

PERSUASION RATHER THAN COERCION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTS OF SOFT POWER AND HARD POWER

Mirzaolimova Zilola

1st-year student of the “International Relations” program,
International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

Qolqanov Nuriddin

Associate Professor of the “International Scientific Supervisor:
Relations” Department at the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan,
Doctor of Political Sciences (PhD)

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20154628>

Abstract: This article scientifically analyzes the essence and significance of the concepts of “soft power” and “hard power,” which are widely used in the system of international relations. The study highlights the methods through which states exercise influence in the international arena, as well as their distinctive and similar features. It reveals how hard power is manifested through military force, economic pressure, and political coercion, while soft power exerts influence through culture, education, diplomacy, science, and national values. In addition, the practical manifestations of soft power policy are analyzed through the examples of the United States and China. The article substantiates that the role of soft power in increasing the international prestige of states is steadily growing under modern globalization conditions. At the same time, it is emphasized that achieving stable results in international politics solely through hard power is becoming increasingly difficult, and states are turning toward a “smart power” strategy based on the combination of hard and soft power.

Key words: Soft power, hard power, smart power, international relations, diplomacy, globalization, state power, political influence, cultural influence, economic pressure, military force, international prestige, Joseph Nye, foreign policy.

States use various methods in international relations to protect their interests and expand their sphere of influence. Among the most well-known are the concepts of “hard power” and “soft power.” Hard power refers to exerting influence through force or coercion, while soft power means influencing through persuasion, culture, values, and diplomacy. In the modern world, the success of states often depends on how effectively they use these two forms of power. Today, the system of international relations is undergoing fundamental changes, and competition and cooperation among states are reaching a new stage. As a result of globalization processes, the rapid development of information technologies, and the strengthening of interstate integration, the methods by which countries exert influence in the international arena are becoming increasingly diverse. Whereas state power was previously assessed mainly through military strength and economic potential, today influence through culture, education, science, diplomacy, and national values has also become an important factor. Therefore, the concepts of “soft power” and “hard power” have gained particular scientific significance in political science and international relations.

Hard power is the use of military force, economic pressure, sanctions, or political coercion by a state to achieve its interests. This method has been widely used throughout history by many states and demonstrates the state’s firm strength in foreign policy. In particular, hard power serves as an important tool in wars, armed conflicts, economic blockades, and geopolitical confrontations. However, in the modern world, achieving stable influence solely through the use of force is becoming increasingly difficult. This is because greater attention is

being paid in the international community to the principles of human rights, democracy, peace, and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Soft power, on the other hand, refers to a state's ability to attract and influence other countries and peoples without coercion, but through its culture, values, political system, science, and diplomatic potential. This concept was introduced into scientific discourse by the American political scientist Joseph Nye, who considered it an important tool for increasing state prestige in modern international relations. Today, developed countries influence the global public through their universities, cultural centers, film industries, mass media, internet platforms, and international grant programs. This further increases the role of soft power in international politics.

At present, states strive to use hard power and soft power together in conducting their foreign policy. Since it is difficult to achieve long-term political goals solely through military or economic power, and impossible to solve all problems only through cultural and diplomatic influence, the principle of "smart power" – the combination of hard and soft power capabilities – has become widely used in international relations. This approach plays an important role in strengthening states' positions in global political processes, protecting national interests, and increasing international prestige.

Soft Power is a popular scientific work written by the American political scientist and former dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, Joseph Nye. Before writing the book, Joseph Nye became famous for introducing the concept of "soft power" in the 1990s. Soft power refers to a country's ability to influence others through non-coercive means such as culture, values, and policies. This differs from hard power, which relies on military and economic strength to achieve influence. According to Nye, soft power is a crucial aspect of international relations in the modern world.

Today, in relations among states, not only military or economic power but also influence through culture, education, and diplomacy has become highly important. Therefore, the concept of "soft power" is widely used in the system of international relations. Soft power is a state's ability to influence other countries without pressure or coercion, but through its culture, values, science, and policies. In the era of globalization, this method is considered an important tool for increasing a state's prestige in the international arena. There are a number of developed and developing countries, as well as major power centers (such as the United States and China), that have effectively used their "soft power" to this day, and one of them is the United States of America. Of course, the United States has a long historical and unique experience in this regard.

For example, after World War II, the "Four Freedoms" idea put forward by Franklin D. Roosevelt had a great influence on the minds of peoples around the world. As a result of this idea, European youth behind the "Iron Curtain" became interested in listening to American music and news through Radio Free Europe. Likewise, during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, Chinese students created a statue modeled after the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of protest. In 2001, citizens of Afghanistan expressed a desire to obtain copies of the American Constitution's "Bill of Rights." Even today, despite various restrictions, Iranian youth continue to watch American films and video products. Such cases are vivid examples of the effective "soft power" policy of the United States in the international arena.

Soft power is mainly manifested through culture, education, art, mass media, and diplomatic relations. Some states achieve popularity among the world's youth through their

film industries, music, prestigious universities, or advanced technologies. As a result, people in other countries begin to develop a positive attitude toward the values and policies of those states. This contributes to the expansion of the state's international prestige and sphere of influence.

Science also occupies a special place as one of the important tools of soft power. In particular, China pays great attention to expanding its influence through science and education. China's soft power policy in Africa can clearly be observed in its cooperation with Egypt. Egypt is geographically an important region connecting Africa and the Middle East, while the Suez Canal is a strategic waterway linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. In addition, Egypt's large consumer market is of great importance to China. Although the establishment of the Confucius Institute was initially aimed at promoting Chinese language and culture, in practice it is regarded as a vivid example of China effectively implementing its soft power policy.

Today, the use of soft power is becoming an important direction of state foreign policy. This is because, in the modern world, achieving goals through cooperation and mutual trust is considered more effective than through war and the use of force. Especially with the development of the internet and social networks, the cultural influence of states is expanding even further. Therefore, many countries are paying great attention to promoting their national culture and values to the world.

Hard Power refers to a state's ability to influence the behavior or interests of other political entities through the use of military and economic capacity. It includes coercive measures such as the use of force, threats, economic sanctions, or bribery. In today's system of international relations, the power and influence of states are manifested through various means. One of these means is "hard power." Hard power is the use of military force, economic pressure, or political coercion by a state to achieve its interests. This method has long been used in international politics and is considered one of the main factors demonstrating state power.

Hard and soft power sometimes complement each other. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy continued nuclear testing despite negative poll results because he was concerned about global perceptions of the Soviet Union's success in the arms race. In this regard, Kennedy was even prepared to sacrifice some of America's "soft" prestige in exchange for strengthening military prestige.

In conclusion, in today's modern system of international relations, hard power remains one of the most important tools of state influence. States widely use military, economic, and political capabilities to protect their national interests, ensure security, and strengthen their position in the international arena. Especially in the current period of intensifying geopolitical competition, hard power occupies an important place in the foreign policy of many states. A strong army, economic stability, and political strength are among the main factors that increase a state's influence in the international arena.

At the same time, hard power also plays a major role in maintaining international security and protecting state sovereignty. Every state seeks to possess sufficient military and economic capacity to defend its territorial integrity and national interests. This is because modern political conflicts, armed confrontations, and economic rivalries require states to pursue strong policies. Therefore, many countries pay great attention to developing defense systems, introducing modern technologies, and strengthening economic power.

However, achieving long-term results solely through hard power is not always effective in international relations. The use of force may increase distrust among states, lead to conflicts, and negatively affect international stability. Therefore, in modern politics, states seek to use not only hard power but also methods based on diplomacy, culture, and cooperation. This contributes to maintaining balance in international relations and strengthening ties among states.

In general, hard power is an important manifestation of state power and serves as a significant strategic tool in international politics. A state's military and economic potential are among the main factors determining its prestige in the international arena. At the same time, in the modern world, states should strive to develop peaceful cooperation and diplomatic relations alongside the use of force. Only in this way can international stability be ensured and mutually beneficial relations among states be developed.

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