

Soft power essay examples

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Is " Soft Power" a new apparatus being used by countries to lead the world towards a new form of globalization?

According to Joseph Nye, the term " soft power" describes an influence method, which indirectly attracts people by using reputation, values and general public appeal. The concept is often compared to the " hard power", which uses threats and carrots in order to co-opt people around a common goal. Although " soft power" is often believed to be the driving force of a new globalization phase, the role of this power remain ambiguous, especially in relation to the more traditional " hard power".

The most apparent benefits of the " soft power" are its ease, effectiveness and efficiency. It does not require additional resources, however, the relationships created using " soft power" approach are based on mutual agreement, therefore they can last longer and tend to be stronger. It is particularly important in the contemporary world, where countries' powers can be balanced. In this case, there is no state, which possesses an absolutely superior power that cannot be offset by a coalition of the other states. Therefore, " hard power" cannot be effective and countries have to rely on the " soft power" of attracting and co-opting. As the countries cooperate closer and spread their influence through soft factors, such as culture, music etc., the world becomes more and more globalized. Hence, it is possible to conclude that " soft power" has indeed become a driver for the new wave of globalization.

However, the impact of " soft power" on globalization can be two-fold. On the one hand it is possible to argue that globalization is enhanced by the

increasing cooperation between states due to their attempts to establish “soft power”. The mechanism of globalization reinforcement through the “soft power” has been functioning in the same way for decades already. Thus, world “Americanization” was not only driven by the possibility to exercise “hard power” by the U. S. A., but also by the wide acceptance and popularity of the American lifestyle and culture. This process, however, was not always a positive-sum game. Apart from the people, who have embraced the U. S. culture and welcomed world convergence in tastes and values, there were many, who opposed globalization and did not accept the “soft power” of America. Indeed, it was hardly effective as a means for resolving major world problems and conflicts. “Soft power” impact created a group of people, who were affected by the power, while segregating all the others, mostly in the poorest and in the most remote regions. If they say that no 2 countries with McDonald’s have ever had a war against each other, it is crucial to add that in the poorest countries with the highest risk of armed conflict McDonald’s simply does not exist. In some instances, “soft power” effect is too slow and does not reach the target. In this case a certain degree of “hard power” should be used as a fast mechanism for conflict resolution. The combination of soft and hard components of the power were combined into a “smart power”, which should be used to drive globalization instead of the “soft” one. In this case, it will both provide a platform for long-term cooperation among countries, and establish a functioning mechanism for mitigating conflicts and the decisions of the remote (politically, economically or culturally) regions, especially if these decisions could have implications for the world as a whole.

Although “ soft power” is often considered a driver of a new globalization, the effectiveness of this mechanism can be arguable. Therefore, it is possible to use “ smart power” instead of the “ soft” one, in order to secure the possibility to put pressure on some countries, which are not willing to cooperate or do not experience the effect of the “ soft power”. In this case, the new wave of globalization will not be characterized by the domination of a single culture all over the world, with the exceptions of the poorest and most problematic zones, which were unable to embrace the “ soft power” features. It will rather be driven by a “ smart” effort to bring globalization to every part of the world, to achieve growth and stability in every country, while possessing the tools to mitigate immediate conflicts and to eliminate some possible threats.

References

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