Fall September 17, 2016

The BRICS and Soft Power-An Introduction

Giulio M Gallarotti
Mathilde Chatin

The BRICS and Soft Power: An Introduction

Mathilde Chatin

and

Giulio M. Gallarotti

Professor of Government

Wesleyan University

Department of Government

John Andrus Center for Public Affairs

Church Street

Middletown, CT 05459

ggallarotti@wesleyan.edu

860-345-3493

860-539-3997

Analysing the BRICS through a soft power prism[1]

This special issue marks an attempt to analyze the soft power of five emerging economies referred to as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). The rise of new powers has been one of the defining features of international politics in the 21st century, and the impact of this rise on the equilibrium and the structure of the international system has become an important issue in the discipline of international relations (Destradi and Jakobeit 2015, p.61). Increasing attention has been devoted to the rise of a group of large and rapidly growing nations that are changing the global power balance (Lesage and Van de Graaf 2015). Kenkel and Cunliffe (2016, p.1) note that: "states held to marginal status… have risen to become important actors on the global stage." Brazilian Ambassador Roberto Jaguaribe (2010) avers that the "BRICS label" illustrates the key characteristic of the current global transformation, highlighting that the paradigm according to which developing nations cannot be relevant actors is no longer true.

The acronym was originally coined by Jim O'Neill in a 2001 Goldman Sachs report. Since then the BRICS nations have garnered much attention in academic and wider public circles. *The Economist* (2010) emphasises that the BRICS "matter because of their economic weight". This fact is illustrated by Sharma's (2012) description: "over the past several years, the most talked-about trend in the global economy has been the economies of many developing nations swiftly converging with those of their more developed peers. The primary engines behind this phenomenon were the four major emerging-market nations, known as the BRICs." In the early 2000s, Goldman Sachs (GS) reports forecast that the weight of the BRICs, and especially China, would grow during the following decades: they would represent over half the size of the G6 in

2025 and their economies taken together would be larger than the G6 by 2039. In 2009 GS reports even conclude that the BRICs would become as large as the G7 by 2032. Interestingly, O'Neill perception of the rising importance of the BRIC nations led him to suggest a new G7 composed of the US, Japan, the EU (as a group rather than represented individually), Brazil, China, India and Russia; and thus having the bloc better reflect the new structure of economic power in the world (Alcântara 2014). Indeed, as a bloc the BRICS introduce a new major presence in the structure of the global political economy: BRICS collectively possess 30% of global land, 43% of global population, 21% of global GDP, 17.3% of global merchandise trade, 12.7% of global commercial services, 45% of world's agriculture production, and 22% of global military spending.

Thakur (2014, p.1792) argues that the BRICS serve as a flagship of the major emerging nations, permitting the member states to acquire prestige from participation in the bloc. Brazilian Ambassador Carneiro Leão also suggests that the group stands out and detaches itself from the other developing nations as "special emerging powers." In fact the bloc creates distinctive standing and adds value to member states. The bloc has also transformed into a diplomatic forum representing increasing power, value and capacity of action for the member states; thus attributing to them a distinctive standing and an image associated with a "special mark" (Sá Pimentel 2013, pp.130-134). Along the same lines, Montbrial (2010) stresses that the BRICS have become a "real brand," to which the states composing the group dedicate great attention.

This special issue addresses this rising bloc of nations through the prism of an equally ascending concept and theory in international relations: soft power. Though much has been said about the growing importance of the BRICS, little has been said (outside of analysis on China) about how the bloc members fare in terms of soft power. Any important understanding of the

3

position of the ascending bloc of nations would have to look at all dimensions of those nations'

power inventory. As emerging economies, the study of their soft power is all the more important

because it may very well fill an important role for them relative to the advanced economics, all

of which possess extensive hard power. Soft power is an especially important lens through which

to study the international influence of the BRICS because it is such a crucial element of their

power inventory, either because the hard power of some of the members is limited (as with

South Africa, India and Brazil); or because some members have used their hard power in ways

that have compromised their international standings in the community of nations (China and

Russia) and hence have had to rely on soft power to mend their images. Moreover, every

member of the bloc has pursued a vigorous strategy of leveraging their global status through soft

power initiatives, with China demonstrating the most extensive soft "offensive." Hence, it is

essential that scholarly curiosity match foreign policy priorities.

Five of the seven articles in this issue assess the soft power of the individual BRICS

nations, while two examine the BRICS as an entity. In the first article, Stuenkel tries to gauge

how the BRICS are performing relative to leading Western nations with respect to soft power

endowments. The author looks at the relative soft power positions of the BRICS nations in the

three areas: public diplomacy, legitimacy/agenda setting and finally the attractiveness of the

member nations as models and destinations. The article's fundamental thesis is that the BRICS,

while possessing impressive soft power resources, are still lagging strongly behind leading

Western nations in their soft influence. First, in the context of public diplomacy, BRICS are in an

"information war" with Western nations. Media networks and language/culture dissemination

initiatives are vigorously promoting the attractiveness of BRICS nations. While aggressive in

these initiatives, the BRICS are falling short of the leading Western powers in this "charm

offensive." Second, regarding legitimacy and agenda setting, some of the BRICS nations –

Russia and China in particular -- are pushing a revisionist rhetoric, which suggests they may at

some point challenge the liberal Western order through their newly created financial institutions

the NDB and CRA, as well as through their gradual engagement in providing public goods and

dealing with security challenges. But notwithstanding successes through the NDB and CRA, still

the BRICS remain on the periphery of important multilateral decision-making. Third, the BRICS

face their most serious shortcomings relative to the West when it comes to serving as role

models. But while the BRICS are lagging in the quest for soft power, still the nations can be

expected to change the international landscape of relative influence. Indeed, Stuenkel embraces

the importance of soft power as an important wedge for the BRICS in moving forward.

Chatin evaluates the balance between Brazil's military (hard) power and its soft power

resources. Given Brazil's historic paucity of hard power, it has relied more vigorously on its soft

power as a wedge for international influence. This soft power quest has included the following

strategies and policies. Brazil has looked askance at military resolutions, much preferring

diplomacy and mediation (e.g. its effort to mediate the Iranian nuclear issue). It has embraced a

strong global leadership role in peace and security arenas. It has vigorously pursued a role of

agenda-setter in a variety of issues. Brazil has proclaimed itself a champion for compliance with

international law (e.g. its fierce condemnation of the 2003 Iraq invasion) and multilateralism

(e.g. its participation to peacekeeping under the aegis of the UN). It has functioned as a bridge

between developed and developing nations, sharing with the latter an inclination for principles

like non-intervention and sovereignty. In this respect, Brazil has pushed a narrative for the

reform of international organisation with more voice for the developing world, without

subverting the established order. Furthermore, it has provided development assistance based on a

rhetoric of South-South cooperation and expertise in implementing nationally successful programmes, and it has championed the defence of Southern interests in strategic negotiations. Chatin concludes that Brazil has indeed, through this multidimensional soft offensive, been able to attain international influence "well beyond its weight class of hard power" and vigorously fulfil its intended role of global soft power broker.

Rutland and Kazantsev posit Russia's soft power strategy as one intended to reverse the nation's existing "image deficit," and to confront what Russian officials view as the West's soft and hard offensive against its eastern European rival. The authors identify several central sources of Russian soft power such as higher education, impact of "Soviet nostalgia" and particularly Russia's achievements in 'high culture' (i.e., its artistic and scientific heritage). Furthermore the authors identify initiatives aimed at boosting Russia's soft power through a "cultural prism": the broadcasting agency 'Russia Today' (breaking the monopoly of Western news organisations), Russian World (promoting Russian culture and language study), Russotrudnichestvo (spreading Russian influence in post-soviet states), the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and the 2018 soccer World Cup. Notwithstanding the development of a significant soft arsenal of power, the authors underscore Russia's soft "handicaps." Domestically these handicaps derive from historical oppression (as evidenced by the controversial deaths of 'dissidents'), bureaucratic corruption, organised crime, and a culture of homophobia. Internationally Russia's soft power has been hamstrung by it recent resort to military aggression in the Georgian war in 2008, the Ukraine crisis in 2014 and the present day Syrian civil war. Although considered by Russians as responses to threatened Russian interests, poll-data confirm the harmful international impact of those actions on Russia's soft power. The authors conclude that Russia's authoritarian turn since 2004, and its use of force in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria; have reinforced negative stereotypes of

Russia as a hard power. These stereotypes have severely hamstrung Russian efforts to marshal soft power as an effective policy tool.

Thussu focuses on the contributions of the media (i.e., expansion of digital media and internet), and Bollywood more particularly, to India's endowment of soft power. Thussu presents Bollywood, the world's largest film factory in terms of production and viewership, as a notable example of "global entertainment outside the Western world" and clearly India's most prodigious soft power resource. Explaining the links between Hollywood and Bollywood, and the diaspora's influence in diffusing Bollywood-content, Thussu provides examples of Bollywood's effect, especially among nations of the global South. For instance, while Bollywood films are particularly appreciated among Muslim audiences (suggesting Bollywood's potential role in promoting anti-extremism), the industry has expanded as far as Latin America (e.g. the success of the Brazilian soap opera *Caminho das Índias* evidences the growing recognition of India's cultural soft power). Indeed, the global silver screen makes India a robust soft power broker.

Zanardi examines two specific policy-areas, the Confucius Institutes and China's naval diplomacy, as part of China's "Charm Offensive," which itself is embedded in a policy narrative of a "harmonious world" and "peaceful development." The offensive is intended to counter the "China Threat theory" and renew China's image worldwide. Without ignoring the related criticism (e.g. organisational challenges posed by the implementation process, China's interference in domestic affairs in pushing its agenda forward), the author sees the Confucius Institutes network as an effective lever of China's "Offensive": it is reflective of a strategy of cultural and language promotion, based on the heritage of Chinese ancient culture. Indeed the

author underscores a major goal of the network: to generate goodwill through cooperation and the development of contacts, and thus enable China to enhance its influence abroad. Insofar as the distinction between hard power and soft power can be blurred, the author also looks at China's naval diplomacy by focusing on the provision of medical assistance and training. In fact, China has sought to project the image of a "benevolent naval power" (even in regions usually outside its purview): to strengthen interaction with foreign navies so as to generate mutual trust and understanding, and to ease suspicions regarding its naval development and military modernisation. In this perspective, the author outlines China's language promotion and its naval diplomacy as two initiatives leading the nation's soft power policy. Although CIs and naval diplomacy have very little in common in Western literature, this article makes the point that in China they are both part of an Eastern vision of soft power, i.e., according to Chinese philosophy, one that integrates direct (zheng) and indirect (qi) force within the same conceptual framework .

Van der Westhuizen sees a shift in South African soft power from Mandela's Presidency (where the nation pursued a broader foreign policy intended to make the nation a noted multilateral player in the global arena) to the subsequent mandates of Mbeki and Zuma, (favouring a "regional" turn and gradually framing a "liberationist democracy"). Under Mandela South Africa adopted a "very liberal worldview" after the advent of democracy, which was manifest by a number of soft power initiatives: making a commitment to human rights (intervening in regional crises and reacting vehemently to abuses); supporting the established order through multilateral activism (signing international treaties, joining institutions and

assuming leading multilateral positions/roles); associating foreign initiatives to a "myth of exceptionalism," and hosting the 1995 Rugby World Cup (i.e., projecting images of race and national identity). Thereafter, with the following administrations South Africa sought to rediscover its Africa identity and to strengthen its regional leadership. In this respect, South Africa turned to act as a continental power broker in several ways: it reaffirmed regional commitments by hosting mega-events and presenting itself as "the gateway to Africa"; it supported new regional institutions (NEPAD and the African Union) to enhance Africa's voice in international affairs; it compromised its commitment to human rights by supporting principles of sovereignty and non-interference, and it prioritized African solidarity over other more multilateral objectives. Thus the author sees a tension in recent South African history with respect to its soft power: while its soft power was bolstered by cosmopolitan/liberal democratic norms and an aggressive initiative to become a global presence in multilateral issues under Mandela, it later became restrained by a turn toward protecting national sovereignty and reinforcing regional objectives.

In the final article Gallarotti presents a new category of soft power: compound soft power. It is fitting that the special issue ends with this article because this specific analysis looks at the collective soft power that can be generated by the bloc of nations as a whole through the venue of an international organization. In this respect, the process of power augmentation is one that can be referred to as a "multilateralization effect," and this compound or multilateral soft power creates an entirely new source of power, with its very own dynamic, a dynamic that is very different from one that envisions a simply additive process of power among member nations of a bloc. Compound soft power is comprised of four processes: *augmentation, transitivity, layering* and *compensation.* Each process demonstrates how the BRICS as an organization can

modify and bolster the soft power of both the members of the international bloc itself. Finally, based on the shortcomings of the organization in bolstering the soft power of the bloc, Gallarotti provides prescriptions for how the BRICS members can more effectively use the organization to enhance their collective soft power: work more closely as a bloc in existing institutions, "decompose" the grouping into sub-units according to the types of issues negotiated, expand activities towards more specific international problems, and increase both actions and action-statements (i.e., charging the BRICS members to push soft power actions and policy initiatives forward).

What is Soft Power and Why Is It Important?

Few scholarly concepts in international affairs have trickled over as vigorously into popular space as the concept of soft power and its corollary smart power. Aside from the growing scholarly attention to the subject, national leaders and leading decisionmakers across the world have proclaimed its importance in the foreign policies of their nations. [2]

Understanding soft power is an especially important venture today. The global system has changed rapidly and significantly. This has created a far more "hazy power space" than has heretofore been embraced by scholars and decisionmakers (Beck 2005). This hazy power space requires new approaches to power and its changing role in world politics. Consequently traditional visions of power in international politics are poorly suited to understanding the modern cosmopolitan world system where there is a pronounced need for a more compatible or theory of power in world politics (Gallarotti 2010b and Barnett and Duvall 2005, p. 40).

Greater attention to soft power itself reflects the changing landscape of international relations. It is no coincidence that such sources of power have been embraced by Neoliberalism and Constructivism, paradigms that have underscored the changing nature of world politics. In this case, theory has been influenced by events. While history has shown soft power always to have been an important source of national influence, changes in modern world politics have raised its utility all the more (Gallarotti 2010a and 2010b).[3]

As with other important concepts or theories, soft power has attracted its share of critical attention. This is to be expected of any idea that is becoming more widely embraced, as there is far less interest in supporting widely embraced ideas than there is in undermining them in academic journals (i.e., supporting popular ideas generates less scholarly impact for many editors and academic publishers). Moreover the concept of soft power itself defies the very core concept of power envisioned by many social scientists. Dahl's (1957) celebrated definition (getting someone to do that which he/she would not otherwise have done) avers a conflict of interests among parties, while soft power sees greater harmony among interests (others end up doing what you would like as a result of them acquiring *your* preferences and interests). In this respect, soft power is missing a significantly contested space among parties. It is also at odds with the vision of power that undergirds the dominant paradigm in international relations theory: Realism. Realism's central view of power reflects a reliance on hard power or the ability to use force (see below).

Furthermore, hard power enjoys a greater allure for the human mind due to its psychological advantages over soft power with respect to how people tend to perceive influence.

Hence, soft power is at a disadvantage relative to its antithesis, hard power, in terms of psychological appeal. Hard power is largely based on tangible resources, which can be easily counted. Soft power has far more of an intangible character. Hence that which can be counted easily has an advantage in the human psyche over that which cannot. Also hard power elicits greater assurance since material resources can be used to extract compliance when necessary, and of course there is greater assurance that such tangible resources can be used to defend against aggression. There is less assurance in the certainty of relying on such intangible assets as good will to both defend and compel. Finally, soft power's footprint can best be evaluated in terms of outcomes, but assessing the causes of outcomes in international politics is most problematic. It is far easier to evaluate power based on the tangible resources one has than to base such evaluation on specific outcomes (Gallarotti 2011).

The major criticisms of soft power have run the full gamut of analytical scrutiny: conceptual, theoretical, and empirical (see citations above).[4] Conceptually and theoretically, the concerns reflect a significant breath of inquiry into the viability of the logic of a process of soft power (tangible versus intangible, means versus ends, policies versus outcomes, path dependencies). Empirically, there is a familiar refrain, especially among Realists who underscore a trope that soft power produces "soft" influence. More precisely, they aver that soft power resources lack the capacity to move others to behave as one would like them to with urgency. In attempting a brief but concise summary of the nature of soft power, this description will hopefully present some clarification so one can better ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of this category of power in light of the prevailing scholarly analysis, both from a critical and non-critical side.[5]

The phenomenon of soft power is best understood in contradistinction to hard power.

Realism has vigorously espoused a hard concept of power, oriented around the idea of nations

using material resources to influence other nations (Barnett and Duvall 2005). For Mearsheimer

(2001, p. 55) "power is based on the particular material capabilities that a state possesses." Waltz

(1979, p. 131) portrays power in a similar light: "size of population and territory, resource

endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence."[6] In his

War and Change in World Politics, Gilpin (1981, p. 13), another leading Realist, defines power

as "the military, economic, and technological capabilities of states." Ultimately it is this

"muscle" that fundamentally determines a nation's power. The emphasis falls on the tangible

power lexicon that determines a nation's capacities to employ force in pursuit of its goals.

While Realists have traditionally looked at a nation's influence in the world as a function

of these tangible and coercive sources of power (threat and force), proponents of soft power

have underscored the influence that derives from a more intangible and enlightened source: a

positive image in world affairs that endears nations to other nations in the world polity. This

positive image derives from a number of sources: the domestic and foreign policies that nations

follow, the actions they undertake, and/or national qualities that are independent of specific

policies or actions (e.g., such as culture). This positive image generates respect and admiration,

which in turn render nations that have soft power more endearing in the eyes of other nations.

The endearment can be so strong that other nations may even attempt to emulate the policies

and/or actions of soft power nations, domestic and/or foreign. Endearment serves to enhance the

influence of soft power nations as other nations will more readily defer to their wishes on

international issues, and conversely avoid confrontations. Hence, decisions about issues that

impact soft power nations will be bounded within a somewhat favorable range of options for the soft power nations. In a similar vein, emulation creates a system of nations that are comporting themselves (actions, policies, goals) in a manner consistent with the interests of the role-model nations. In these ways, soft power ultimately configures the context within which other nations make decisions in ways that favor the interests soft power nations (i.e., meta-power, discussed below). [7]

The principal difference between hard and soft power can be understood in the following way: hard power extracts compliance principally through reliance on tangible power resources—more direct and often coercive methods (either their symbolic use through threat or actual use), while soft power cultivates it through a variety of policies, qualities, and actions that endear nations to other nations—more indirect and non-coercive methods. In this respect, hard power exhibits a greater conflict of interests relative to soft power. Hard power contemplates nations compelling other nations to do what the latter would ordinarily not otherwise do (Dahl's [1957] classic definition of power). Soft power, on the other hand, conditions the target nations to voluntarily do what soft power nations would like them to do, hence there is far less conflict of interests in the process of soft power.

Soft power has many qualities of metapower or what some power theorists might call structural power. Meta-power manifests itself in situations in which power relations themselves are embedded within some greater constellation of social relations that influence those relations and thereby influence final outcomes that derive from the interactions among actors. The structures of the bargaining boundaries are determined by the processes going on in the greater

social relations within which they are embedded (i.e., endogenous rather than exogenous).[8]

Under conditions of meta-power, little can be inferred about the balance of power in a bargaining process merely by simply looking at the equilibria within the existing bargaining space. One actor may seem to be moving the other actor closer to his/her preferred position within a bargaining space without in fact enjoying much influence over the seemingly compliant actor. Since the preferences or objectives are endogenous, and therefore the result of some greater constellation of social relations, the bargaining space itself can be the outcome of some greater configuration of power that has set possible equilibria in a range highly consistent with the interests or preferences of the seemingly compliant actor.

Some confusion has arisen about the nature of soft power because it is often equated with agenda control. Nye (2004b, p. 9) himself refers to soft power as a control over the "political agenda" and attributes the origin of the concept to the work of Bachrach and Baratz (1962 and 1963). Agenda control, in its more precise context, would indeed represent a subset of meta-power.[9] But agenda control need not reflect a process of soft power if adversarial relations among the bargaining agents are not abated through agenda control, hence the remnants of a strong conflict of interests among the bargainers. There are definite winners and losers in these contests over the agenda, and the losers are cognizant of having lost. In this respect, the second face of power is quite distinct from a process of soft power that generally is instrumental in abating conflicts of interests.[10]

While agenda control could be consistent with some elements of soft power (through the construction of rules and support of institutions), the principal essence of the idea of soft power

relates much more closely to the third face of power, as seen in the work of Lukes (1974) and Isaac (1987), insofar as it represents the manifestation of empowerment through the process of co-optation. Lukes'(1974) idea of three-dimensional power and Isaac's idea of structural power postulate that influence can be acquired if an actor is able to mold the preferences and interests of other actors so as to converge closer to its own preferences and interests. There is one fundamental difference however. The third image, or radical vision of meta-power , exudes a far greater conflict of interests among actors than does the idea of soft power.[11] This is because the logic is inspired by the idea of Gramscian (1988) hegemony. The radical vision of meta-power contains a strong element of conflict of interest in the social relations it contemplates because the process of co-optation imposes ideas that are against the objective interests of the groups being co-opted (Gramsci 1988 and Pellicani 1976). Soft power contemplates the process of influence as grounded in a less conflictual constellation of interests across parties. In this respect, soft power does not manifest the same reliance on a Marxian "false consciousness" in determining the nature of social relations.

It has become all too common to equate the concept of soft power with the influence emanating from the seductive cultural values created by media and fashion (Fraser 2003). Soft power is much more than that. Soft power can be systematically categorized as deriving from two general sources: international sources (foreign policies and actions) and domestic sources (domestic policies and actions), with multiple sub-sources within each. All of these sources ultimately contribute to a positive image that endears nations with soft power to other nations, which in turn enhances the influence of these soft power nations' in world politics (See Table 1).

Under international sources, first, nations must demonstrate a pronounced respect for international law, norms, and institutions. This commitment to "the rules" exudes dependability, sensitivity, legitimacy, and a disposition against violence. This general commitment is the principal source of international soft power, as the sources that follow are more specific elements of this more general orientation.

In this respect nations must embrace a multilateral disposition and eschew a overly unilateralist posture in the promotion of their foreign policies. Disregarding multilateralism can be costly. Nations relying decreasingly on multilateral fora to respond to threats or problems alienate regime members and consequently risk the possibility of marginalization in those regimes, which in turn diminishes such fora as viable options in attending to foreign objectives. As with the above two sources of soft power, forsaking erstwhile allies and international commitments in favor of unilateral solutions produces a maverick image that comprises traditional sources of power embedded in multilateral support networks. Furthermore, nations must be willing to sacrifice short-run particularistic interests in order to contribute toward substantive collaborative schemes that address important multilateral problems. Consistent with international commitments and fair play, nations will garner considerable respect by foregoing short-run national objectives for the sake of the collective good. Finally, a nation must pursue policies of economic openness. Free trade in goods and open capital markets represent a commitment to maintaining opportunities for economic growth in other nations.

Domestic sources can be broadly categorized under two rubrics: the power inherent in culture and in political institutions. In terms of politics, institutions founded on strong

principles of democratic agency can generate significant soft power, but such a condition would be sufficient rather than necessary. Soft power can emanate from political systems that deliver democracy, pluralism, liberalism, and constitutionalism. But a nation need not be a beacon of liberalism to generate soft political power. Nations such as Singapore generate admiration from stable and well functioning governance, but are hardly liberal. Culturally, soft power can be generated by characteristics such as social cohesion, an elevated quality of life, freedom, abundant opportunities for individuals, tolerance, the alluring characteristics of a lifestyle that garners great admiration and even emulation, and cultural primacy or influence. Numerous observers have underscored the power emanating from an admired culture, in these cases, that of the U.S. (Klein 1999, Barnet and Cavanagh 1996, Sklair 1991, and LeFeber 1999). But liberal society is not necessary for generating cultural soft power. Saudi Arabia, as the center of the Arab and Muslim worlds, garners great international influence as a result of cultural primacy (Gallarotti and Al Filali 2012).

Table 1. Sources of Soft Power

International Sources

*Respect for international laws, norms, and institutions

*Fundamental reliance on multilateralism, and disposition against excessive unilateralism

*Respect international treaties and alliance commitments

*Willingness to sacrifice short-run national interests for the collective good

*Liberal foreign economic policies

Domestic Sources

Culture

*Pronounced Social Cohesion

*Elevated Quality of Life

*Freedom

*Sufficient Opportunities

*Tolerance

*Alluring Lifestyle

*Cultural Primacy and Influence

Political Institutions

*Democracy

*Constitutionalism

*Liberalism/Pluralism

*A Well Functioning of Government Bureaucracy

Several critiques of soft power have questioned the precision with which it is differentiated with hard power (e.g., do they occupy entirely different spaces, what are the differences in tangibility). Although there is a tendency to equate hard power with tangible

resources and soft power with intangible resources, their principal distinction does not depend on tangibility. Even for Nye (2002, p. 8 and 2004b, p. 5) , whose language highlights a distinction between tangible resources and intangible resources, tangibility is not a strict source of differentiation among the two categories. Nye's own logic would allow for intangible applications of hard power. For example, a threat is intangible, but a threat forces a mode of action onto another nation involuntarily and hence is inconsistent with soft power. Furthermore, a large military force can generate attraction effects through "perceptions of invincibility" (Nye 2004b, p. 26). Nations may show deference and even admiration because they want to be associated with a winner.[12] Conversely, soft power can be enhanced through the use of tangible resources, as tangible resources can support policies and actions that deliver soft power.

Indeed, the relationship between hard and soft power is much more complex and interactive than both supporters and critics have traditionally acknowledged. Just as any other category of power, the concept is elastic in its nature. Like hard power, soft power can be conceptualized as both a means and an end. In fact, as long as theorists conflate influence and power, all power categories could be conceptualized as both means and ends. Power is something to be used as a wedge of influence (i.e., resources that help you attain some sort of standing that makes you better able to attain outcomes), but can also be conceptualized as influence itself (i.e., the standing). Soft power as a concept is not positioned to solve this means/ends conundrum.

Furthermore, hard and soft power are neither perfect substitutes nor are they rigid complements. Often, they can actually reinforce one another.[13] In fact, it will often be the case that each set of power resources require at least some of the other for maximum effectiveness

(i.e., Cosmopolitan or smart power). Certainly, a strong positive image can garner many more

allies, which in turn can bolster a nation's defenses. And of course, committing troops to defend

a nation against invasion will certainly garner a better image for the protector state. Gilpin (2002)

underscores the extent to which the global economic primacy enjoyed by America in the post-

war period has been founded on American military primacy. Moreover, the possession of hard

power itself can make a nation a role model in a variety of way. For example, a strong image can

be garnered by large military arsenals and successful military strategies (Waltz 1979). As a

symbol of national success, this extensive hard power generates significant soft power by

enhancing respect and admiration (Gallarotti 2010b). Even the employment of force can

generate soft power if it is used in the service of goals widely perceived as consistent with such

pervasive principles of international justice: e.g., for protecting nations against aggression,

peacekeeping, or liberation against tyranny. But these hard power resources cannot be used in

ways that undermine respect and admiration.

Aside from reinforcing one another, it is also the case that the use of one kind of power

may also detract from the other kind. Hard power carries obvious disadvantages for image if it is

manifest in an aggressive-unilateralist style: invasion, imperialism, economic sanctions, and

threats. But actions that enhance soft power can be perhaps even equally costly in terms of

sacrificing hard power. This is the position that many American unilateralists take in their

distaste for the entangling limitations on individual actions created by international agreements.

The separation of the two types of power resources is imperfect categorically. Giving

international aid for example may enhance a nation's image, but may also provide liquidity to

21

purchase donor exports or to pay back debts to banks in donor nations. Here, a single instrument

generates both hard and soft power. Similarly, the use of aggressive military force can generate

a positive image with nations who are benefiting from such an initiative: e.g., liberating Kuwait

and protecting Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. Moreover, the exercise of each of the kinds of

power resources has complex consequences within its own specific context. The use of hard

power resources can in fact diminish the hard power position of a nation in various ways, i.e.,

power curses, counterproductive aggression (Gallarotti 2010a). Similarly, the use of soft power

resources may also adversely affect a nation's image no matter how innocuous the resources. A

clear example is cultural primacy: while many embrace the values of Western culture, others see

them as a source of cultural imperialism and contamination (Sklair 1995 and LeFeber 1999).

Another interesting interaction effect among the two kinds of power is that the use of one

set of resources may either economize on or enhance the need for another set of resources. A

positive image may create outcomes within such favorable boundaries for a nation that it actually

reduces its need to use hard resources (i.e., carrots and sticks) in order to gain compliance on

important issues. Reputations for loyalty may attract more allies, and hence abate or vitiate the

need to expend unilateral resources in order to achieve foreign policy goals. Furthermore,

accepting restraints on one's unilateral actions may not adversely affect relative hard-power

positions if such an action fosters similar restraints by other nations, as would be the case with

for example an arms reduction treaty. Hence, a reduction of hard power has been compensated

by a soft effect: others have accepted similar reductions. Moreover, intransigence to

multilateralism may in fact reduce one's hard power position even though it frees that nation

from restraint. Such would occur if reactions to such intransigence resulted in a more antagonistic international system (Gallarotti 2010a and Nye 2002 and 2004b).

But ultimately, as interconnected as the two sources of power are, and thus could share many qualities (like tangibility and intangibility), the real differentiation of power is in the context of its use. In order to effect soft power, the context of actions (whether tangible or intangible) must be a manifestation of generally accepted norms and principles of international justice and fair play (see Table 1). In this vein, hard power itself can be used in a manner that engenders the respect and admiration of other nations if it manifests itself in actions consistent with these principles (e.g., peacekeeping, protecting against aggression or genocide, or providing economic aid on terms favorable to recipient nations). Hard power, of course, will fail or be counterproductive in enhancing influence when it is used in a more barbaric fashion. There is no inherent incrimination of hard power as necessarily evil. Ultimately, tangible resources can deliver both hard and soft power. But tangible resources are merely instruments and are no better or worse than the manner in which they are used.

The question of impact or effectiveness has produced a vigorous debate on the precise influence of soft versus hard power. Indeed, it has been underscored that the label of soft power is apropos: i.e., soft power produces "soft influence" Ferguson (2003). Evaluating the relative impacts of the two types of power is a difficult task to say the least. It is difficult to establish the empirical manifestations of power of any kind because outcomes are often problematic from a causal perspective: e.g., how important was respect relative to fear in moving a nation to undertake a particular course of action? One of the main reasons for this is that the activation

process of soft power, like most processes of power activation, is translucent. Even so, a number

of case studies (including the contributions to this special issue) have demonstrated[14] that soft

power can indeed be an effective lever of influence in global affairs (Kurlantzick 2007, Gallarotti

2010a, 2010b, and Gallarotti and Al Filali 2012). Moreover, other case studies demonstrate that

excessive reliance on hard power can actually compromise influence (Nye 2004b and Gallarotti

2004, 2010a and 2010b). But hard power is also difficult to gauge because so many hard

resources are never activated (threats and violence are not pervasive, especially on a large scale).

We have also seen extremely uneven success in the employment of hard power throughout

history (Gallarotti 2010a). Hence speaking of impact is inherently problematic, irrespective of

the kinds of power considered. But we *can* perhaps speak a bit more resolutely about trends in

the world and relative investments on the part of nations in soft power resources as reflective or

suggestive of changing relative impacts among hard and soft power.

In terms of trends in the world, we can identify a number of changes in international

politics that are creating a "softer" world. More specifically, these changes in world politics

suggest that the importance and hence impact of soft power is growing relative to hard power.

First, the utility of hard power has diminished because the costs of using or even threatening

force among nuclear powers have skyrocketed. Indeed, current leading scholarship in the field of

security has proclaimed that the nuclear revolution has been instrumental in creating a new age

of a "security community," in which war between major powers is almost unthinkable because

the costs of war have become too great (Jervis 1988, 1993, 2002). Mueller (1988) reinforces

and modifies the nuclear deterrent argument by introducing the independent deterrent of

conventional war in an age of advanced technology.

Second, there is the impact of interdependence and the pervasive process that compounds its effects on power: globalization. The diminishing utility of hard power is partly the result of a specific political, social and economic context created by modernization: that context is interdependence (Herz 1957, Osgood and Tucker 1967, Keohane and Nye 1989, and Nye 2004a). Using sticks, or whatever kinds of coercive methods, generate considerable costs in an interdependent world. Indeed in such an interpenetrated world, punishing or threatening other nations is tantamount to self-punishment. In such an environment strategies for optimizing national wealth and influence have shifted from force and coercion to cooperation.

Third, the growth of democracy in the world system has served to compound the disutility of coercion and force as the actors bearing the greatest burden of such coercion and force (the people) have political power over decisionmakers. In this respect, the process of democratic peace has altered power relations among nations (Doyle 1997, Russett and Oneal 2001, and Ray 1995). As individuals become politically empowered, they can generate strong impediments to the use of force and coercion. But even beyond the enfranchisement effect, democratic culture naturally drives national leaders towards the norms and principles manifest in the cannons of soft power. Hence, national leaders are much more constrained to work within softer foreign policy boundaries.

Fourth, in a related vein, social and political changes have made modern populations more sensitive to their economic fates, and consequently far less enamored of a "warrior ethic" (Jervis 2002 and Nye 2004b, p. 19). This "prosperous society" has compounded the influence of economics and made economic interdependence that much more compelling as a constraint to

the utility of hard power. With the rise of this welfare/economic orientation and the spread of democracy, national leaders have been driven more by the economic imperative and less by foreign adventurism as a source of political survival (Gallarotti 2000 and Ruggie 1983). This prosperous society, through the political vehicle of democracy, has shifted not only domestic but also foreign policy orientations. The economic welfare concern has put a premium on cooperation that can deliver economic growth and employment, and has worked to discourage hard power policies that might undercut such goals.

Fifth, globalization has strongly compounded the effects of interdependence by enhancing the process of social and economic interpenetration in the international system. The global age has given civil societies the capacity to receive and transmit information, as well as move across nations with ever greater speed and magnitude. These greater links compound the interdependence among networks containing both transnational actors and national governments. These forces have both diminished possibilities of political conflict and have thus shifted the epicenter of competition away from force and threat (Rosecrance 1999 and Nye 2004b, p. 31).

Finally, the growth of international regimes has embedded nations more firmly in networks of cooperation: themselves being fundamental components of soft power. As these networks have evolved, so too has the soft power of norms and laws they represent increased (Krasner 1983 and Keohane and Nye 1989). In such a world, unilateral actions that disregard these institutions become far more costly. Such institutions have effectively raised the

minimum level of civil behavior in international politics, and consequently raised the importance of soft power significantly.

With respect to national investments in soft power, it is clear that nations have taken the potential of soft power seriously and have sunk substantial effort and wealth in generating international influence through such means. It is most apparent from the articles in this special issue that indeed every BRICS member has made soft power a foreign policy priority. But even among the three superpowers of the present world system (China, Russia, US), recent leaders have openly used the term and underscored its importance in their foreign policy. Hence, the most powerful nations in the world believe that soft power has an important impact on their international relations; and in this particular scholarly application, the nations under scrutiny (BRICS) have all vigorously implemented a soft power offensive. Under such circumstances, one may still question the impact of soft power, but it is much harder to question the importance which it has garnered among nations today. Ergo it may be enough to say soft power is important because many important nations believe it is important, hence our attention to soft power is not a fruitless endeavor. But the evidence is amassing on many fronts, beyond the perceptions of leaders, that it is indeed a softer world, and in such a world soft power will be effective in generating influence on the international stage. Inspired by such a belief, both the editors and authors of this special issue of the *Journal of Political Power* consider such an undertaking to possess significant merit.

References

Baldwin, David A. 2002. "Power and International Relations" in Walter Carlsnaes,

     Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons., eds., *Handbook of International Relations*, pp.

     177-191. London: Sage.

Baldwin, David A. 2016. *Power and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University

     Press.

Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. "Two Faces of Power." *American Political Science*

     Review 56 (December): 947–952.

Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz. 1963. "Decisions and Nondecisions: An Analytical

     Framework." *American Political Science Review* 57 (September): 632–942.

Barnet, Richard, and John Cavanagh. 1996. "The Homogenization of Global Culture." In *The*

     Case Against the Global Economy and for a Turn Toward the Local. Edited by Jerry

     Mander and Edward Goldsmith, 71–77. San Francisco: Sierra Club.

Barnett, Michael and Raymond Duvall. 2005. "Power in International Politics."

     International Organization, 59 (Spring):39-75.

Beck, Ulrich. 2005. *Power in the Global Age: A New Global Political Economy*. Malden, Mass.:

     Polity Press.

Berenskoetter, Felix. 2007. "Thinking about Power" in Felix Berenskoetter and M.J.

     Williams, eds. *Power in World Politics,* pps. 1-22. London: Routledge.

Dahl, Robert A. 1957. "The Concept of Power." *Behavioral Science*, 2:201-215.

Doyle, Michael W. 1997. *Ways of War and Peace*. New York: Norton.

Etheridge, Eric. 2009. "How 'Soft Power' got 'Smart.' New York Times, January 14, http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/14/how-soft-power-got-smart/.

Ferguson, Niall. 2003. "Power." *Foreign Policy* (January/February): 18–27.

Fraser, Matthew. 2003. *Weapons of Mass Distraction: Soft Power and American Empire*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Gallarotti, Giulio M. 2000. "The Advent of the Prosperous Society: The Rise of the Guardian State and Structural Change in the World Economy." *Review of International Political Economy* 7 (Spring): 1–52.

Gallarotti, Giulio M. 2004. "Nice Guys Finish First: American Unilateralism and Power Illusion" in Graham F. Walker, ed. *Independence in an Age of Empires: Multilateralism and Unilateralism in the Post 9/11 World*, Halifax, Nova Scotia: Center for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, pp. 225-236

Gallarotti, Giulio M. 2010a. *The Power Curse: Influence and Illusion in World Politics*. Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner.

Gallarotti, Giulio M. 2010b. *Cosmopolitan Power in International Politics: A Synthesis of Realism, Neoliberalism and Constructivism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gallarotti, Giulio M. 2011. "Soft Power: What it is, Why it's Important, and the Conditions under which it Can Be Effectively Used." *Journal of Political Power* 4,1 (April): 25-47.

Gallarotti, Giulio M. and Isam Yahia Al Filali. 2012. "The Soft Power of Saudi Arabia." *International Studies*, 49, 3&4: 233-261.

Gilpin, Robert. 1981. *War and Change in World Politics*. New York: Cambridge

University Press.

Gilpin, Robert. 2002. *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1988. *Prison Letters*. London: Zwan.

Hall, Peter M. 1997. "Meta-Power, Social Organization, and the Shaping of Social Action." *Symbolic Interaction* 20:397–418.

Herz, John. 1957. "Rise and Demise of the Territorial State." *World Politics* 9 (April): 473–93.

Isaac, Jeffrey C. 1987. *Power and Marxist Theory: A Realist View*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Jervis, Robert. 1988. "The Political Effects of Nuclear Weapons: A Comment." *International Security* 13 (Autumn): 80–90.

Jervis, Robert. 1993. "International Primacy: Is the Game Worth the Candle?" *International Security* 17 (Spring): 52–67.

Jervis, Robert. 2002. "Theories of War in an Era of Leading-Peace Power." *American Political Science Review* 96 (March): 1–14.

Johnston, Alastair Iain. 2008. *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980–2000*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kearn, David W. Jr. 2011. "The Hard Truth about Soft Power." *Journal of Political Power* 4,1 (April): 65-85.

Keohane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Nye Jr. 1989. *Power and Interdependence*. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co.

Klein, Naomi. 1999. *No Logo*. New York: Picador.

Krasner, Stephen D., ed., 1983. *International Regimes*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Kurlantzick, Joshua. 2007. *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lasswell, Harold D. and Abraham Kaplan. 1950. *Power and Society: A Framework for Political Inquiry*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

LeFeber, Walter. 1999. *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*. New York: Norton.

Lennon, Alexander T. J., ed. 2003. *The Battle for Hearts and Minds: Using Soft Power to Undermine Terrorist Networks*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Lukes, Steven. 1974. *Power: A Radical View*. 1st Edition. London: Macmillan.

Lukes, Steven. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*. 2nd Edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Meade, Walter Russell. 2004. "America's Sticky Power." *Foreign Policy* (March/April): 46–53.

Mearsheimer, John. J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: Norton.

Mueller, John. 1988. "The Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons: Stability in the Postwar World." *International Security* 13 (Autumn): 55–79.

Nossel, Suzanne. 2004. "Smart Power." *Foreign Affairs* (March-April): 131–43.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. 1990a. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books.

Nye, Joseph S., Jr. 1990b. "Soft Power." *Foreign Policy* 80 (Fall): 53–71.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. 2002. *The Paradoxes of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. 2003. "The Velvet Hegemon: How Soft Power Can Help Defeat Terrorism." *Foreign Policy* (May/June): 74–75.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. 2004a. *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization*. London: Routledge.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. 2004b. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. 2007. "Notes for a Soft-Power Research Agenda" in Felix Berenkoetter and M.J. Williams, eds. *Power in World Politics,* pps. 162-172. London: Routledge.

Nye**,** Joseph S**.** Jr. 2011a. *The Future of Power*. New York: Public Affairs.

Nye, Joseph s. Jr. 2011b. "Power and Foreign Policy." *Journal of Political Power* 4,1 (April): 9-24.

O'Neill, Jim. 2001. "Building Better Global Economic BRICS." *Goldman Sachs Global Economics Paper* no. 66, Novermber 30.
http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/archive/archive-pdfs/build-better-brics.pdf

Osgood, Robert E., and Robert W. Tucker. 1967. *Force, Order and Justice*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Pellicani, Luciano. 1976. *Gramsci: An Alternative Communism*. Stanford: Hoover Institute.

Ray, James Lee. 1995. *Democracy and International Politics: An Evaluation of the*

Democratic Peace Proposition. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies Commission on Smart Power. 2007. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Rosecrance, Richard. 1999. *The Rise of the Virtual State: Wealth and Power in the Coming Century*. New York: Basic.

Ruggie, John Gerard. 1983. "International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order." In *International Regimes*. Edited by Stephen D. Krasner, 195–232. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Russett, Bruce, and John R. Oneal. 2001. *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organization.* New York: Norton.

Sklair, Leslie. 1995. *Sociology of the Global System*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Waltz, Kenneth. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading: Addison Wesley.

Zanardi, Claudia. 2016. "China's Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics: The Cases of Confucius Institutes and Chinese Naval Diplomacy." This issue of the *Journal of Political Power*.

---

[2] Nye introduced the concept of soft power in "Soft Power" (1990b) and *Bound to Lead* (1990a) and further applied and developed it in Nye (2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2011a, 2011b).

The literature on soft power has grown significantly over the past decade. Especially insightful treatments, both from a supportive and critical perspective, can be found in and Gallarotti (2004, 2010a and 2010b), Berenskoetter (2007), Baldwin (2002 and 2016), Kurlantzick (2007), Yasushi and McConnell (2008), Lennon (2003), Ferguson (2003), Fraser (2003), Kearn (2011) and Meade (2004). Also, Johnston's (2008) work on socialization introduces categories that reflect processes of soft power.

The idea of "smart power" suggests that a foreign policy based on the combined use of both hard and soft power can yield superior results over one that relies exclusively on one or the other kinds of power. On smart power see, Nossel (2004), *Report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies Commission on Smart Power* (2007), and Etheridge (2009). Gallarotti's (2010b) Cosmopolitan power represents a theoretical development and historical application of the idea of smart power.

[3] Gallarotti (2010a and 2010b) demonstrates that throughout history soft power could have significantly enhanced the influence of nations whose leaders were predominantly swayed by the allure of hard power (i.e., victims of a hard power illusion).

[4] For two especially insightful and penetrating critical inquiries, see Baldwin (2016) and Kearn (2011).

[5] The reader is referred to much more extensive descriptions that can be found in Nye (2004b and 2011a) and Gallarotti (2010b and 2011).

[6] For Realists, power also derives from some intangible sources: Waltz' competence (i.e., leadership, policy, decisionmaking). Hence it is not tangibility that determines the principal distinction between soft and hard power. Realists would also embrace the utility of threat or

other types of coercive posturing. But ultimately, these intangible measures rely on actual

material capabilities to be effective, hence muscle is the key to power for Realists.

7 This recalls Lasswell and Kaplan's (1950, p. 156) process of "identification": where rank and

file members of a group adopt the values of their leaders out of respect and admiration.

8 "Meta-power refers to the *shaping* of social relationships, social structures, and *situations* by

altering the matrix of possibilities and orientations within which social action occurs" (Hall

1997, p. 405).

9 The power literature has designated four faces of power. Agenda control would fall under the

second face of power. On the four faces see Barnett and Duvall's (2005).

10 Nye (2011b) later acknowledges this distinction.

11 In this context, I stress the ideas of Lukes as formulated in the first edition of *Power: A*

Radical View (1974). In the second edition, Lukes (2005), has acknowledged possibilities of

power relationships that abate conflicts of interests, and hence are closer to the idea of soft

power.

12 Another example of the soft power generated by an extensive military presence would

highlight the good will promoted by American civil-military functions abroad: education,

political stabilization, provision of public goods.

13 China conceptualizes all types of power as existing in one space: idea of *qi* and *zheng* place

influence squarely in the realm of the coexistence of hard and soft power (Zanardi 2016).