity of soft power to foster increased alignment of interests creates the possibility for mutual benefits, which contradicts the classic power theory's view of a situation where one party's gain is another party's loss. Attaining mutual advantages is easier when both sets of nations assess outcomes using a same framework of preferences, resulting in reduced contention. However, it is important to note that although if respect and shared interests can result in positive outcomes, soft power can also have negative consequences. The rulers of early modern Europe were in complete agreement over the imperative to exert dominance over the Continent, which therefore resulted in large-scale conflicts. Likewise, the admiration gained from military strength could result in harmful policies.

The lack of theoretical development has led to a misunderstanding of soft power. Several difficulties are apparent. Soft power does not exclusively originate from intangible sources. Many people believe that the distinction between hard and soft power is evident in the tangibility of the resources involved. Hard power relies on

tangible resources, whereas soft power relies on intangible resources. Contrary to that statement, the two sets of power intersect and influence each other. They are not mutually independent. Hard power has the ability to create soft power, and vice versa. Providing tangible resources, such as help, to nations can greatly enhance their reputation. Likewise, respect can be used to gain more military strength, such as obtaining permission to use airspace. Occasionally, highly esteemed military vehicles have served as significant generators of soft power, specifically referring to the public diplomacy efforts conducted by American foreign military outposts. The intricate coexistence of nations is exemplified by the strong correlation between hard and soft power, as indicated by international power metrics. It is observed that nations with significant hard power capabilities also possess substantial soft power influence. This correlation has prompted academic literature and policy discussions to shift towards the concept of smart or cosmopolitan power. The policy community has started to lean towards a preference for a balanced combination of hard and soft power as a normative direction. (Nye, 2004, Gallarotti, 2010b, III, 2008)

Furthermore, the combination of respect and the alignment of interests and objectives, which are the key elements that generate soft power, might have negative implications when assessed based on a liberal normative standard. Admiration might potentially drive followers towards authoritarian or undemocratic outcomes. The erroneous application of the broader principles of soft power only to liberal results has resulted in a foreseeable state of confusion. There are certain role models that are considered less acceptable when it comes to inspiring loyalty and imitation through positive emotions. Authoritarian countries can wield substantial influence if other nations highly value their policy visions and actions. In recent times, there has been an increasing group of dictators who participate in self-praising language and imitate each other by emphasizing power, suppressing their own people, and promoting nationalism. This has disrupted international relations by introducing

a contagious form of expansionism, disdain, paranoia, limitations on civil rights, and xenophobia into the global system. Hearts and minds have been captivated, but their focus has been directed towards extremely illiberal goals. The concept of acute power has arisen within this theoretical framework. Sharp power refers to the use of disinformation campaigns by authoritarian countries or questionable individuals to improve their reputation in specific countries. The neologism is logically misapplied as it incorrectly combines the procedure with the attribution of the moral character of the outcomes. The manifestation of sharp power follows the same process as soft power, as both aim to improve the reputation of the nations or people involved. It has been differentiated from soft power due to alleged malicious intentions and morally questionable role models. However, it is important to note that the process of creating positive emotions does not necessarily result in favorable consequences (Nye, 2018, Liu, 2018)

A significant amount of opposition to soft power arises from the Realist faction, which remains the prevailing framework in the field of international politics. Realists consider soft power to be an epiphenomenon. Indeed, it is seen as having a rather low influence. The argument presented is that the utilization of soft power resources and techniques results in minimal benefits in terms of influence (Ofitserov-Belskiy, 2024) Realists, who are primarily concerned with the consequences of anarchy, view force as the ultimate determinant of international relations. In a self-help system, only hard power resources are certain to be useful. For example, diplomatic efforts may not deter an invasion, but military systems are guaranteed to cause harm to an aggressor. Hard and soft power resources can be conceptualized as investments in assets that have varying levels of risk and potential return (Gallarotti, 2010a). Due to the inherent nature of soft power, which aims to foster compliance or influence, the resulting impact is expected to be rather moderate as there is no immediate need to adhere to gentle approaches. However, the potential drawbacks of implementing

soft techniques and instruments will be limited due to the reduced likelihood of receiving negative reactions from the countries being targeted. Utilizing hard-power methods such as threats and force to ensure compliance might result in larger benefits, particularly in the short term, due to the sense of urgency it creates. However, there is also a far higher danger of bad consequences and feedback. Put simply, employing forceful methods to obtain obedience may result in counterproductive results. Soft power is perceived in a more favorable manner than Realists due to the consequences that arise from it.

This falls into the category of severe disempowerment. Hard disempowerment refers to a situation where the application of forceful tactics is ineffective and ultimately leads to failure. While it is true that using aggressive tactics such as violence can lead to immediate improvements in compliance, it is important to consider the potential consequences. The use of force may result in the formation of opposing forces from the target and other nations, which could ultimately undermine any long-term gains in terms of influence. Therefore, activities or techniques that were meant to enhance actually ended up undermining a nation. Countries that become vulnerable to such situations are frequently exploited by what I have termed as power illusion: the inclination to assess benefits according to the potential for extracting nominal compliance. Leaders often fail to fully comprehend the overall effects of activating their authority in terms of influence. The net results refer to all the outcomes that encompass the repercussions of the reactions from both target and third-party nations.

The notion of hard disempowerment is based on the principles of complexity and the impacts of the system (Jervis, 1997). The international system, similar to any other social or physical system, is characterized by its intricacy in terms of the interactions between its components. Interactions within the system are closely connected, so that actions can have a ripple effect and produce extensive and intricate outcomes, often known as feedback. Occasionally, the outcomes are straightforward and can be determined, but for the

most part, they are complex and challenging to comprehend. In such instances, minor alterations in the starting conditions might have a ripple effect, leading to significant changes in overall outcomes. Therefore, soft power can actually result in limited benefits. However, in a complex system, even little gains at a certain point in time might create a very positive effect in the future. The intricate nature of the system makes even minor actions meaningful. Therefore, the initial activities' nominal size does not accurately reflect their ultimate systemic influence.

Does foreign aid effectively serve as a means of exerting soft power? Does it create a sense of connection towards the countries that provide donations and the values they promote? What impact, if any, does it have on the way people perceive the geopolitical adversaries of the donors? Despite the widespread use of aid as a means to enhance international influence, there is a surprising lack of research on these specific concerns. Donors expend vast sums of money.

Each year, a significant amount of financial assistance is provided to the world's most impoverished nations. Apart from its commercial and development goals, aid is marketed and endorsed with the intention of garnering support for the donor country among recipient communities, and disseminating political values that align with the donor's perspective. Over time, foreign aid can influence recipient communities to become more open to the foreign policy objectives of the donor, to the extent that they align their own interests with those of the donor, as Nye famously described as soft power (Nye, 2004).

Individuals residing in recipient nations must initially encounter programs financed by donors, either through direct involvement as beneficiaries or indirectly through media or word of mouth. It is crucial for people to correctly credit these projects to the specific donor that provided the funding. Recipients who perceive benefits from these projects may revise their past beliefs to become more favorable towards the donor country. In addition to the rise in "positive affect" towards donors (Eunji Kim, 2023). Aid can also lead to a

significant change in how recipients perceive the types of government and development that donors espouse, such as liberal democracy or free market capitalism (Philip A. Atitianti, 2023).

According to the data released by the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, trade volumes between China and Central Asian countries have significantly risen, establishing China as a crucial trading partner for Central Asia (2023b). The trade volume between China and the countries of Central Asia in 2022 surpassed 70 billion United States dollars, setting a new high. By the end of 2022, a grand total of 65,000 China-Europe freight trains had effectively transported more than 6 million twenty-foot equivalent units of goods, amounting to an approximate value of 300 billion dollars. Around 80 percent of all trips were conducted via Central Asia (2023a). While Central Asia may not be highly ranked among China's total economic partners, it has the most prominent position as a commercial partner for the region (Muratbekova, 2023). China's economic growth has led to a steady rise in its influence in Central Asia (Zogg, 2019).

Although previous research analyzed aid as a tool of hard power (Axel Dreher, 2008, Ilyana Kuziemko, 2006, Allison Carnegie, 2017), for example; focusing on whether aid influences recipient governments to align their voting behavior with the donor country in the UN General Assembly, this body of literature has largely neglected the significance of shaping the opinions and beliefs of recipient populations.

Nye contends that public support, as manifested through polls and other methods, serves as a pivotal gauge of a nation's soft power (Nye, 2004). This demonstrates the correlation between a country's perceived attractiveness and the financial burdens associated with unpopular policies. The level of attractiveness, or lack thereof, can impact a country's capacity to achieve desired goals on the global stage.

Aid has the potential to significantly strengthen soft power, particularly at the individual level, since it can be seen as a manifestation of the donor



country's ideals among the residents of the recipient countries. This, in turn, contributes to the enhancement of the donor's soft power. Soft power is more prominent at the individual level in comparison to hard power. Aid can foster support and alignment by captivating others and instilling in them a desire for the same objectives as the donor country, which is a fundamental element of soft power (Yu Bai, 2022) (Roongsangjun, 2023) (Lancaster, 2000).

Presently, the impact of power on individuals in society may not be as pronounced as it was in the past. However, it still relies on the extent to which a person's willingness indirectly influences others to engage in certain actions or pursue particular desires. Nevertheless, controlling soft power proves challenging due to the absence of a definitive method to determine whether an individual has the same viewpoint as others. Additionally, the outcomes of soft power initiatives may not manifest immediately, as certain benefits may take years to materialize. Effectively using soft power necessitates a certain level of ability. Regardless of your desire to apply or not, it is possible to submit an application. Importantly, in order to establish soft power and attract others to recognize its value, a specific minimum investment is necessary. Soft power, although sometimes perceived as a form of outreach, has a more immediate impact than one may realize. It subtly influences the views and attitudes of individuals, even without their conscious awareness. Thus, it may be necessary to utilize soft power to enhance the country's development and foster society through infrastructure development. This entails establishing creative ecosystems that nurture young creatives in open experimental spaces, showcasing their works, implementing supportive legal measures that facilitate business operations, harnessing the potential of intellectual property, and creating new market prospects. Additionally, it is crucial for the government to prioritize these efforts and pay heed to behavioral research and the perceptions of foreign consumers. The promotion and formulation of this plan are done actively and regularly, with the use of defined roadmaps and

instructions. When implementing soft power from the government, it is crucial to avoid coercion by the state and instead rely on subtle persuasion through perception, allowing individuals to form their own feelings and beliefs. An example of perception as opinions is when someone says, "This is interesting." I desire to encounter a similar sensation. It should not be challenging as the government established the objective from the outset, which is to promote the adoption of soft power for the purpose of advancing the country and society. This would result in the generation of substantial revenue for the nation and unparalleled tangible progress in society (Roongsangjun, 2023).

Foreign aid proved to be a highly effective instrument of U.S. diplomacy in the latter part of the 20th century. It effectively curbed the spread of communism in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, fostered economic and social progress in those areas, and sent humanitarian aid during crises. The 1990s witnessed a significant transformation. The Cold War concluded with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The process of globalization gained momentum as advancements in communication technologies diminished obstacles to worldwide trade and investment (Lancaster, 2000).

Effective targeting of democratic assistance can enhance the process of democratization. However, the involvement of authoritarian donors might erode public backing for democracy in the nations receiving such assistance. The effectiveness of aid is contingent upon the political circumstances prevailing in the receiving country and the methodologies employed by the contributing parties (Rachel M. Gisselquist, 2021, Gafuri, 2022, SZENT-IVÁNYI, 2015).

A significant portion of the existing literature has primarily examined the question of whether foreign aid reduces the level of support that citizens have for their own governments. The influence of aid on the level of support citizens have for donor countries is potentially as significant, however it has received limited research attention (Tobias Heinrich, 2019, Philip Akrofi Atitianti, 2023).

The analysis of soft power's role in molding global views and affecting international relations reveals its growing significance in modern diplomacy. Soft power, as defined by Joseph Nye, refers to the capacity to attract and influence rather than to compel, utilizing cultural allure, political principles, and diplomatic policies that are favorably received by other countries. This stands in stark contrast to hard power, which frequently utilizes military or economic force to attain desired objectives.

The efficacy of soft power resides in its ability to cultivate voluntary collaboration among states. In contrast to hard power, which elicits cooperation by coercion or incentives, soft power fosters a feeling of common ideals and reciprocal respect. This dynamic is especially important in a time when global challenges—such as climate change, terrorism, and public health crises—require collaborative solutions instead of unilateral ones. Countries that effectively utilize soft power not only elevate their global status but also forge enduring alliances grounded in trust and mutual interests.

Furthermore, the interaction between soft and hard power—commonly known as smart power—highlights the importance of a balanced strategy in foreign policy. Although hard power might yield prompt outcomes, its long-term viability is frequently scrutinized in a swiftly evolving global environment. Conversely, soft power measures often produce lasting effect, as they generate goodwill and promote favorable attitudes that can be utilized in subsequent diplomatic interactions.

In conclusion, as countries traverse a more interconnected world, the strategic use of soft power will be essential for those aiming to augment their global influence. By emphasizing cultural interchange, humanitarian assistance, and diplomatic interaction, nations can adeptly influence global opinions and fulfill their foreign policy aims without the disadvantages linked to forceful methods. The continuous evolution of international relations is expected to render soft

power increasingly vital in promoting cooperation and collectively tackling global concerns.

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