IIUM Journal of Human Sciences
Vol. 7, No. 1, 2025, 13-24
ISSN 2682-8731 (Online)

Culture and Trade: Revisiting Smart Power in the Digital Age

Rini Suryati Sulong[1] and Hou Xiaoli[2]

[1] *Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Labuan International Campus*

[2] *Management College, Beijing Union University, Beijing, China*

ABSTRACT

This article explores how cultural trade can serve as a form of 'smart power'. We examine how globalisation has developed to amplify the influence of digitalisation in the exchange of both tangible and intangible goods, thereby boosting cultural trade. We review how a nation's cultural identity has been constructed and understood through a conceptual synthesis. This article investigates how a nation utilises the medium through which its culture is shared and considers the extent of its influence. We argue that although a nation's cultural identity may be exchanged as tangible and intangible cultural products across borders, the underlying values and implicit assumptions of these artefacts are not always communicated as intended. Consequently, we seek to explore the role of advancements in telecommunications and digital technologies in shaping cultural identities and state power. From our analysis, while digital technologies enable quicker access and broader audience reach, digitalisation may not yet fully capture the nuanced understanding required for accurate cultural exchange. In this context, if a nation can effectively leverage digital technology to disseminate the cultural norms and values associated with its cultural products, then, and only then, can it utilise 'smart power' to influence public opinion and manoeuvre international relations to its advantage.

Keywords: *Cultural trade; Soft power; Smart power; Cultural influence*

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the digital age has transformed communication, commerce, and the way identities and relationships are formed. The advancements in telecommunications and digital technologies influence public opinion, cultural identities, and state power.

Culture encompasses many aspects of national identity, from intangible elements like language to tangible items such as jewellery and architecture. The trade of goods and services of cultural significance is a relatively ancient concept but has gained importance over time. According to Frey and Pommerehne (1987), "international art trade is not a new phenomenon but has existed since the very beginning of art" (p. 465). What has changed is how it is perceived and evaluated. In the words of Siehr (2005):

> *In ancient times, people traded goods that today would qualify as cultural objects but were then common items of daily life (e.g., pottery), of aristocratic lifestyles (e.g., jewellery, statues for gardens), or of funeral customs (e.g., urns, sarcophagi). [...] Their trade was part of broader commercial relations across the whole ancient*

> *world. [...] Art trade as a specialised profession is a relatively recent development. (p. 1069)*

The cultural industry developed rapidly after World War II, following the advent of the third industrial revolution and increased global trade integration. This led to a rise in the use of electronics in telecommunications, production, and transportation, making the movement of goods and services more efficient. As a result, international trade in cultural products attracted the interest of many scholars and researchers.

The relationship between culture and economics, along with the evolving concept of cultural trade, moved to the forefront of academic discussion in the late 1980s. Scholars such as Frey and Pommerehne (1987) examined concerns about international trade in art from economic and psychological perspectives. Other important early works on culture and trade included Marvasti's (1994) cross-sectional analysis of international trade in cultural goods, Frey's (1997) economic approach to assessing cultural property, and Galperin's (1999) study of the development of cultural industries in the context of regional integration and trade agreements.

Studies have emphasised the growing importance of cultural trade in promoting economic growth and influencing international relations. Statistics from the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as reported by Li Xin (2021), indicated that global cultural trade expanded at an annual rate of 5.3% between 1994 and 2002. Additionally, the total volume of global cultural trade increased from 98.314 billion USD in 2000 to 138.638 billion USD in 2018, representing a growth of 41.02% (Li, 2021). During this period, the United States of America (US), the United Kingdom (UK), and Germany consistently ranked among the top ten, reflecting their dominance in cultural trade worldwide. For instance, in 2018, the total cultural trade volume of the US, UK, and Germany was 26.145 billion dollars, 15.803 billion dollars, and 12.926 billion dollars, respectively, accounting for 39.58% of the global cultural trade volume that year (ibid.).

It is also noteworthy to mention that China has climbed the ranks significantly over the past decades. The popularity of China's pop culture may have been strongly influenced by its substantial growth in cultural trade during this period. For example, according to an analysis by Li Xin (2021), China's total cultural trade volume increased from 1.831 billion dollars in 2000 to 9.927 billion dollars in 2018, ranking 13th in 2000, 6th in 2008, and 4th in 2018, showing significant growth both in rank and trade volume. This was further emphasised in an article by Yecies, Keane, Yu, Zhao, Zhong, Leong and Wu (2019), stating that China's government is heavily investing in digital innovation, where it is "most evident in the trailblazing presence of Chinese digital and telecommunications companies in the domestic market and also abroad." (p. 205).

Conceptualising Cultural Trade

Before engaging in any discussion on cultural trade, we must first identify what kinds of products and services are included under the term 'cultural products'. This is not an easy task. The very concept of 'culture' is already broad and subjective, shaped by a society's values, attitudes, and unspoken assumptions; therefore, the criteria for classifying cultural products are also wide-ranging, covering both tangible items like paintings and buildings, as well as intangible assets like language.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (n.d.), cultural goods are consumer products that convey ideas, symbols, and ways of life, such as books, magazines, multimedia products, software, recordings, films, videos, audiovisual programmes, crafts, and fashion (UIS, 2009). UNESCO has also stated that cultural products include goods and services related to the arts (performing, visual, architecture), heritage conservation (museums, galleries, libraries), the cultural industries (print media, broadcasting, film, recording), and festivals. This represents a very broad range of goods and services, covering a wide area of trade.

Scott (2004), along with other scholars (e.g., see Schreiber, 2017; Scott, 2017) in the field of cultural economy, describes cultural economy (or the cultural-products industry) as sectors that provide service outputs centred on entertainment, edification, and information, as well as manufactured products through which consumers create distinctive forms of individuality, self-affirmation, and social display (p. 462). Some examples of products and services falling under this broad classification include print media, recorded music, films, clothing, and jewellery. Broadly speaking, the cultural economy involves "the creation of products whose value rests primarily on their symbolic content and how it stimulates the experiential reactions of consumers" (Power & Scott, 2004, p.3). Additionally, some scholars have emphasised the significance of "ideas" and "image" in defining and categorising cultural products. For example, in a study by Liu, Li, Tao, and Wang (2024) on intangible cultural heritage, they argued that "image", which refers to an individual's ideas and impressions of an object, plays a vital role in defining the meaning and "authenticity" of intangible cultural heritage.

Based on a report published in "The WTO: Legal, economic and political analysis", conceptualising cultural trade and labelling of cultural goods are among the fundamental issues revolving around culture and international trade (see Appleton & Pummer, 2007). There has been a long history of conflicts on the global stage related to cultural products, including their significance and influence on cultural expression and national cultural industries deemed crucial for a nation's socio-economic development (Bernier, 2005). For instance, the definition of the attributes of cultural products became one of the main points of contention in the "China-US Audiovisual Services Trade Dispute". Among other developments in the industry, against the backdrop of escalating geopolitical conflicts, the field of international cultural trade and investment has witnessed a shift from offshore production to onshore production, and from offshore outsourcing to friend-shoring and nearshoring. This has also consequently impacted the global flow of cultural trade (Hua & Tian,2024).

Nevertheless, with the rapid pace of globalisation, trade in cultural goods and services worldwide now occurs not only in physical form but also digitally. This includes the sale of art, the dissemination of beliefs, traditions, and customs through films and literature, and the movement of artists and performers across borders. For instance, the widespread use of social media has enabled every one of us to post information and sell items identified earlier as cultural goods and services. Therefore, the scope of cultural trade has certainly expanded to include the digital exchange of ideas, and its impact has become more significant.

Take China, for example. According to the "Annual Report on China's Digital Publishing Industry 2022-2023: China's Digital Publishing Moving Forward with Determination" published by the China Academy of Press and Publication, the total revenue of China's digital publishing industry in 2022 reached 1.358699 trillion yuan, an increase of 6.46% compared to the previous year. Of this, online comics contributed 33.094-billion-yuan, mobile publishing (including only mobile reading) 46.352-billion-yuan, online games 265.884 billion yuan, online education 262 billion yuan, and digital music 63.75 billion yuan. China is

becoming one of the world's major markets for digital content. The "2021 Mobile Games Going Global Insight Report," jointly published by Google and App Annie, revealed that in the 2021 overseas mobile game market, Chinese mobile games accounted for 23% of user spending. This ended the dominance of Japanese games and established China as the global leader.

In another example of the growing influence of cultural trade, it was reported by the Canada Council for the Arts (2024) that Canada exported $24.5 billion worth of cultural products in 2022, an increase of 8.6% from the previous year. Among the top five countries receiving their exports, the US remains their largest trading partner. In terms of both cultural exports and imports for Canada, crafts, written and published works, and audio-visual and interactive media have contributed most to this growth.

What can be discerned from the discussion above is the complex, and often confusing, nature of identifying, defining, and categorising between tangible and intangible cultural goods and services. With the influx of technology and digitalisation of products, the issue of ownership of cultural products becomes a concern and a source of conflict for some.

Where Does Culture Influence State Power

Cultural trade has received increased attention in the 21st century due to its capacity to influence not only economic growth but also social, political, and cultural relations between nations. In a speech during the "20th Seminar on International Security, Politics and Economics" in 1999, Renato Ruggiero, the WTO Director-General at that time, stated:

> *"More and more, we are facing issues and concerns which go beyond the parameters of trade. More and more, globalization is raising a whole new set of questions about how to manage interdependence. [...] Can we preserve cultural identities in an age of borderless communications?" (12 April 1999)*

As cultural goods and practices spread globally through trade, they can challenge traditional ideas of national identity, change social norms, and influence political power relations. Although it is still debated how much importance a nation's cultural trade holds in international power dynamics, it cannot be denied that cultural influence is seen as a key aspect of state power.

Powers of the State

Power in international relations generally refers to the ability to persuade or dissuade an actor from doing something it would not otherwise do (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2012). Put simply, a state's power depends on its capacity or potential capacity to influence others. Power can be categorised into hard power, soft power, and even smart power. The term "soft power" was introduced by Joseph S. Nye in 1990 as an analytical concept to explain elements of power beyond military and economic resources (Nye, 2021). According to Nye, soft power is "the ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction and persuasion rather than coercion and payment" (Nye, 2014, 2017; Foreign Policy Association, 2016). While hard power refers to more visible or tangible forms of strength that can threaten or coerce others, such as economic and military might (Kroenig, McAdam, and Weber, 2010; Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2012).

Since its emergence, the concept of soft power has become a fundamental part of the study of international relations. As Nye (2017) himself states in a commentary, "I thought of soft power as an analytic concept to fill a deficiency in the way analysts thought about power,

but it gradually took on political resonance" (p.2). However, its meaning, attributes, and the significance attributed to its relative power have varied and are sometimes regarded merely as rhetoric in politics.

The factors of cultural influence, national image, and recognition by others were also conceptualised by other scholars as soft power (e.g., Jin, 2024; Neto, de Sousa-Filho, and Lima, 2021; Schreiber, H., 2017; Smith, 2012; Goldsmith and Horiuchi, 2012; Zamorano, 2016). Therefore, some scholars argue that soft power resources and capabilities can offer opportunities for states to influence their regional neighbours in a way that differs from hard power. For example, researchers such as Ogunnubi and Isike (2015) believe that soft power can serve as a tool for regional influence, which formed the basis of their comparative analysis of how Nigeria and South Africa can use their soft power capabilities to shape their regional hegemonic status in Africa. They describe soft power as a state's ability to employ subtle and non-violent means of advancing its national interests on the international stage.

Having the ability to influence neighbouring regions is crucial for a state. In John Agnew's (1999) article on "Mapping political power beyond state boundaries," he challenges us to view power from different perspectives, such as the social-geographical conditions that enable power politics. Agnew argues that a state's political power also depends on how other states and institutions recognise it, with support, loyalty, and legitimisation all contributing to the formation of political identity. He further contends that technological advancements have altered how state power can be measured, where being territorially larger does not automatically make a state more economically or politically powerful.

Enhancing neighbourly relations through soft power via cultural exchange can be illustrated by an article by Hahm and Song (2021), which examined how cultural trade helped improve the relationship between South Korea and Taiwan. The authors observed that the popularity of Korean cultural products, largely driven by its entertainment industry, positively influenced relations between the countries, with more Taiwanese students studying in South Korea and increased tourism. It was also noted that the success of South Korean TV dramas and music videos, known as the "Korean Wave," significantly boosted economic trade between the nations, providing a strong argument for the effectiveness of soft power (ibid.).

Nevertheless, similar to the issue of cultural trade, defining and conceptualising soft power has also been debated among scholars and statesmen since the idea was first introduced. Many studies have described soft power as related to a country's cultural values or its ideological and cultural influence (Neto *et al*, 2021; Singh, 2010; Ogunnubi and Isike, 2015). In this context, a country's cultural products and the identity linked to the culture can be seen as sources of power (Schreiber, 2017; Singh, 2010). Similarly, soft power has often been equated with a nation's image or how its people, culture, and identity are perceived by others (Blanchard and Lu, 2012; Didier, 2019; Hill and Beadle, 2014; Neto, *et al,* 2021; Nye, 2014; Ogunnubi and Isike, 2015). Despite the different elements associated with soft power, there is a consensus that a significant part of soft power is rooted in shared ideas and identity. However, this raises the question of how cultural values are developed and what roles traditions and communication play in shaping our shared identity.

Revisiting Power in the Digital Age

In essence, the state has a full range of power capabilities and resources, both in hard and soft forms, that can be effectively used to influence outcomes favourable to national interests. As demonstrated by examples of how the "Korean Wave" spread across the globe,

from the works of Hahm and Song (2021) and Jin (2024), these examples illustrate how cultural influences, essentially soft power, can be managed effectively through digital platforms. Therefore, we argue in this paper that a state's ability to influence through soft power in the digital age can be regarded as "smart power".

Over the years, the concept of "smart power" has garnered increasing interest and prominence in foreign policy discussions. In an article by Wilson III (2008), he stated that a state's "capacity for creativity and innovation can trump its possession of armored divisions or aircraft carriers, and new hi-tech tools can greatly enhance the reach of military and non-military influence" (p.112). This emphasises the significant role that digital technology and advancements in telecommunications can play in shaping a state's relative power. Similarly, Popova et al. (2022) also examined the role of digital media and social networks as tools for implementing soft power. They argued that digital communication technologies have a strong influence on the formation of ideas among their users, which can generate both advantages and disadvantages for a nation. On the one hand, a nation can increase its influence and power, but on the other, it can create social and political threats through the dissemination of damaging information to the state.

The ability of states to use all available tools, combining hard and soft power to achieve preferred outcomes, has been termed "smart power" (Nye, 2017, 2021; Wilson III, 2008). Candidly, Wilson III (2008) writes, "sophisticated nations have everything from smart bombs to smart phones to smart blogs" (p.113). Just as bombs, the spread of information, especially misinformation, can significantly impact state power. This raises the question of how the digitalisation of cultural trade, that is, the use of technology to wield soft power, can be manipulated to attain desired results. For the state, this is not merely a question of soft power, but more fundamentally one of "smart power".

Blurred Lines: Managing Culture & Trade in the Digital Era

Based on our discussion so far, it can be argued that smart power is a tool for the state to utilise digital media to promote its cultural identity positively and to exert influence. Studies have demonstrated that traditional communication and digital media technologies can serve as powerful tools for transmitting information, whether supportive or damaging to a nation's image (see Jin, 2024; Nye, 2021; Hahm & Song, 2021; Surowiec, 2017; Zamorano, 2016; Hunter, 2009; Goldsmith and Horiuchi, 2012). Additionally, research indicates that foreign policies that support education initiatives and foster networks also significantly contribute to enhancing a nation's soft power ambitions to bolster its reputation (see Arif, 2017; Blanchard and Lu, 2012; Geun, 2009).

For instance, the idea of diplomacy through culture was highlighted by Yecies, et al (2019) in their article discussing how culture and power complement each other, where the concept of "cultural soft power" entered China's policy vocabulary in 2007 through President Hu Jintao's efforts to expand China's political and economic influence abroad. "In China, power is strongly associated with ideology, which is underpinned by disseminating 'correct' representations of the nation and national life, or at least representations that senior leaders and officials approve" (ibid., p. 206). Here, we are once again shown the importance of ideas and shared identities.

In today's seemingly borderless world, our environment is no longer limited to physical walls or communities within our reach. Instead, rapid technological advancements in telecommunications have transformed the world into a vast source of knowledge. This

highlights the importance of re-examining the role and significance of smart power in the digital age. As Schrader (2015) states, "new media, and social media in particular, provide affordances for learning, knowledge development, meaning making, and mind changing" (p.27). The close connection between ideas and technology is further illustrated in an article by Kroenig, McAdam, and Weber (2010), where the authors argued that a state's soft power's effectiveness heavily depends on its ability to communicate the intended message and ideas that can influence the attitudes of its audiences.

This can be linked to the idea of social constructs. From a constructivist perspective, soft power emphasises how actors develop their ideas and beliefs through social interaction. Social constructivism suggests that knowledge development, such as learning new ideas and norms, involves active engagement with objects and people in one's environment (Schrader, 2015). Once again, this highlights the role that smart power plays, particularly the influence of digital technology (especially in media), and how it can be utilised to spread ideas that shape people's views and attitudes towards a state.

As foreign media, music, fashion, and entertainment become more prevalent through global trade and digital sharing platforms, domestic cultures also risk being overshadowed by dominant international cultures. For example, foreign countries with large media conglomerates may use cultural trade to promote certain political ideologies or consumer behaviours that might not align with the values of the importing country. If traditional values and customs become less popular compared to foreign culture, the political autonomy of the state is at risk. According to soft power reasoning, when local cultures are marginalised in favour of globalised norms, it can reduce a country's ability to assert its cultural sovereignty and preserve a distinctive national character.

Nevertheless, influencing others through soft power based on our views may not be as straightforward as simply sharing messages or exchanging cultural products. According to Clarke (2016), publications in Cultural Studies have focused more on the implied meanings that actual audiences interpret from cultural products (such as artwork, film, music, etc.), both individually and collectively. Although cultural products have their own values and associated meanings, it is not guaranteed that these intended meanings will be received or understood in the same way by the audience. On the other hand, it may even have the opposite effect, being perceived as propaganda and outright rejected by the intended audience.

Based on Clarke's research (2016), he concluded that

> *[...]much international cultural exchange is facilitated by a global cultural market over which states have relatively little control. Global media are, if anything, more likely to be influenced by corporations, although even they equally do not ultimately control the modes of reception and re-interpretation to which cultural products are subject.* (p. 170)

Global media today holds greater significance than it did a decade ago. Social media has established a very strong presence as we enter the 21st century, although its influence varies across generations and plays a key role in shaping our culture. The way we interact, who we engage with, and the types of knowledge shared through social media are changing rapidly.

According to the Digital 2023 Global Report (DataReportal.com), there were 5.16 billion internet users worldwide in 2022, meaning that 64.4 percent of the global population is now online. An article in Forbes Advisor (Forbes.com) estimates that 4.9 billion people globally

used social media in 2023. Following this, the Digital 2024 Global Report (DataReportal.com) revealed that the top five most-used social platforms are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and WeChat. Regarding the average number of times each user opens social media per month, the countries with the highest figures for the first four platforms are Egypt, South Korea, Argentina, Turkey, and Israel.

Social media is not just for fashion influencers or dance challenges; it is a powerful tool for spreading ideas and gaining support for both state and non-state agendas. According to a report by DigiTips.ch on world leaders on social media in 2022, as of May 2022, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, has 126 million followers on his personal and institutional accounts, which is twice as many as the American President, Joe Biden. Among world leaders, he has the most followers on Twitter (over 126 million) and on Facebook (over 60 million).

Renowned political scientist Ian Bremmer introduced the idea of the "digital order" potentially shaping the future of our world's geopolitics. In his Ted Talk segment (14 June 2023), Bremmer stated:

> *"The dominant actors setting rules and exerting power aren't governments but technology companies. […] Tech companies decide whether former U.S. President Donald Trump can speak without filters and in real time to hundreds of millions of people as he runs for president again. Without social media and its ability to promote conspiracy theories, there is no Jan. 6 insurrection on Capitol Hill, no trucker riots in Ottawa, no Jan. 8 revolt in Brazil. Tech companies even define our identities." (2023)*

The Undiscovered Future

In the 21st century, the digital age has transformed communication, commerce, and entertainment. Our discussion clearly highlights that cultural trade can impact a nation's cultural identity as well as shape public opinion and the course of international relations. The ability to subtly influence the values, attitudes, and behaviours of people to align with national (or foreign) interests through cultural trade via media exports of various forms is redefining soft power.

The state's control over messages shared on social media varies by country, but it generally aims to regulate content for reasons that are often politically motivated. Among these reasons, protecting national security, maintaining public order, and preserving social harmony are the most common justifications given by government authorities. In some countries, this control is exercised through strict censorship, while in others, more subtle methods such as content moderation and legal frameworks are employed. The trust that audiences place in the state, corporations, or social media content is influenced by various factors, including the perceived credibility of the source, past actions, and political ideologies. But where does the power of the state lie in terms of control and response? With advances in technology, algorithms also play a crucial role by curating content that aligns with a person's interests and personal views, creating "filter bubbles" that reinforce existing beliefs (Pariser, 2011).

If we rethink the idea of power as the ability to persuade or dissuade others, the current digital landscape allows communication at faster speeds and wider reach, which can pose challenges for the state. The capacity to influence through soft power is now available to both state and non-state actors, nearly on equal terms. Governments must compete with the diverse range of content provided by social media, which is personalised by algorithms to maximise

engagement and user satisfaction. While governments can regulate content to some degree, algorithms often offer a more immediate, tailored experience that can surpass government narratives (Tufekci, 2015).

A question that warrants further analysis in the rise of smart power is how a nation's cultural identity could be affected and what role cultural trade plays in relation to state power. Among the questions for future research is how much control a state would have over messages broadcast and shared on social media by the population. Herein lies the conundrum. What we perceive as a significant issue in wielding smart power in the digital age is trust. With the rapid and dynamic nature of technological progress, it raises serious concerns about algorithmic power and how it is used to shape cultural identity. It is difficult to determine which entities – the government, corporations, or the increasingly evolving artificial intelligence – control the mechanisms behind the algorithms of social media.

In our discussion, we proposed that if states can harness digital technology to promote cultural diplomacy through trade, then the concept of 'smart power' can be expanded to include how social media is used by both state and non-state actors to build shared values. However, the challenge lies in balancing control while encouraging greater cultural trade to achieve global recognition and support.

REFERENCES

Agnew, J. (1999). Mapping political power beyond state boundaries: Territory, identity, and movement in world politics. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies,* 28(3), 499–521.

Appleton, A. E., & Plummer, M. G. (Eds.). (2007). *The World Trade Organization: legal, economic and political analysis*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Arif, B. H. (2017). The role of soft power in China's foreign policy in the 21st century. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies, 3(3).* Retrieved January 24, 2025, from http://dx.doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v3i3p94

Bernier, I. (2005). Trade and culture. In *The World Trade Organization: Legal, Economic and Political Analysis* (pp. 2331–2377). Springer US.

Blanchard, J. M. F., & Lu, F. (2012). Thinking hard about soft power: A review and critique of the literature on China and soft power. *Asian Perspective*, 36(4), 565–589.

Canada Council for the Arts. (2024, October 9). *Trade of culture and sports products*. Retrieved January 29, 2025, from https://canadacouncil.ca/research/research-library/2024/10/trade-of-culture-and-sport-products.

Clarke, D. (2016). Theorising the role of cultural products in cultural diplomacy from a cultural studies perspective. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 22(2), 147–163.

Disdier, A.-C., Tai, S. H. T., Fontagné, L., & Mayer, T. (2010). Bilateral trade of cultural goods. *Review of World Economics*, 145, 575–595.

Didier, L. (2019). Soft power and exporters' behavior in international trade. *Economics Bulletin*, 39(4), 2595–2614.

Frey, B. S. (1997). Evaluating cultural property: The economic approach. *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 6(2), 231–246.

Frey, B. S., & Pommerehne, W. W. (1987). International trade in art: Attitudes and behaviour. *Freie Universität Berlin, Finanzwissenschaftliche Forschung*.

Foreign Policy Association. (2016, February 23). *Joseph Nye on soft power* [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved January 23, 2025, from https://youtu.be/_58v19OtIIg.

Galperin, H. (1999). Cultural industries in the age of free-trade agreements. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 24(1).

Goldsmith, B. E., & Horiuchi, Y. (2012). In search of soft power: Does foreign public opinion matter for US foreign policy? *World Politics*, 64(3), 555–585.

Goldstein, J. S., & Pevehouse, J. C. (2012). *International relations*. Pearson.

Geun, L. (2009). A soft power approach to the "Korean wave". *The review of Korean studies*, *12*(2), 123-137.

Hahm, S. D., & Song, S. (2021). The impact of the Korean Wave on South Korea–Taiwan relations: the importance of soft power. *Asian Survey*, *61*(2), 217-240.

Hill, C., & Beadle, S. (2014). *The art of attraction: Soft power and the UK's role in the world*. The British Academy. Retrieved June 20, 2025, from https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/322/the-art-attraction-soft-power-and-uks-role-world.pdf.

Hua, J., & Tian, Y. (2021). The international cultural trade order: Governance challenges and China's solutions. *Journal of Shenzhen University (Humanities & Social Sciences)*, 41(5), 36–46.

Hunter, A. (2009). Soft power: China on the global stage. *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, *2*(3), 373-398.

Jin, D. Y. (2024). The rise of digital platforms as a soft power apparatus in the New Korean Wave era. *Communication and the Public*, *9*(2), 161-177.

Kroenig, M., McAdam, M., & Weber, S. (2010). Taking soft power seriously. *Comparative Strategy*, 29(5), 412–431.

Li, X. (2021). *Analysis on the evolution characteristics and influencing factors of global cultural trade network since 2000* [Master's thesis, Liaoning Normal University].

Liu Y, Li Y, Tao W, & Wang Q (2024) Measuring intangible cultural heritage image: A scale development. *PLOS One,* 19(6): e0299088. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0299088

Marvasti, A. (1994). International trade in cultural goods: A cross-sectional analysis. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 18, 135–148.

Neto, A. R., de Sousa-Filho, J. M., & Lima, A. C. (2021). Internationalization of culture and soft power. *European Business Review*, 34(1), 103–126.

Nisbett, M. (2016). Who holds the power in soft power? *Arts and International Affairs*, 1(1), 1–24.

Nye, J. S. (2014). The information revolution and soft power. *Current History*, 113(759), 19–22.

Nye, J. S. (2017). Soft power: The origins and political progress of a concept. *Palgrave Communications*, 3(1), 1–3.

Nye, J. S. (2021). Soft power: The evolution of a concept. Journal of Political Power. Retrieved March 1, 2025, from https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2021.1879572.

Ogunnubi, O., & Isike, C. (2015). Regional hegemonic contention and the asymmetry of soft power: A comparative analysis of South Africa and Nigeria. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 37(1).

Pariser, E. (2011). *The filter bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*. Penguin Press.

Popova, A. L., Kanavtcev, M. V., Lukyanchikov, E. Y., & Averianova, V. F. (2022). The Role of Social Media in Implementing the Concept of "Soft Power". Retrieved on June 18, 2025, from https://www.atlantis-press.com/article/125970838.pdf

Power, D., & Scott, A. J. (2004). A prelude to cultural industries and the production of culture: The rise of the cultural economy. In *Cultural industries and the production of culture* (pp. 3–15). Routledge.

Schrader, D. E. (2015). Constructivism and learning in the age of social media: Changing minds and learning communities. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 2015(144), 23–35.

Schreiber, H. (2017). Intangible cultural heritage and soft power: Exploring the relationship. *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, 12, 44–57.

Scott, A. J. (2004). Cultural-products industries and urban economic development: Prospects for growth and market contestation in global context. *Urban Affairs Review*, 39(4), 461–490.

Scott, A. J. (2017). The cultural economy: Geography and the creative field. In *Economy* (pp. 339-349). Routledge.

Sergunin, A., & Karabeshkin, L. (2015). Understanding Russia's soft power strategy. *Politics*, 35(3–4), 347–363.

Siehr, K. G. (2005). Globalization and national culture: Recent trends toward a liberal exchange of cultural objects. *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, 38(4), 1067.

Singh, J. P. (2010). *International cultural policies and power*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Solomon, T. (2014). The affective underpinnings of soft power. *European Journal of International Relations*, 20(3), 720–741.

Surowiec, P. (2017). Post-truth soft power: Changing facets of propaganda, kompromat, and democracy. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 18(3), 21–27.

Tella, O. (2016). Wielding soft power in strategic regions: An analysis of China's power of attraction in Africa and the Middle East. *Africa Review*, 8(2), 133–144.

Tufekci, Z. (2015). Algorithmic harms beyond Facebook and Google: Emergent challenges of computational agency. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 12(3), 181–187.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (n.d.). Cultural goods. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Retrieved June 18, 2025, from https://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/cultural-goods.

USC Annenberg. (2019, June 7). *Joseph Nye on the future of soft power and public diplomacy* [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved January 26, 2025, from https://youtu.be/q75uTqz5XS4.

Wilson, E. J. III. (2008). Hard power, soft power, smart power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 110–124.

Yang, R. (2007). China's soft power projection in higher education. *International Higher Education*, 46.

Yecies, B., Keane, M., Yu, H., Zhao, E. J., Zhong, P. Y., Leong, S., & Wu, H. (2019). The cultural power metric: Toward a reputational analysis of China's soft power in the Asia-Pacific. *Global Media and China*, 4(2), 203–219.

Zamorano, M. M. (2016). Reframing cultural diplomacy: The instrumentalization of culture under the soft power theory. *Culture Unbound*, 8(2), 165–186.