

## CONCEPT OF SOFT POWER I:

“A state may achieve the outcomes it prefers in world politics because other states want to follow it or have agreed to a situation that produces such effects. In this sense, it is just as important to set the agenda and structure the situations in world politics as to get others to change in particular cases. This second aspect of power, which occurs when one country gets other countries to want what it wants, might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants.”

“If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow.”

From Nye, *Soft Power Foreign Policy*, No. 80, (Autumn, 1990), pp. 153-171  
Published

The above use of soft power has three aspects: **emulation**, actively getting others to want what we want, and structuring the situation to suit our goals and abilities. I focus on emulation. The other two aspects are inherent to the diplomatic instrument of power.

**Emulation is a unique capacity, which is not used or wielded by a state, but can be used up by a state's behavior. It is a passive instrument of power to which others may respond. The U.S. has long thought of itself as the “City on the Hill,” which others would want to emulate.**

## CONCEPT OF SOFT POWER II:

**Already in Nye's concept above are the seeds of its expansion – “might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants.”**

A second concept of soft power has developed – soft power versus hard power. Soft power is any instrument of power that is not coercive. Hard power includes all instruments that are coercive. This is a broadening of the original idea of command power.

The difficulty with this dichotomy is that every instrument of power can be either coercive or not. People power can arise from elections or from riots. Military power is often used in a non-coercive manner. Economic power is coercive when it is used in sanctions or used as a weapon in the manner of Russia's use of gas. The distinction is in the eyes of the one toward whom the use of the instrument of power is aimed, as well as the intent of the user of the instrument.

*Therefore, I prefer to keep soft power as the power to cause emulation and to avoid the distinction of hard power versus soft power as being potentially confusing and lacking in clarity. From my perspective, unfortunately the distinction has gained traction as a short hand way to categorize policies and behavior.*

