

THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN IMPLEMENTING THE "SOFT POWER" STRATEGY

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the extent of the role played by mass media in implementing the "soft power" strategy on the international stage. While countries employ various methods of "soft power" strategies, the study emphasizes that without leveraging mass media for promotion, achieving effective outcomes is unlikely. The research examines evidence from the experiences of countries that have successfully utilized this approach to demonstrate its efficiency.*

Keywords: *"soft power," strategy, China, Qatar, Turkey, mass media, promotion, attractiveness, national image.*

Annotatsiya. *Mazkur maqolada xalqaro maydonda "yumshoq kuch" strategiyasini amalga oshirishda ommaviy axborot vositalarining roli qay darajada ekanligi tahlil qilinadi. Garchi, mamlakatlar turli usullardagi "yumshoq kuch" strategiyalarini qo'llasalarda, ularni ommaviy axborot vositalari orqali targ'ib qilish siyosatini yuritmasalar bu samarali natijadorlikka erishmasligi bu usuldan unumli foydalangan davlatlar tajribasidagi faktlarni tahlil qilish yordamida o'rganiladi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *"yumshoq kuch", strategiya, Xitoy, Qatar, Turkiya, ommaviy axborot vositalari, targ'ibot, jozibadorlik, mamlakat imiji.*

Аннотация. *В данной статье анализируется роль средств массовой информации в реализации стратегии «мягкой силы» на международной арене. Хотя страны используют различные методы стратегий «мягкой силы», без продвижения этих стратегий через средства массовой информации достижение эффективных результатов маловероятно. В исследовании рассматриваются примеры стран, которые успешно применяли этот подход, чтобы продемонстрировать его эффективность.*

Ключевые слова: *«мягкая сила», стратегия, Китай, Катар, Турция, средства массовой информации, продвижение, привлекательность, имидж страны.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, international relations have undergone significant transformations. During the era of military confrontations and hegemonic conflicts, the primary choice for states in foreign policy was the strategy of hard power. However, concepts such as attraction, incentives, and influence on opinions have emerged as alternatives to coercion, threats, and sanctions. This shift has given rise to the concept of "soft power" in international politics.



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The term "soft power" was introduced into academic discourse by Harvard University professor Joseph Nye. As he explains in his book of the same name, in politics, soft power refers to the ability to turn one's interests into the interests and desires of others. In this process, the ideas proposed by one country ultimately serve the interests of the proposing country itself. Joseph Nye emphasizes the importance of sources such as cultural history, heritage, various events and conferences, intellectual and artistic production, as well as museums, libraries, and influential national figures. He notes that these are essential tools for creating an image that promotes a state and exerts influence on others (1).

Former chairman of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission, Newton Minow, also shared his views on "soft" and "hard power." He stated that "a dollar spent on ideas is equivalent to a hundred dollars spent on bombs."

This article examines the extent to which mass media plays a role in implementing the "soft power" strategy on the international stage, using the experiences of developed countries as examples for analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It should be emphasized that while each country adopts different approaches to "soft power," the core essence of this strategy remains focused on enhancing a nation's image on the global stage, promoting itself, and increasing its recognition worldwide. Pang Zhongying, Director of the Center for Global Governance Studies at Renmin University of China, argues that rather than adopting American ideas, China should seek its own approaches to enhance its overall national strength. As an example, he cites the ancient Chinese governance strategy of *Huairou* ("Gentle Agreement").

In China's "soft power" strategy, culture is recognized as its cornerstone, and as a result, significant attention is devoted to this domain. The primary focus lies in promoting the country's traditional culture, in contrast to nations like the United States, Japan, and South Korea, which emphasize pop culture. Chinese scholars and policymakers also associate soft power with nation branding, further illustrating its strategic importance (2).

As one of the most effective forms of "soft power," the role and utility of mass media in modern times hold particular significance for China. To gain greater control over narratives about China, Beijing has increasingly focused on foreign-language media outlets. The government's main news agency, Xinhua, expanded its operations to 170 foreign bureaus. Publications such as *China Daily* and *Global Times* are printed in English and distributed worldwide.

In 2016, CCTV, the state television broadcaster, rebranded its news service as the China Global Television Network (CGTN). Of its six channels, two broadcast in English, while others operate in Arabic, French, Russian, and Spanish, reaching over 70 countries. Additionally, in the same year, China Radio International broadcast 392 hours of programming per week in 18 languages from 27 overseas offices.

According to a Reuters investigation in November 2015, a Chinese media firm covertly managed a network of over 30 radio stations across 14 countries to conceal its influence. These initiatives targeted approximately 50 million ethnic Chinese in

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Southeast Asia and beyond, as well as foreign audiences, as part of China's strategy to expand the reach of its mass media (3)

In recent years, Beijing has launched an aggressive campaign to expand its influence and promote its perspective on key global issues through international mass media. These efforts have taken various forms, ranging from establishing new media outlets to conducting sophisticated propaganda campaigns.

Chinese officials have also been known to leverage platforms such as Twitter, WeChat, and Douyin (TikTok) to disseminate pro-China content, often utilizing fake accounts to amplify their reach and bolster their narratives (4).

Another example is Qatar, a nation that once consisted mainly of desert but has rapidly built its international image through strategic national positioning and branding. Qatar has transitioned from a policy of neutrality to adopting strategies focused on competition and influence. A cornerstone of this approach was the establishment of the Al Jazeera network in 1996, which became a transformative force in the Arab media landscape (5).

Al Jazeera fundamentally changed the objectives, scope, and structure of Arab media. From its inception, the network championed slogans of independence and neutrality. However, it is no secret that Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa was both the founder and sponsor of the network. Al Jazeera introduced a model of media with limited political constraints, attracting top journalists and media professionals to its ranks.

The network gained significant prominence due to its coverage of major events like the war in Afghanistan and exclusive interviews with controversial political figures. Within a few years, Al Jazeera successfully expanded in structure and influence. It shaped perceptions of desert warfare, guided public opinion, and established itself as a global player. Today, the Al Jazeera network stands on par with major outlets like CNN, Sky, and BBC.

In addition, Turkey has successfully implemented the strategy of using mass media as an external instrument in its "soft power" policy, which has effectively evolved into "television diplomacy." Key tools in this strategy include TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), Anadolu Agency, news websites, radio, newspapers, films, and television programs.

Under the Justice and Development Party (AKP), for the first time, mass media in Turkey began to be utilized for "public diplomacy" objectives. The Balkan countries became the focal point of Turkey's informational "public diplomacy" strategy. In 2012, Anadolu Agency began publishing in Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian languages. The agency also opened branches representing Turkey's face and brand in Sofia and Belgrade. In a short period, it became a leading source of news in the Balkans.

Through these efforts, Turkey successfully implemented a strategy to disseminate news infused with a Turkish perspective to the region's population. TRT WORLD emerged as the largest news channel and an international driver of "public diplomacy." TRT AVAZ, another significant channel, broadcasts to a vast region spanning the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Balkans, and Central Asia, reaching approximately 250 million people across 27 countries. In 2010, TRT TURK took on the task of covering the

geography of the Balkans with its wide Turkish-centric audience and strategies encompassing various fields.

CONCLUSION

As the significance of information warfare continues to grow, states have increasingly integrated news dissemination strategies into their long-term objectives. Mass media play a critical role in shaping international politics by creating unique perceptions and realities through language and ideas.

It is essential to note that Uzbekistan also possesses ample "soft power" resources that can enhance its image on the global stage. The country's rich heritage, expanding cultural collaborations, and consistent peace-oriented foreign policy already serve as attractive elements. However, the effectiveness of promoting Uzbekistan's language, literature, art, sports, gastronomy, nature, and other cultural assets through mass media on the international stage remains insufficient.

The above facts underscore the need for a dedicated information source capable of promoting the country's policies across various fields worldwide. Establishing major agencies with foreign branches, staffed by skilled and influential Uzbek professionals, could provide unbiased and transparent information as a primary source, gaining the trust of a broad audience.

Currently, the absence of an Uzbek-focused information agency, even targeting the Central Asian region, highlights the critical need to strengthen promotional and advocacy efforts. Developing such infrastructure would significantly contribute to Uzbekistan's presence and influence in the international information landscape.

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