

Theoretical approach on "Soft power"

*it's probably not so good question,
so what block of*

have to follow

Soft power is not term used only for chinese political system. In many countries, most superpower countries is soft power included in their political structure and more or less is „transforming the word“. But as Mingjiang Li say „It has to be nurtured through a soft use of power and intentionally cultivated.“

So what is so called soft-power? Nye says that soft power is "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments."

If country make good use of its resources of power through various domestic cultural, economic, and political programs and this will bring well-being to its own nationals, such use of power in the domestic context can resonate in the international arena and will produce a lot of admiration and respect from other countries. This is feasible way to get what you want, while by other countries is considered still as legitimate.

So this attraction is usually based on power resources, such as culture, ideology, and institutions. Whereas hard power is evident in practices of threat, coercion, sanction, payment, and inducement. Soft power is preferable whenever is possible, not because its more moral then using force, but mostly by pragmatic and economic point of view: „ When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction.“

On the other hand soft power as well as hard power need to think as a two power affecting each other. Inappropriate use of hard power can lead to the decline of a state's soft power. An inappropriate and aggressive use of soft power can lead to make more enemies. For example as Katzenstein and Keohane argue American popular culture partially contributes to anti-Americanism in some parts of the world.

*I like this statement
kind of agree with it*

However to gain softpower, a state only attempts to display the good part of its culture that the outside world believes is enjoyable or agreeable, and hides those elements, that may cause uneasiness or misgiving in other states. In my opinion the main point how to convinced our partners is to emphasize what we have common.

There are two best option; how to generate soft power in international relationship. The first is convince their leaders that state is considerate of the concerns and interests of other states. „American leadership will be more enduring if we can convince our partners that we are sensitive to their concerns . . .“. The second best scenario would be to be able to have soft power over a majority of states.“ But as Nyes say: „this power is easy to feel, but hard to define.“

If soft power is used in international relationship for easier way to get what you want, we can also ask question if softpower was used by ancient emperors and leaders. Even soft-power is

wrong topic?

relatively new term, I think it is impossible that in ancient time was not such a use of power. Even if emperors and leader didnt think more deeply to define this term, I think it was less or more used in their international policy and trade.

As regards trade, for China big ^{advantage?} vantage in ancient times for using soft-power, could be its long time lasted status of „center of the world“. With this status, if chinas soft power and hard power in international policy was used well, it could lead to admiration and attracts many countries.

We can take a look, how Yo-Yo Ma describe a new silk road: „a modern metaphor for sharing and learning across cultures, art forms and disciplines.“ Even this definicion regard a new inovated silk road, the main character could be transformed also to old one. Silk road trade was mainly based on culture attraction by countries along silk road. If your culture and commodities is attractive for other countries, it can lead to better trade and easier earning money. In this point of ^{view} wiev, china could have a big tempting power for other countries and as we know, many countries in Asia and later also in Europe was less or more influenced by chinese culture. As Nye says: “When a country’s culture includes universal values and its policies promote values and interests that others share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes.“

As to China’s purpose of cultivating superpower in last decade. Deng and Zhang argue that China’s goal is more than becoming simply an economic superpower. China also wants to become a major world cultural power. However, in some points China’s development could has some serious signs of weakness too. As Suisheng Zhao argues that although China has moved quickly and made self-conscious efforts to cultivate soft power in order to promote its interests and expand its influence as a rising power, its approach to exercising soft power is flawed. This is largely because the pragmatic political values behind China’s rapid economic growth.

China’s current approach to soft power lacks contemporary moral appeals and is therefore hardly sustainable in the competition with the U.S. to inspire the vision of building a free and prosperous world.

I don't understand why there is in conclusion sentence about China's current approach while the topic was "Old Silk Road(s)"

I think the conclusion topic is too broad and the author is a bit lost in it. Or at least I'm.

It also look slightly like a summary of given sources. 😊



Can soft power be applied in terms of the Old Silk Road?

When it comes to topic of chinese government policy, we can more frequently hear about term of soft power. What we can understand under term of soft power? How can China influence the rest of the world by using soft power? Is it possible to apply soft power in terms of silk road? In following text (I am going to focus on theoretical approach of soft power in terms of the Old Silk Road.

Chinese leaders determined soft power as main international political strategy.

Chinese former President Hu Jintao remarked that international status of China depends on hard power as well as on soft power. The economy, technology and science could be considered as hard power, while soft power is more about influencing people through China's culture and traditional philosophy. Li Mingjian claims, that: "The mainstream assessment of the state of China's soft power by Chinese analysts is that soft power is still a weak link in China's pursuit for stronger comprehensive national power." (2009, p. 2). This could be claimed based on the fact that some countries are not worried about Chinese success in influencing other countries through soft power, because of hesitation to determine what is Chinese culture and values.

The question is what does really soft power mean? Li Mingjin claims that „It is the ability to get desired outcomes because others want what you want“ (2009, p. 3) and "the ability to affect what other countries want tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions." (2009, p. 3). Under these circumstances, soft power's main source are definitely for other countries attractive parts of culture, political values and impressive legitimate foreign policies. Soft power should be able to shape international institutions as well. Still, there might be question where we is the border of soft power and hard power. If one country is helping another one in any way without asking anything in return, could we claim that soft power is in play? How could we prove it? After all, is chinese approach to soft power reasonable and effective, if we know that hard power is also a good tool to produce attraction?

The old Silk Road was a very important and famous trading network and it is significant part of the world's history. Although these roads were connecting whole world, it is mostly associated with Asia, and for it's is name name mainly with China. Chinese leader Xi Jinping announced a new development strategy adopted by Chinese government Belt and Road Initiative. Could old Silk Roads increase attractiveness of chinese Belt and Road Initiative? I assume if chinese government's conviction that culture, ideology and values is a great source of soft power, claim that Belt and Road Initiative is a renewal or old Silk Roads could get people attracted. However I am not concerned that being attracted by idea of renewal Silk Road could significantly increase influence of chinese government.

Chinese government is convinced that culture, ideology and values are good sources of applying soft power and soft power is an effective tool to influence other countries. Although it seems that China hesitates to determine what is it's culture and values and so for some countries Chinese soft power is not a big threat. The fact China proclaims that Belt and Road Initiative is attempt to renew old Silk Road could sound attractive and in this way it could be applied in terms of Silk road. However I am not concerned that it could significantly increase influence of Chinese government.

Sources:

Li Mingjiang. 2009. „Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature“, in: Li Mingjiang, Soft Power : China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics. Lanham: Lexington Books, p.1-18.

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

The essay is discussing more the present situation than the old silk road.
THE ESSAY DOESN'T ANSWER THE RESEARCH QUESTION AT ALL.

NOT SURE IF "ME" AND "I" BELONG TO ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

WHERE DID WE FIND THIS FACT? DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE SENTENCE.

missing last name of author, for longer essays there might be more than one book from 2009

unclear, change word order? AGREE! SENTENCE CORRECT

DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION

2.2.2

Can soft power be applied in terms of Old Silk Road?

As professor Li Mingjiang explains in his book *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, the concept of soft power provides a unique perspective not only on China's current foreign and security policy but, more significantly, on the trajectory of China's rise in the long term.¹ The aim of this essay is to examine if soft power can be applied in terms of Old Silk Road when international trade between China and Western empires began to rise. In order to find the answer to this essay's question, it is important to firstly understand the theoretical approach on soft power, both by Joseph S. Nye, the author of the concept, and Li Mingjiang as well. Moreover, it is also necessary to remember the fact that there are different approaches on Old Silk Road, as it is not just one route or one century to be considered.

In 1990, American political scientist, Joseph S. Nye, in his book *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* developed the concept of **soft power**. Referring mainly to the United States, his concept of soft power stands opposite to military power and economic power, which are both examples of **"hard" command power**. As Nye explains, hard power can rest on inducements or threats. In his book, he suggests that there is also an indirect way to get the outcomes that you want, so-called "the second face of power." A country may obtain its preferred outcomes in world politics because other countries want to follow it, admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness. According to Nye, the ability to establish preferences tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as an attractive culture, political values and institutions, and policies that are legitimate or having moral authority.²

Moreover, Li Mingjiang in his book adds that *soft power doesn't exist in the nature of certain resources of power but rather it has to be nurtured through a soft use of power and it has to be intentionally cultivated through prudent use of all sources of power available in certain social relationships*. Focusing on the words **intentionally cultivated and nurtured**, can it be then applied to Old Silk Road? Taking China as the subject of application, the question here is if ancient Chinese dynasties were aware of possibility to use soft power to expand its territories and develop trade relations. Furthermore, there was no "China" as we know it today, with set borders and set values or developed culture. No doubt it can be applied for

¹ MINGJIANG, Li. *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*. Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009. ISBN 978-0739133774.

² NYE, Joseph S. *Bound to lead: the changing nature of American power*. New York: Basic Books, 1990. ISBN 04-650-0744-9.

contemporary PRC's New Silk Road initiative where China uses infrastructural projects, cultural festivals, scholarships and loans to secure its presence mostly in South America, East Asia and Africa. In the 21st century, PRC follows a set goals and has a clear purpose, so it can be said that its soft power is intentionally cultivated through prudent use of all sources of power available in certain case. Grill and Huang noted that culture (including Confucius Institutes), domestic values and policies (especially the Chinese model of development) and foreign policy (including good neighbour policies, international peacekeeping and international aid) became resources of Chinese soft power.³

Now, the two fundamental problems emerge. First one is the Old Silk Road term. Both Li Mingjiang and Joseph Nye are showcasing soft power on specific examples, like China and United States. However, applying soft power to Old Silk Road or Old Silk Road era is more difficult, mainly because it is hard to define what is meant by Old Silk Road. Looking at this problem using Richthofen's term '**Silk Roads**' (**Seidenstrassen**), there is a quite limited time period. He applies the term only to the Han period, in discussing the relationship between political expansion and trade on the one hand and geographical knowledge on the other. The term refers in the first instance to a very specific east-west overland route defined by a single source, even though he recognizes that at that time there were other routes in various directions.⁴

Taking a closer look at the Han period, there are occasions that might be considered as Chinese empire engaging in something like foreign relations (the better term might be engaging with outside world). Thus, there is a situation when soft power could be potentially used. In 138 BC, emperor Wudi sent the first Chinese envoy led by Zhang Qian to form an alliance with the tribal Yuezhi, because emperor was hoping to persuade the Yuezhi to help him defeat a rival group, Xiongnu. Zhang Qian failed in negotiating alliance, but he returned with information about sophisticated civilizations existed to the West, with which China could advantageously develop relations. However, there is no mention that Zhang Qian or Wudi were trying to use culture or policies to form alliance with Yuezhi. There are also mentions about holding hostages and sending spare princesses to organize matrimonial alliances with enemies, but this part of Han diplomacy doesn't seem legitimate or having moral authority. Hence, it cannot be said that soft power was practised during this period.⁵

awesome use of many sources and connecting all the information together

³ LAI, Hongyi a Yiyi LU. China's Soft Power and International Relations. New York: Routledge, 2012. ISBN 78-0415604017.

⁴ WAUGH, C.Daniel. Richthofen's 'Silk Roads': Toward the Archaeology of a Concept. *The Silk Road* 5/1, 2007.

⁵ WOOD, Frances. *The Silk Road: Two Thousand Years in the Heart of Asia*. United States: University of California Press, 2004. ISBN 978-0520243408.

Shifting away from Richthofen's approach of Old Silk Road, it linked the regions of the ancient world in commerce between 130 BCE-1453 CE, so not only during the rule of Han Dynasty. The mutual trade between West and East seems to play the most significant role. Li Mingjiang also argues *that soft power is the ability to get desired outcomes because others want what you want, rather than do what you make them do. It is the ability to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion.* But what did Chinese emperors want? Was the desired outcome prospering trade or something else? Chinese themselves used the Silk Road routes historically to import horses from Ferghana Valley, camels from Bactria, Persian luxury metalwork and textiles, and jade from Khotan, among other things they needed. On the contrary, China exported silk or porcelain vessels to the West, which should be considered as economy power or payment, not soft power.⁶ Now to emphasize the phrase **attraction rather than coercion**, extending territories in the past was often achieved by hard power. Ghengis Khan and his powerful army of Mongol horsemen spilled out of the eastern steppe and overran the surrounding territory in all directions. This was one of the most ferocious campaigns the world has ever known. When offered resistance, the Mongol armies took no prisoners. The Mongols even turned west beyond the Pamirs and attacked the Silk Route city of Merv. They are said to have massacred its 700,00 inhabitants - and even killed all the cats and dogs. This behaviour surely couldn't make positive impression on foreign entities.⁷

I like these questions it shows you think about the topic further

In conclusion, soft power cannot be applied in terms of Old Silk Road. Regarding Chinese history, there seem to be several obstacles. Looking at the rule of different dynasties with different political values and different attitudes towards foreign relations, further and deeper analysis of historical events would be needed. Applying theoretical approach of soft power to Old Silk Road seems difficult, as no evidence of intentional nurturing of soft power was found. Moreover, the term Old Silk Road itself is hard to define.

- great conclusion, clearly explained why
- very nice essay, great questions, using sources



⁶ BEACH, Milo C. The Ear Commands the Story: Exploration and Imagination on the Silk Road. *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1, The Silk Road and Beyond: Travel, Trade, and Transformation, 2007.
⁷ The Silk Route of the Mongols. In: *UNESCO*. [online] Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/knowledge-bank/silk-route-mongols>.

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1. BEACH, Milo C. *The Ear Commands the Story: Exploration and Imagination on the Silk Road*. *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1, The Silk Road and Beyond: Travel, Trade, and Transformation, 2007.
2. LAI, Hongyi a Yiyi LU. *China's Soft Power and International Relations*. New York: Routledge, 2012. ISBN 78-0415604017.
3. MINGJIANG, Li. *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*. Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009. ISBN 978-0739133774.
4. NYE, Joseph S. *Bound to lead: the changing nature of American power*. New York: Basic Books, 1990. ISBN 04-650-0744-9.
5. The Silk Route of the Mongols. In: *UNESCO*. [online] Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/knowledge-bank/silk-route-mongols>.
6. WAUGH, C. Daniel. Richthofen's 'Silk Roads': Toward the Archaeology of a Concept. *The Silk Road* 5/1, 2007.
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Modern Definition of Soft Power in Terms of the Old Silk Road

The initiative of New Silk Road, also called Belt and Road Initiative is nowadays widely discussed in the world. Not only governments but also companies and ordinary people have different ideas about China's intentions. And not all the interpretations of this initiative are positive. However, we can say that in general, countries mostly welcome the renewal of the Silk Road because of the economic benefits. Furthermore, we can state that one of the functions of new Silk Road is the spread of China's soft power and influence. But does the same view or arguments apply on the old Silk Road?

The intention of this paper is to analyse the connection between the old Silk Road and China's soft power. After reading Li Mingjiang's paper, we argue that in the past Silk Road and its functioning, we can find certain traits associated with soft power in contemporary meaning but the role of this road or roads was not the same. In the first part of this paper, we will concentrate on arguments supporting the idea that the old Silk Road served as a soft power tool. The second part of text will point out the differences which support my partial disagreement with the thesis. In my opinion, it is difficult to measure or define the past with modern worldview and that is the reason why the function of Silk Road differed in the past.

GREAT!
THE AIM
SHOULD ALWAYS
BE EXPLAINED
(GOOD JOB!)

Firstly, as Li mentions in his paper, imperial China was guided by Confucianism. Confucian man should treat others with kindness, morality and tenderness, which applies also to other nations. The international relations, according to Confucianism, should result in harmonising the good and bad and this balanced relationship can be maintained by trading interests. The aim of Confucianism is to avoid the extreme situations such as absolute peace or absolute chaos. This harmonisation of elements is commonly called doctrine of the Mean and it was one of the most fundamental philosophical approaches of imperial China. This principle of balanced life by always staying in the mean can be compared with today's conception of compromise in internal relations or trade, for example. Two governments or organisations are searching for intersection of their demands. From the philosophical point of view, we can state that the old Silk Road was one of the tools of China's soft power. Even though China was fighting with neighbouring nations who were trying to invade China's territory, the Silk Road served for commerce, cultural exchange and as a way to get in touch with different nations. The merchants moved along this road or roads, because for each time period, there were some smaller or bigger changes in geographical location of Silk Road.

Secondly, we can point out what was the result of the Chinese doctrine of the Mean. As Li states: „China, in practice, should strive for the “middle way” and orientate itself as a defensive participant who aims not at changing the status quo or opposing the hegemonic power of the system, but rather at defensively managing both internal and external challenges and avoiding costly competition.” (Li, 2009, p.12) In present, as well as in the past, to avoid the conflict and war means saving money and human resources. Furthermore, Li argues that nowadays, this approach guarantees a good reputation for China who is rising as a new power. China did not rise from bloodshed, which is beneficial when trying to gain international trust and support. Peaceful approach towards other nations and the support of mutual trade is surely a sign of soft power approach.

Thirdly, with exchange of goods and establishment of international relations naturally comes the cultural exchange as well. It helps better mutual understanding and the genuine interest in different culture or the desire for more effective commerce results in learning foreign languages and studying cultural differences. These days, the establishment of Confucian Institutes is one of the most-known examples of spreading Chinese culture. Of course, we know examples from past when scholars or military members were exploring foreign lands, cultures and nations. As we can see, the cultural exchange as another trait of soft power was present in past and it is not only a modern invention of diplomacy.

Shortly, the ideas of peaceful coexistence of different nations, economic thinking, mutual benefits in commerce and cultural exchange existed all along the human history. They had different names and might have been utilised differently than nowadays, but they were crucial for survival of nations. In my opinion, the arguments used so far support the thesis of usage of old Silk Road as a soft power tool. But we should consider the other side of argument as well.

As mentioned before, the doctrine of the Mean was crucial in Chinese philosophy. However, the idea of China being the Middle Kingdom and the only and perfect civilisation in the world shaped significantly China's worldview as well as politics. After a period of rich cultural exchange and foreign influence during the reign of Tang dynasty, China stopped to explore the world in belief that the world would come to learn from China. This idea comes from Confucianism, same as the doctrine of the Mean. As it is generally known, this approach led to one hundred years of shame of China starting at the beginning of 20th century, after being defeated by Western powers. Consequently, we could question the level of importance of international relations in the past. Nowadays, in globalised world, we would not be able to survive if we decide to end all the international relations or export and import of goods. But in the past, the situation was not the same. The international trade was limited, majority of it was happening within neighbouring nations. For example, the trade between Europe and China was rare and limited to exchange by third party. There were merchants who were traveling along the Silk Road and imported Chinese goods to Europe or the other way around, but the direct trade was limited. The limitations were caused by the distance and limited knowledge, which started to change mostly during the 19th century and later. The limited contact with foreign nations as well as low or non-existent dependence on the foreigners decreased the level of soft power which needed to be used or developed.

Moreover, according to Li Mingjiang, another trait of soft power is interest in problems of neighbouring and foreign countries. The real importance and influence of Europe's problems on China in the past is questionable. If there is a rare chance to obtain information about each other, also the impact on each other is low, which again decreases the mutual dependence and the need of good relations. As we said before, till the 19th century, the relations, trade or information between China and Europe were almost non-existent. We can assume that the conditions mentioned above were not supporting the principal of interest in problems of other nations.

Lastly, Li's text is elaborating the question of contemporary China's ability to use the soft power. The argumentation in his book concludes that China is still learning how to use the soft power. Also, when reading about China's reactions or actions on international issues, we can see that China is not always using the right approach to solve a problem or to make an appropriate statement. However, in my personal opinion, China ameliorated a lot her political rhetoric in recent years. The examples of different more or less appropriate reactions of China is another argument why to disagree with the statement that the old Silk Road was used as a soft power tool.

In conclusion, as we mentioned before, when we take a look on philosophical background of imperial China, we are able to find examples supporting the thesis of soft power usage, as well as the traits which acted against it. For example, the doctrine of the Mean or the belief of China being the only civilisation in the world. The international trade, peaceful coexistence and cultural exchange were present in different amounts during different periods of time. However, it is questionable how many of the activities were intentional, how much of the trade or cultural exchange was supported directly by the emperor and how much of it was just a natural consequence of living among other nations. Because the countries are searching for stability, peace and economic benefits, as they are crucial for existence.

Finally, we were able to find multiple examples of usage of soft power in the past, but because the societies and the world had different functioning, it is hard to implement contemporary definitions and behavioural schemes on the functioning of imperial China.

but author mentioned before that cultural exchange is not only the modern invention

IN GENERAL, GOOD JOB, BUT MAYBE I WOULD WRITE SOURCE OF WHERE DID WE GET THE EXPLANATION OF CONFUCIANISM, THE "MEAN" PHILOSOPHY ETC.



Sources

Li, Mingjiang. 2009. „Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature“, in: Li Mingjiang, Soft Power: China´s Emerging Strategy in International Politics. Lanham: Lexington Books, p. 1-18.

Can soft power be applied in terms of the Old Silk Road?

'Silk Road' as well as 'Soft power' are relatively recent terms. Soft power is a very popular concept in international affairs nowadays, ever since it was mentioned in a book published in 1990 by Joseph Nye - 'Bound to Lead'. While Silk Roads for the majority of their long history had no concrete name. But in the nineteenth century, German geologist Ferdinand von Richthofen, named the ancient network of trade routes, formally established during the Han Dynasty of China Die Seidenstrasse (the Silk Road), and the term, was richly used by historians and therefore had also become well-known as a common and recognized name by wide public.

On one hand both of these terms are very new and recent but on the other, China has been transforming the world with its soft power ever since the trading with other nations began, far before anyone was talking about it. Europeans had become used and dependent on the goods delivered from China. Besides goods, other ideas as well, like religion, philosophies, sciences and new technologies, were exchanged. As one of the criteria of soft power is attraction and China, which came up with gunpowder and paper, and also had a monopoly on silk production, which became, considered an exotic luxury, extremely popular and demanded, it is safe to say that other nations were attracted by China. Therefore could be more open to accepting, or even adopting, Chinese culture, learning, philosophies and so on. China grew enormous influence - soft power and the Silk Road trade significantly helped to the development of the civilization of China, but also Korea, Japan, Iran, India, Europe, Africa and Arabia.

State tries to display a good part of its culture only, so the rest of the world can sympathize and relate. China nowadays uses the Old Silk Road to gain sympathy as it shows there have been long-term, peaceful, prosperous and harmonious trade between China and other nations, including Europe. "It is no accident that many Chinese analysts now talk about the Chinese cultural emphasis on harmony or peace as the sources of China's soft power because these values essentially touch on the core issue of how power should be used." (Li, page 8) Culture is a very important potential source of soft power and China's goal is more than becoming an economic superpower. As Chinese economic power continues to grow, China wants to become a major world cultural power as well. It is not surprising that we can see overusing positives which bring the Old Silk Road to the world as there are many parts of Chinese history and culture which may be completely unacceptable to people in other societies. But China's soft power diplomacy has become more sophisticated and comprehensive in recent years. Its strategies now include expanding cultural and social exchanges, promoting economic independence, highlighting expected benefits from China's prosperity and presenting a peaceful and non-threatening new image around the world. It is obviously working and China quite improved its international image. BBC World Service poll of 22 countries discovered that China is playing a significantly more positive role in world affairs than even the U.S. Even more interesting is the fact that neighboring Asian countries that have historically suspicious of China are thinking about China in a very benign way now. China has much more cultural power than people ordinarily think.

China grew soft power along the ancient Silk Road besides other things also because of its demanded goods and nowadays tries to spread its culture to other countries in the name of this historical tradition. China quietly expands its power overseas by promoting Confucius Institutes across the world, offering help in less developed regions, for example training programs for African elites, the appeal of China's model of development and so on. Basically we can say that even when China's soft power has lagged significantly behind the growth of the country's hard power and many strategists maintain that China is still not sophisticated in incorporating soft power into its strategic planning, China's soft power is already transforming the world and we can only guess how it will evolve in next decades and shape the world.

- structure
- answering the question?
- the last sentence? - not topic of essay

1. Try to write more about how China's vision of the Old Silk road can affect its current position in global world
- 2 - focus on difference of soft power in China and US or in the democratic countries

Essay: Can soft power be applied in terms of the Old Silk Road?

At first, it is necessary for better understanding to explain what soft power means in terms of international relationships. According to the originator of this concept Joseph Nye, soft power is (very simply said) kind of an ability of one country affect the behaviour of another country without using pressure or other practises (e.g. threaten with starting a war,...).¹ However, the border between soft and hard power is something difficult to distinguish. As the author Li Mingjiang claims, culture is undeniably good source of soft power but due to aggressive cultural policy of a country, it can also reach the level of cultural hegemony or cultural imperialism.²

There are two points of view on China's current using of soft power. The first one supposes that China distinctly lagged its soft power in the comparison with the hard power. In this viewpoint China might not have coherent system how to properly use soft power. On the other hand, there is also another opinion that China's approach to soft power is quite optimistic while consider its rich sources, such as culture or traditional philosophy.³

What I reckon as very interesting is Nye's clause which is meentioned in Li's paper:

„This aspect of power – that is, getting others to want what you want – might be called indirect or cooptive power behaviour. It is in contrast to the acctive command power behaviour of getting others to do what you want.“⁴

I found it interesting because it describes the difference between soft and hard power clearly. The core of soft power is using behavioral approach. When a state uses its resources to make an offer in multilateral institutions, which are recognized by other states as legal, operable and also salutary, this act will bring soft power to it.⁵

With regard of current policy of China towards other countries, especially Europe in terms of soft power, there is The Belt and Road Initiative. In Chniese very own „13th Five-year plan for economic and social development of the People's republic of China“ is said:

„...All-around opening up is imperative to development. We need to carry out development with the door open. While focusing on domestic issues and making full use of domestic resource-related strengths and market and institutional advantages, we should also keep in mind the connectivity between the domestic and the world economies and respond proactively to changes in the external environment so as to make better use of both domestic and international markets and resources, and ensure benefit and development for all.“⁶

According to my opinion, this is very good image of how soft power can be gained – through showing you want to help the whole world to be better but also spreading your own sphere of influence. The „magic“ in succesfully gaining the soft power is showing only good elements from the culture.⁷

Oh not sure if this kind of language / metaphor can be used in essay

¹ LI, Mingjiang. Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature, in: LI, Mingjiang. Soft Power : China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009, p. 3.

² Id. p. 4.

³ Id. p. 2.

⁴ Id. p. 6-7.

⁵ Id. p. 7.

⁶ People's republic of China, Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, transl. Compilation and Translation Bureau, 13th Five-year plan for economic and social development of the People's republic of China, 2016, p.14-15. Retrieved from: <http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/policyrelease/201612/P020161207645766966662.pdf>.

⁷ LI, Mingjiang. Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature, in: LI, Mingjiang. Soft Power : China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009, p. 8.

NOT SURE
IF "I" or
"HE" SHOULD
BE USED
IN ESSAYS

NOT
ACADEMIC
LANGUAGE

Agree → THE PAPER FOCUSED MORE ON CURRENT CHINESE POLICY, NOT ON SILK ROAD

When it comes to the „Old Silk Road“, the usage of soft power is definitely not obvious. What I mean by the „Old Silk Road“? From historical point of view, there were not only one road but many small roads leading from China, through Middle East to Europe. Therefore, Ottoman Empire was very important point of contact. This fact lasted until 15th century when the Ottoman Empire prohibited this trade on their lands. What I found as the aspect of soft power is spreading the western religion. Westerners also showed to Chinese emperor what he could have, e.g. strong horses. Back then, many things were traded with, for example rice, silk, gunpowder, tea, animals, porcelain, etc. But as I mentioned earlier, not only material things were sold and bought there. Silk Road(s) was great example of exchanging both Western religion and East-Asian philosophy.⁸

In conclusion, I would say that applying designation soft power in terms of the Old Silk Road is quite suitable. Even though the term was invented in the 20th century and that is why it is easier to apply it on the present situations.

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maybe different formulation would sound better in English

More examples of how could be Soft-Power applied for Old Silk road

TOO BRIEF, SHOULD BE DISCUSSED MORE. WHY DO YOU THINK SOFT POWER WAS NOT OBVIOUS WHEN YOU GIVE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES?

Agree, the title suggests further elaboration of the old silk road, maybe more examples

⁸ Ancient History Encyclopedia [online]. MARK, J.J. Silk Road. England. c2009-2019 [cit, 2019-10-19]. Retrieved from: https://www.ancient.eu/Silk_Road/

X

SOFT POWER: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics {Review essay}

The book is an unique piece of academic work. It consist of several chapters. Every chapter was created as a contribution of different authors. The whole book was compiled and edited by Mingjiang Li. The whole study is based on logical arguments and it is very easy for readers to follow the ideas of the author. The whole book well structured. As we can understand from the book tittle soft power is the crucial topic for research of the study. Consisting of 13 chapters, this book seeks to present an in-depth examination of China's soft power potential, the perspectives among Chinese elites on soft power, China's practice of soft power, and the impacts and implications of China's emerging soft power strategy in world politics. This study is interdisciplinary in nature since the subject of soft power involves domestic politics, culture, history, social relations, and, of course, conventional approaches to international relations.

I think there is no need for such a long introduction of the book

As it was written in the introduction to this book author is trying to find answers to several questions. He uncovers lot's of claims about China's soft power for example It is claimed that China has built up its soft power 'at the expense of the United States' and to have mounted a 'charm offensive' globally to transform the world in its own image. Is there any substance behind such claims? Or What is China's soft power? In which way is China accumulating its soft power? Why should there be such a rage about China's soft power at this particular time?

Author is trying to examine the Soft power from many perspectives and angles. Starting with it's theoretical understanding moving through several factors which shapes it's more ore les obvious form to point out specific in a state international policy. Author provides not only a clear examples of using soft power but also gives an explanation to the readers what might be the causes and consequences of it's impact to presented international or bilateral image of the state. By reading this book readers can easily finds out those crucial factors which probably stand behind creating international presentation of the country made by it's government. Domestic problems of governance, stability, and regime security have threatened China's soft power. Nevertheless, soft power will likely continue to drive China's aspirations abroad. In chapter 5, Jianfeng Chen explores China's soft power from the Chinese cultural Doctrine of the Mean, essentially a traditional Chinese philosophy about how to use power and influence. In the context of international relations, the Mean refers to a world that embraces a unity of opposites rather than absolute peace or absolute chaos. Moreover author shows that results of the soft power actions which are taken to create a positive and attractive image for international community can be more or less predictable in most of the cases.

At the beginning author pointed out who used the term "Soft Power" for the first time. Author says that term was first publicly used by Joseph Nye's in the 1990s. Author briefly provide a critical review of Nye's conceptualization of Soft power. On one hand Author analyses a hot debate of China's soft power as a part of China's internal policy on the other hand he explains China's urgent need for receiving positive and admiring recognition in the international arena.

The book gives a lot's of comparison between the soft power of the United States and China, especially in using of methods how to demonstrate that the nation is a superpower and it's culture, ideas and the way of ordering the world should be blindly followed by other nations. The crucial in the strategy of soft power is to highlite uniqueness of the county and nation in

the way that would be strongly appreciated by international community. In a short Soft power can be determined as an ability of nation to get what it wants through the attraction rather than coercion or payments.

In the idealistic understanding of successful soft power one nation can convince the world to follow voluntarily its ideology, culture or even let the world think that emulating one model of behaviour is beneficial for everyone. However in reality the process of attraction other nations is a very complex process and there is no universal method for nation how to become a hegemon. Moreover it is clear from this study that only successful use of soft power is sometimes not enough. As I understand from the study only combination of soft power, hard power, economy and technological domination can put a country on the way to become hegemon. On the other hand author also demonstrate on example of the USA that cultural hegemony can gradually leads to anti- Americanism

A better approach to soft power is how the resources of power are used rather than associating sources of power as soft or hard. If a nation state (or any other actor) makes good use of its resources of power through various domestic cultural, economic, and political programs to bring well-being to its own nationals, it will produce a lot of admiration from other countries.

As it is obvious the sources of soft power not always produce attraction persuasion for the others. As we see values ideology culture of one country can come in to a conflict with other. This conflict can often increase in to hostility between nations. Demonstrating example of China it is clear that some sources of soft power and characteristics like authoritarian regime, or suppressions of democratic values and individualism will be strongly criticised from a western democratic countries's point of view. Since the mentioned values are the core of the western countries it is often the reason for them to limit the cooperation with China. But reality we can see that obstacle of different values can be overcome with a mutual economic business interest

On the other hand authoritarian regime, model of hybrid market and state control economy as well as ability to make a quick solution and adopt to new situations and persistence of CCP is often admired from the developing countries like Africa where the rulers are much more open to cooperate CCP regime. In result the projects of democratic countries involving in the developing countries are far behind the China's projects.

As author mentioned the key role of China is to shape international community by its actively participating on a global projects where the majority of the countries share basically the same values and opinions for ex: global warming problem, more over thanks to current policy of the USA and its isolationism China is having a perfect chance to gain a very positive recognition if can propose solution to certain international problems. China's international image has improved quite substantially. In fact, a BBC World Service poll of 22 countries found that China is viewed as playing a significantly more positive role in world affairs than even the U.S. What is particularly noteworthy in the survey is the fact that even in neighboring Asian countries that have been historically suspicious of China, the general views are relatively benign.

This study reveals that Chinese views on soft power widely vary, with the main stream believing that soft power is still a weak link in China's strategic planning but nevertheless should be an important component in China's future.

- Small grammar mistakes
- Nice ☺
- not sure if it fulfilled the topic we should write about
- I cannot see almost any personal thoughts or ideas