

Soft Power and Korean Diplomacy: Theory and Reality

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1. INTRODUCTION

Soft power, a term coined by Joseph Nye in the late 1980s, is the capability to attract and persuade others without coercion and payments.¹ Although military force and economic prosperity serve typically as the backbone of national power, such hard power does not always seem to reflect its influence. For instance, the United States as the world's sole superpower has spent a defense budget that equals many times more than that of other nations and it is the world's largest economic body. However, America's image and its influence are on a downfall, mainly due to its failure in seeking a global consensus on how best to pursue counterterrorism approaches and to address potential global challenges such as climate change. There have been many calls both within and outside the United States to restore America's leadership through "smart" blending of hard and soft power.

Many other countries are also increasingly recognizing the importance of soft power tools such as diplomacy, foreign (economic) assistance and communications in the process of galvanizing influence and enhancing positive images. Europe has a longer tradition and spends more in its "public diplomacy," a useful means to wield soft power, as shown in its global peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, international cultural relations, and immigration policies. Japan has embraced the concept of soft power as an instrument of its

foreign affairs and security policy under its constraints on the use of hard military power. Economically fast growing China began to increase its soft power potentials through culture, education, and foreign assistance. In recognition of culture as an indelible component of his foreign policy, Korean president-elect Lee Myung-bak aspires to build a “soft, strong power,” especially by combining culture and technology into a “creative industry.” These countries attempt to increase their capacity to strengthen soft attractive power, and at the same time integrate it well with the hard power of military and economic strength.

Despite its growing importance around the world, a universal definition of soft power is yet to be found, except that it is a form of national power based on ideational and cultural attractiveness which is intentionally or unintentionally utilized by actors in international relations to achieve strategic imperatives. As the conceptual gap broadens, soft power is incorporated into existing academic program and political institutions with considerable difficulty.

In order to overcome this deficit, this paper reviews ongoing discussion on soft power and specifies how it is identified, evaluated, and pursued in major states in international arena. With special emphasis on the case of Korea, the paper analyzes attractiveness of political institutions, economic model, social organization and culture of Korea and its contribution to the overall evaluation of the country’s soft power in global relations. In addition, it discusses how governmental and nongovernmental roles have contributed to strengthening Korean soft power.

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOFT POWER

Power refers to the ability to influence others to produce the outcomes you want. According to Robert Dahl, a prominent political scientist, “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.”² Traditionally, a nation’s

power has been determined primarily by its capability to influence the behaviors of other states through coercion and economic incentives. The size of population, territory, military force, national resources and economic strength have thus been key factors in assessing national power. Countries have tended to heavily depend on the use of hard power that rests on force (sticks) and inducements (carrots) because it was the direct and tangible way of enforcing dominance in international relations.

While acknowledging the indispensable importance of hard military and economic power, Nye in his book *Bound to Lead*, published in 1990, added a third dimension to the concept of power, i.e. soft power. Soft power is the ability to attract and convince, not just command and coerce. It enables a nation to appeal to others' values, interests, and preferences rather than the dependence on carrots and sticks. Nye argues that "[i]f a state can make its power 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... In short, the universalism of a country's culture and its ability to establish a set of favorable rules and institutions that govern areas of international activity are critical"³ because compatibility with other nations' value and interests is as important as the exercise of hard power to get what a nation wants.

According to Nye, in the global information age, "all three sources of power – military, economic, and soft – remain relevant, although in different degrees in different relationships." Yet, he argues that soft power is taking on increasingly more importance and relevance as countries engage in competitive politics of attraction, legitimacy, and credibility. He suggested there are three major resources of a nation's soft power: culture which attracts others, political values when it lives up to those values at home and abroad and its foreign policies when others appreciate it as legitimate and moral.⁴

Nye's conceptualization is by no means the only or the definitive explanation of power. For example, earlier than Nye, Kenneth Boulding in 1989 used the terms "threat,"

“exchange” and “integrative” power for similar purposes, claiming that while the realist’s focus tended to be placed on the threat power of coercion, “the evidence is very strong that integrative power is the most important of the three.” From this perspective, threat power is coercive and destructive and exchange power is based on the dynamics of trade, mutual contracts and reciprocal cooperation, while integrative power has a more emotional and organic basis, where human relationships extend beyond respect into friendship and even love.⁵

Long ago, E.H. Carr already discussed about the importance of “power over opinion” and its close association with a nation’s military and economic power.⁶ Among Hans Morgenthau’s modes of exercising national power, policy of prestige provides some hint into understanding the implication of soft power in an anarchic world. Power, in and of itself, is not an end of a nation state, but a means to achieve prosperity and to guarantee survival. A state not only enforces its will to others by taking measures that accompany propulsion of resources on foreign soil, but also by relying on international reputation for having sufficient intention and capability to use its power. Morgenthau stated that “[i]n the struggle of existence and power, what others think about us [the image in the mirror of others’ minds] is as important as what we actually are.”⁷

Spontaneous submissions to one’s will is the ultimate goal a state should achieve in interstate relations. Even under the two core assumptions of the realist approach, “international anarchy” and “state as a unitary actor,”⁸ the exercise of material power is not always the most efficient way to realize a nation’s ultimate goal. States should possess diverse means to confront diverse threats in different sectors and be alert to international morality and world public opinion to maintain its international status.⁹

A diversion of the “traditional” approach to international relations led by international institutionalists makes this point clearer. Accepting the realist assumption of international anarchy, institutionalists do not consider states unitary actors.¹⁰ International relations are

conducted through a complex web of interactions among diverse actors in different sectors. Different “layers” existed in interstate relations, such as military, economy, energy, and environment, and some states possess more leverage in certain layers although their military clouts are weaker than others. Under intricate interdependence, resources other than military power can be more influential depending on time period, sectors, and issues. In this condition, soft power functions as a “tool” to achieve national imperatives by creating favorable international context or by inducing willing submission of other states to a country’s own purpose. This soft power potential of a country would most likely expand if that country espouses a multilateral approach based on win-win mentality in its foreign policy.¹¹

For instance, if a state, particularly a hegemonic power, can persuade other nations through diplomatic, cultural, ideological, and moral methods, this soft power is what makes countries around the world accept the rules and norms of a system primarily designed and operated by the hegemon and its allies, as well as what allows a hegemonic system to function without continuously relying on sticks, carrots, or violence.¹² Therefore, the concept of soft power is developed under the research program stemming from the realists’ theory. It is a form of power intentionally utilized by actors in international relations to achieve national strategic imperatives.

In recent years, the idea of soft power has been further scrutinized by scholars and practitioners because of its possibility to function as a new means to increase the state’s influence in international affairs and to upgrade its status. To its advocates, soft power is a “slower, surer, more civilized way of exercising in influence than crude force.”¹³ In the age of globalization and information, winning others’ hearts is crucial for the enhancement of international influence. For this, acquiring legitimacy in the pursuit of a nation’s foreign and security policy should be prerequisite. Military force is essential to defeating states, but without legitimacy, a state is guilty of the misuse of hard power, alienating much of the world. Therefore, soft power, which rests on legitimacy and values, is regarded as an indispensable

complement to hard power. Yet, it is hard to make a universally accepted definition of soft power due to the following reasons.

First, more evidence needs to be documented to judge whether a nation wields soft power without hard power, or if the enhancement of soft power requires strong hard power, or a state's enormous hard power decreases its soft power. Nye stated that although hard power and soft power are closely inter-connected, the former may or may not increase the latter, and vice versa. Still, history shows that a state with gigantic hard military and economic strength has often neglected soft power by exercising coercive measures to achieve its desired outcomes. The former Soviet Union's invasion and crackdown on Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in the 1968 were cases in point.¹⁴ The Bush administration has been criticized for disregarding soft power in its prosecution of the war on terrorism and a conflict with Iraq.

Meanwhile, some realists argued that a nation's hard power such as material success and influence is the bedrock of its soft power of culture and ideology.¹⁵ Unless a nation is equipped with sufficient military capabilities and material resources, the exercise of its soft power only creates a hollow voice in international affairs. To these realists, "it was safer to be feared than to be loved," as Machiavelli said. However, given that strong hard power does not always translate into global influence, the success of any power resources depends on "context" and trends of international relations. As noted in the commission report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which were co-chaired by Richard L. Armitage and Nye, "it is better to be both feared and loved."¹⁶

Second, countries have different objectives and strategic priorities to employ soft power tools. While all states possess certain aspects and amount of soft power, they manifest it differently under diverging international environment and domestic politico-economic development. States tend to seek soft power in the areas where they found comparative advantage. If the U.S. soft power was one based on its global hegemony, aiming for the

restoration of its inspirational leadership, other states found their attractiveness in their economic competitiveness, leadership in international institutions, or culture and the way of life. That is, those who are militarily and economically powerful, like the United States, enhance cultural, ideational and institutional resources to produce more influence and take steadfast leadership in global affairs whereas those who are less powerful exert these resources to make up for a deficit in hard power.¹⁷ Also, soft power can contribute to securing the peace by offering ideological and cultural means to help absorbing emerging new powers into the established system and reduce the possibility of violent conflicts between the hegemonic power and the challengers.¹⁸

Here, Nye's concept of soft power can be criticized for its overemphasis on soft power as "the superpower's means to success in world politics." It is argued that having heavily focused on how the United States enhances its international prestige and influence, Nye failed to adequately deal with soft power of less powerful countries, which have different goals and strategies.¹⁹

Third, the power of attraction in international relations is still elusive. Despite its increasing importance in agendas for national policy around the world, political leaders and policy makers often find it difficult to implement soft power as an effective instrument of foreign policy. Compared to hard power, soft power is a less direct and visible source of a nation's influence and consequently is a power that has considerable difficulty in projecting its immediate outcomes in dealing with global and regional challenges because it is "an accumulative effect of political, economic, social, and cultural developments over many generations" and requires long-term investment of human and material resources.²⁰ Also, there are limitations on successful implementation of soft power due to the mismatch between what a nation believes to be an effective projection of soft power and what other nations perceive it to be. For example, the U.S. humanitarian and state-building assistance in war-torn societies is often viewed as an attempt to legitimize its hard power operations in global

security.

Another challenge in the pursuit of soft power relates to the emergence of diverse actors in international relations. In coping with post-Cold War world affairs, the roles of ‘unofficial’ actors including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become as important as that of official actors such as governments. While hard power resources come mainly from governments, soft power is largely exerted by various actors including private sectors and civil societies. It is particularly true when a nation’s “attractive power” such as its movies, publications and consumer products, is drawn from citizens and commercial sectors, which are often beyond the control of political leaders and policy makers.

Fourth, the concept of soft power can arouse doubts over the feasibility of the operational implementation of the concept since it is not easy to measure a nation’s soft power capacity. Soft power is more than mere cultural power and includes its political values and ideas, educational and socio-economic systems, and legitimate national policies as accepted by other nations and people. Nye highlighted science and technology as a key condition of soft power because they provide effective ways of promoting specific conditions of a country.²¹ There have been academic endeavors to measure countries’ images and influence in international relations through multinational surveys of public opinions. Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA)’s reports on global views, in partnership with Asia Society and Japan Economic Foundation, as well as the ongoing joint research by the CCGA, the Korea Foundation, and East Asia Institute, are good examples of attempts to assess soft power through a study of U.S. and Asian public opinion and its implications for international order.²²

There are three major dimensions - cognitive, affective, and normative – in measuring a nation’s image, prestige, and influence. The cognitive dimension refers to how other nations evaluate a state’s image and standing in international affairs through the level of education, science and technology, attractiveness of mass culture, rich history of cultural heritages, tourism, social equity, political stability and social order, governmental transparency,

environmentally sustainable practices, availability of modern medicines and treatments, openness of opportunity to success, human rights records, friendliness, multiculturalism, religious freedom, etc. The affective dimension relates to whether other nations like or dislike a state despite its political, economic, military strength or weakness. The normative dimension reveals whether or not other countries regard a state's policy and international role as justifiable. For instance, although some observers argue that the U.S. war on Iraq is wrong (normative), they still can like the U.S. culture and political ideals (affective). Those who criticize U.S. foreign policy as unilateral (normative) and do not like the United States as a whole (affective) can still wish to have their children receive their college education in the United States since it is the most influential country in the world (cognitive).²³

In spite of these scholarly efforts to form criteria in determining a country's reputation and influence, several questions still remain unanswered: How can we describe the persuasive, as opposed to the coercive military, dimension of a nation's foreign policy to get other countries to admire its ideals and to want what it wants? How can we quantify the level of soft power, which lies in the attractiveness of a nation's culture, political ideals, and policies? How can the international community, which includes both powerful and weak countries, generate universal norms and practices that benefit and are supported by all nations and people? These questions lead us to the conclusion that while the search for an adequate definition of soft power is important, an understanding of the complications and limitations to the use of soft power as an instrument of national policy is much more important in developing strategic thoughts, resource bases and tool kits to increase soft power potential of a country. Such efforts can be realized by pursuing a best possible mixture of hard and soft power.

In short, soft co-optive power enables countries with strong military and economy to reinforce their hard power and weaker countries to compensate for their shortage in hard power. In both cases, soft power cannot be overlooked until hard command power has been managed. Just like the soft power of a nation with little hard power is not recognized, a

country with no soft power has limits in employing hard power. This is why the emerging academic and policy community began to emphasize what is dubbed as “smart power.” This integrates hard and soft power into a strategic plan for implementing foreign policy goals. The CSIS Commission on Smart Power suggested that in order to increase US influence and establish the legitimacy, the U.S foreign and security policy should focus heavily on alliances, partnerships, and institutions at all levels, as well as maintain strong military and economy.²⁴ The exercise of a smart power strategy is also relevant to other nations in exerting influence over other countries’ preferences since this strategy will reinforce their soft power potential which complements their hard power components.

3. COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES ON SOFT POWER

American Soft Power

American soft power has worked under the U.S-dominant international power structure. When considering that the success of soft power depends on how well a state projects its national image and message, and on how that image and message is accepted by other states, the United State’s status as a military and economic superpower in the world arena has proven to be one of the greatest sources of its soft power. As Susan Strange argued, this dominance has also helped the United States in forming the structure of international relations that works as the arena for interstate interactions in accordance with U.S. interest/intentions regarding not only military and economic affairs, but also normative issues.²⁵

America’s efforts during the Cold War years to build up its international standing and goodwill through a norms-based approach to global engagement would not have produced any tangible results if such efforts had not been supported by its economic and military strength. Despite controversies, American values including its legacy of idealism, democracy,

human rights, rule of law, free market, etc., have become to be regarded as the “global standard”; and such leadership was largely viewed as legitimate through Washington’s consultation and interoperability with its allies.

The source of America’s soft power also comes from its distinctive culture. In particular, American “high culture” has substantially enhanced U.S. soft power by annually attracting more than half a million international students to come to the United States for further study that have in turn helped promote a better understanding and appreciation of American values and institutions among foreigners. In effect, the American education system has served as a good public diplomacy tool for the United States. Popular culture like Hollywood films, rock-and-roll music and popular sports has also contributed to the promotion of American images and values that are regarded as open, mobile, individualistic, anti-establishment, and pluralistic.²⁶ In addition, American brands such as Mickey Mouse, McDonald’s, Levi’s, and Microsoft have not only produced gigantic economic profits for U.S. companies, but have also been identified as symbols of American ideals - free market and democracy. As a result, the United States has become the best practitioner of soft power through its superpower status, and has become an ideological and cultural model for less powerful states to follow.²⁷

At the same time, American soft power has helped the country promote its foreign policy objectives, most notably in maintaining its superpower status. Although the Soviet Union also enjoyed its strong soft power during the Cold War, which was drawn from the appeal of Communist ideology and the anti-imperialist struggle, much of its soft power assets were dissipated by its state-run propaganda, oppressive political structures and incompetent economic system, and could not compete with the West’s attractive power in these areas. It is no secret that the essential causes of the Soviet Union’s collapse originated from within and that America’s victory in the Cold War was accredited to the effective implementation of both its hard and soft power.

Despite a degree of opposition to American policy, along with expressions of dissatisfaction with U.S. leadership, it was after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, however, that the positive impact of American images and messages were substantially undermined. U.S. disregard for international agreements and institutions, and its rejection of several international initiatives such as the Kyoto Protocol on climate change and the International Criminal Court, has further aggravated sentiments of anti-Americanism. The unilateral actions of the United States have further led to international opposition and U.S. isolation, which have also reduced the financial and operational support of its allies.

Lately, voices criticizing U.S. unilateralism have also been raised within the American academic and policy community. Recently, the academic and policy community has worked to create a new vision and strategy to recover America's faltering national image, recognizing that the decrease of American soft power has led to the failure of various post-Cold War foreign policies. For instance, the CSIS team has proposed: strengthening alliances, increasing developmental and humanitarian aid to under-developed nations, investing in UN peacekeeping operations, consolidating multilateral capacity-building, creating innovative technology to combat climate change and contribute to energy and security, and expanding financial and human resources for public diplomacy.²⁸ The Report of the Princeton Project on National Security has also warned that the U.S. government should no longer assess the contemporary world through the event of 9/11. Identifying three strategic goals – a secure homeland, a healthy global economy, a benign international environment – the report also suggests the integration of hard power with soft power as an effective tool for promoting U.S. interests.²⁹

It is encouraging to note that Robert Gates, incumbent Secretary of Defense, supports this proposal,³⁰ but the current American dilemma is that efforts to expand U.S. soft power that attempts to deliver “well-intended messages” is unlikely to improve the U.S. image if the government is the medium for propagating such messages. At the same time, it also remains

to be seen whether the next U.S. administration will seek soft power strategies to genuinely reconcile with the rest of the world through its respect for diversity and internationalism, or simply use such strategies for interests of promoting its hard power.

Europe's Soft Power

European countries, despite their relative disadvantage in hard military power compared to the United States (and the Soviet Union during the Cold War), have long taken pride on its soft power. Europe's renowned history and tradition in the arts, literature, classical music, football, fashion, and food, as well as its long tradition of providing charity and political asylum, its preference for multilateral cooperation, and its domestic policies on promoting democracy and human rights have a large appeal to people around the world.³¹ European countries have also allocated the most money from their national budgets to spend on public diplomacy and international cultural exchanges. For instance, France spends an average of \$17 per capita on international cultural programs, whereas the United States pays only 65 cents.³² Europe's role in promoting global issues, including concerns on the global environment and human rights, are reflected in comments by political figures like former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, who had labeled such issue areas as "European values."³³

With increasing discontent on U.S. leadership in the wake of the war on Iraq, the international community has started to pay more attention to the European Union (EU)'s constructive role in managing global troubles that range from counterterrorism to communicable disease eradication. Also, the continued process of EU enlargement has been regarded as a solid foundation for Europe's soft power, especially because the EU has maintained an open-door accession policy on countries, which are willing to accept the rule of law and make commitments to building a secular and free society. However, the failure of finding a solution to the division of Cyprus in 2004, and ongoing controversies that have

complicated the accession process of Turkey still remain an obstacle to the reconciliation and reintegration of the entire region and presents a question on whether Europe's soft power could be employed to achieve such goals.³⁴

In short, European ideas and non-military policies can contradict America's heavy reliance on its hard power. Nevertheless, Europe's public diplomacy and other soft power tools that have served to counter al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups have brought tangible benefits in achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives, especially considering that Islamic extremism is not merely a rebellion on American values, but Western values as well. Of course, the effect of such shared soft power between the United States and Europe, especially in areas on human rights and democracy, would depend on how much collaboration and tools are developed.

China's Soft Power

Asia is a fast growing and dynamic region with increasing potential resources for soft power. Among them, China's "charm offensive" has proven to be remarkably successful in attracting both its neighbors and distant countries. The country's unprecedented economic rise has enabled Beijing to lay the groundwork to become a major global power, not only through its growing military and industrial strength, but also through soft power tools such as foreign aid and investment, and cultural and educational exchange. "Skillful diplomacy" has also been devised to co-opt the interests of its neighbors, promote multilateral cooperation in the region, and expand China's influence on the world stage.³⁵ Taking advantage of American "policy mistakes," China's reliance on soft power is also used to convey a benevolent national image - which attempts to project the country as a model of economic and social success - and expand international alliances.³⁶

At the regional level, China rivals Japan as the largest investor and donor in Southeast

Asia. With loans and aid, China has also wooed developing countries in Africa and Latin America, which are abundant in natural resources. It is now often argued that China will soon rival the United States in international influence. China is aggressively promoting its cultural and language study programs by directly funding educational programs abroad and increasing the number of international students coming to Chinese universities from 8,000 two decades ago to some 120,000 in 2007.³⁷

Beijing's declared principles of respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs - indicating that it will support other countries but will not interfere in their internal affairs, nor ask other governments what to do or not to do - are reassuring to leaders of countries where intervention seems to suggest regime change. At the same time, in order to reassure countries concerned with the "rise of China," Beijing has also declared that it would follow the course of peaceful development and contribute to building a "harmonious world" of sustainable peace and common prosperity.

China's soft power diplomacy has been so successful that several developing countries have started regarding China as a model for economic and social development. The "Beijing Consensus," as opposed to the "Washington Consensus" (which is often viewed as a unilateral, hawkish, neo-liberal policy), was disseminated with the release of Joshua Cooper Ramo, a former senior editor for the weekly newsmagazine *Time*.³⁸ Recent surveys in Asia, Africa, and Latin America also reveal "warmer" feelings toward China, as well as expectations on China's positive role in managing global and regional issues.³⁹

From a long term perspective, however, the China model may backfire. First, authoritarian leaders in Africa have merely imitated China's means of political control, rather than investing in their own people or conducting substantive economic reforms. Second, there is continued anxiety on China's attempt to use its growing economic power to promote its military strength.⁴⁰ Third, as China becomes more open to the world with its economic growth, there is also the possibility that it could face a backlash from those who are opposed

to the political dictatorship, which could jeopardize its domestic order. Furthermore, China has been more recently suspected of its pursuit of a “new imperialism” in Africa, seeking to promote its economic self-interest in the form of increased access to natural resources and markets through investment and aid.⁴¹ China’s advocacy for multilateralism and regionalism could also be viewed as a smoke-screen, aiming to weaken the strong U.S.-Japan alliance and its influence in the East Asian region.

Japan’s Soft Power

As for Japan’s soft power, Nye stated that it has the greatest potential soft power resources in Asia.⁴² Japan already has a rich reservoir of soft power. Its economic miracle is an object of admiration all over the world. Since the late 1970s, it has also attempted to increase its international influence by providing a great amount of official development assistance (ODA) to underdeveloped countries, particularly in Southeast Asia.

Japan was the first non-Western state that attracted the West with its high-tech products such as Toyoto, Honda, and Sony. Japanese art, music, design and food has served to expand the countries soft power assets by combining Japan’s distinctive ancient and modern culture. Popular culture such as karaoke, animation and manga (comics) has also many international fans everywhere. Japanese economic success became a driving force for the resurgence of poverty-stricken Asia in the late 20th century. The Japanese developmental model, which is based on state-initiated economic planning, was first adopted by Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, and then by Southeast Asian countries. China and India is now following in their footsteps.

However, Japan’s soft power on the whole falls far below in terms of achieving its desired policy outcome, i.e., promoting its national image and influence.⁴³ Japan’s “cash

diplomacy,” both in realms of ODA performance and global peacekeeping activities, did not successfully galvanize its international reputation and influence. This reality is mainly associated with Japan’s culture and society, which tends to be inward-looking compared to that of the United States and other developed countries.⁴⁴ A stretch of economic recession since the mid-1990s known as Japan’s “lost decade” has also induced Japan to focus on domestic issues. Although this slump did not squander Japan’s soft power resources and its global cultural influence in areas of consumer electronics and pop culture, Tokyo placed much of its soft power-related foreign policy (e.g., international investment and aid) to the backburner and heavily relied on its hard power alliance with the United States.

Also, Japan has long been reluctant to receiving immigrants. In view of the country’s shrinking population due to a declining birth rate, the Japanese society needs to be more open and receptive to foreign immigration and business. Considering that English has become the universal language worldwide, the meager English language skills of Japanese people impede talented, qualified foreign populations to work and study in Japan. In order to develop world-class educational institutions and internationalize its culture, Japan would need to invest on improving the English language proficiency of its people. Active cultural exchange and cooperation both at the governmental and civilian levels would also help other countries and people better understand Japan and thus enhance its image.⁴⁵

With its economic recovery, Japan’s soft power is expected to expand, as Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda is eager to promote the country’s national image during his tenure. Nevertheless, there are still limits to Japan’s soft power, mainly because the country has not fully come to terms with its imperialistic past during the 1930-40s. While Germany has expressed its apology on its foreign aggression and has reconciled with its neighbors, Japan’s ‘unapologetic’ foreign policy, manifested in the controversial Japanese history textbook issue and former Prime Minister Koizumi’s visits to the Yasukuni shrine has posed an obstacle to the intra-regional reconciliation process. Over the past years, sentiments within China and

Korea have increasingly focused on demonizing Japan for asserting its own role in the region and reminding both Koreans and Chinese of the history of Japanese colonialism.

On the Japanese side, it is argued that much of its efforts in economic, cultural and social exchanges have been made to compensate for the legacies of its past history, but Japan's good-intended messages have not had their full effect, mainly due to the suspicions of neighboring countries toward Japan. The aforementioned CCGA poll reveals that both Koreans and Chinese have anti-Japanese sentiments and have little trust of the country's actions. For example, 81 percent of Koreans surveyed have no or little trust in Japan's responsible leadership in the world and 66 percent believe Japan is playing a negative role in managing regional issues.⁴⁶ As a result, it will be difficult for Japan to use its soft power resources and public diplomacy to enhance its regional reputation and influence without resolving the history issue.

Given China's growing popularity and attraction to younger generations abroad, higher priority should be given to Japan's outward-oriented strategies to increase its capacity for soft power competition. On the other hand, Japan has a relative advantage, compared with China, since it is an open and democratic society that is more tolerant of intellectual freedom and more resilient to external influence. This could serve as a foundation to exercise smart power strategies of alliances, partnership and institutions to enhance both hard power and soft power capabilities.

In short, both China's and Japan's soft power strategies are closely associated with their long-standing goals, i.e., the attainment of regional leadership. Both countries regard soft power as a vital complement to its hard power capabilities in expanding their respective spheres of influence. Accordingly, Sino-Japanese rivalry over soft power, together with a military arms race on both sides seems inevitable, further complicating the regional dynamics. It is thus important to find and expand areas of cooperation where China and Japan could work together to promote regionalism, and more ideally, a regional community, which in turn

benefits the two countries' domestic and foreign policy goals in promoting peace, stability and prosperity.

4. KOREA'S PURSUIT OF SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY

One of the biggest sources of Korea's soft power is its obvious success in achieving economic development and democratization. South Korea's soft power appeal has grown during the past two decades thanks to its remarkable economic and technological success, as well as the successful hosting of various international events including the 1988 Olympics and 2002 World Cup. Korea's semiconductor and automobile industries are internationally renowned and *Hallyu* (Korean wave in English), which began with the export of Korean TV dramas, represents the popularity of Korean pop culture as a whole. This success is largely attributed to cohesive trends in the country's socio-economic development and international engagement.⁴⁷

Organizations such as the government-funded Korean Foundation have greatly contributed to the expansion of Korean Studies abroad. Since its birth in 1991, the Foundation has worked towards promoting international understanding on Korea through academic exchange programs, which provide scholarships to foreign scholars and students in Korea, while it offers substantial financial support to establish Korean Studies programs in renowned universities abroad, as well as finance the world's leading museums to display Korean artwork, publish periodicals and books on Korea in foreign languages, and distribute books to overseas universities and libraries. These efforts have helped promote understanding and interest on Korean culture, language, arts, literatures, and current affairs abroad.⁴⁸

Korea, with president-elect Lee Myung-bak's emphasis on cultural power as a key element of Korea's foreign policy, is expected to develop strategies of globalizing Korean culture, which can serve as an effective conduit for reconciliation between East and West, and

between South and North through the Korean Wave, Korea's competitive IT industry, cultural diplomacy, and sports diplomacy. He also highlights the importance of "greater Asian diplomacy," pledging to expand an "Asian cooperative network" based on open regionalism. As a starting point, reconciliation will be sought with Japan on the basis of renewed and deeper trilateral cooperation involving the United States.⁴⁹ If this good neighbor policy yields a fruitful outcome, it will serve a double purpose of enhancing regional stability (hard power) and also promoting Korea's national image (soft power).

Korea's soft power initiatives need to be pursued in conjunction with hard power strategies. Seoul has long relied heavily on hard power, due to the political atmosphere on and around the divided Korean peninsula, as a direct and visible source of its national strength, despite the limits to what hard power could accomplish in promoting Korea's national image.

To some extent, this dilemma provided a momentum within the Korean academic and policy community to promote the "Sunshine policy," or a policy of engagement with North Korea, which has served as the principal official doctrine for dealing with the North under Presidents Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun. Over the last decade, this policy has led Seoul to downplay hard power and actively embrace the Kim Jong-il regime through soft power, despite North Korea's "bad behavior" related to its nuclear weapons programs and human rights. This engagement policy is largely criticized for its naïve and illusive concept of "*Uri Minjok Kkiri* (Between Us Koreans)," which takes precedence over international coordination. This approach has resulted in a perception and policy gap between Korea and the United States regarding North Korea.

For soft power to produce tangible results on Korea's policy on North Korea, Seoul needs to be firm in demanding greater openness and reciprocity from Pyongyang.⁵⁰ Still, it will be a tall order for Korea's incoming administration to find a right balance between soft power (engagement and persuasion) and hard power (deterrence and "no aid") in inter-Korean relations.

At the same time, it has also been difficult to develop soft power instruments. Generally, Korean soft power diplomacy mostly tends to focus on the cultural dimension. In recent years, the Korean government has greatly increased the national culture industry's budget and established a "hall of the Korean Wave" in large cities in China and other Asian countries in order to reinvigorate the *Hallyu* phenomena. However, Chinese authorities have expressed their discontent and concerns and have regarded such actions to be an aggressive move from the Korean government to promote the greatness of Korean culture. As a result, the government has belatedly realized that this could provoke a backlash from other countries and jeopardize the access of Korean products, being regarded as a vehicle for the spread of *Hallyu*, to foreign markets.⁵¹

As discussed above, soft power is much more than just a nation's cultural attractiveness and includes a country's political values, ideals, norms, and methods on carrying out "skillful" diplomacy. It is imperative that various soft power resources such as the expansion of ODA, contribution to global peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, huge investment in budget and personnel for public diplomacy, and active engagement in multilateral institutions and regional community-building efforts are utilized to promote national brand values and overseas networking.

It should also be pointed out that Korean soft power diplomacy, like that of China and Japan, has largely remained in the hands of the government. In the era of global information and communication, the concept and scope of soft power lie beyond the activities of national governments. The active participation of non-state actors like NGOs, private individuals and civil society is mandatory in efforts to enhance a nation's reputation, mainly through the internet and other media, tourism, and collaboration between diverse NGOs. Such popular participation which would complement governmental efforts could generate more comprehensive perspectives and strategies in accelerating and disseminating soft power. For this reason, it is important for the government to facilitate the activities of various actors in

different sectors.

5. CONCLUSION

It is largely said that the 21st century is an era of soft power which rests on culture, value sharing, knowledge, technology and science, and international exchanges. Soft power is a means to enhance a state's international status, to expand its influence, and to ensure survival in an anarchic world. Therefore, the idea of soft power is not a contrasting concept to hard power, but it is a successful strategy for achieving national policy goals which cannot be achieved by hard power alone. Countries are competing to bolster their own national images through soft power, but at the same time are trying to find an optimum balance in exercising hard and soft power to increase their international influence or to complement its insufficient hard power resources.

In the case of Korea, which remains relatively weak in its hard power, the strategies to promote its "charm" will contribute to improving Korea's national prestige and influence. Yet, these strategies will be tested by how Korea positions itself among the great powers within the region. From a hard power perspective, Korea is too small to be a "balancer" between the Sino-Japanese rivalry in the region and to become an "architect" of the regional order. Realistically, Korea's success of hard power-related foreign policies depends heavily on the regional dynamics that mostly remain beyond its control. In view of soft power initiatives, which are not just driven by great powers, however, Korea as a middle power is big enough to serve as an "honest broker" between great powers to advance regional cooperation and development.⁵² Of course, this soft power role cannot be effectively exercised without the country's own hard power capabilities. In this sense, the concept of smart power, which advocates a strategic, balanced combination of soft and hard power, is increasingly important and relevant in Korea's foreign policy. Korea has more to gain than lose if it adopts a more

coherent and pragmatic policy of a “soft, strong power.”

Appendix

[Korea’s Image and Standing in International Relations]

Table 1: Feelings Toward Korea

Average rating given to South Korea by respondents in the following countries

	Feelings Toward Korea
China	73
Australia	56
India	48
United States	44

(0: a very cold and unfavorable feeling 50: not particularly warm or cold 100 a very warm, favorable feeling)

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 49

Table 2: Perceived Influence of Countries in Asia by Ranking

Average rating of the level of influence respondents from the following countries think each country has in Asia.

Chinese Public		Indian Public		Japanese Public	
United States	8.0	United States	7.1	United States	7.5
China	8.0	India	6.3	China	6.3
Russia	7.1	Japan	6.0	Japan	6.0
Japan	6.8	China	5.9	Russia	5.0
European Union	6.7	Russia	5.9	India	4.8
Korea	6.7	European Union	5.5	Korea	4.8
India	6.3	Korea	5.2	European Union	4.5
Australia	6.2	Australia	5.2	Australia	3.9
Indonesia	5.8	Indonesia	4.7	Indonesia	3.8

(0: not at all influential 10: extremely influential)

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 83

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Japan Economic foundation, Global Views 2006, *The United States and Japan: Responding to the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 54

Table 3: Korea's Role in Resolving Key Problems in Asia

Percentage in each country who believe that china plays a very or somewhat positive role or a very or somewhat negative role in resolving key problems facing Asia

	Negative	Positive
Korea	n.a.	74
China	n.a.	59
United States	n.a.	51
India	n.a.	50

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 48.

Table 4. Leaders in Innovation: The U.S. View

Ratings by Americans on how much the following countries are leaders in developing new products and technologies.

Countries as a leader in Innovation	Now	In Ten Years	Difference
United States	7.6	7.3	-0.3
Japan	6.9	7.0	+0.1
China	5.5	6.1	+0.6
Germany	5.3	5.6	+0.3
India	3.8	4.6	+0.8
South Korea	3.8	4.5	+0.7

(0: not at all a leader 10: very much a leader)

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 24.

Table 5. Leaders in Innovation: The Chinese View

Ratings by Chinese on how much the following countries are leaders in developing new products and technologies.

Countries as a leader in Innovation	Now	In Ten Years	Difference
United States	8.5	8.6	-0.1
Japan	7.5	7.7	+0.2

Germany	7.4	7.6	+0.2
China	7.2	7.9	+0.7
South Korea	7.1	7.4	+0.3
India	5.8	6.4	+0.6

(0: not at all a leader 10: very much a leader)

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p.34.

Table 6. Leaders in Innovation: The Indian View

Ratings by Indians how much the following countries are leaders in developing new products and technologies.

Countries as a leader in Innovation	Now	In Ten Years	Difference
United States	6.8	7.1	+0.3
India	6.4	6.9	+0.5
Japan	6.3	6.4	+0.1
China	6.2	6.5	+0.3
Germany	5.7	5.8	+0.1
South Korea	5.5	5.8	+0.3

(0: not at all a leader 10: very much a leader)

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p.41.

[Korean Views]

Table 7: Increase in China’s Power

Percentage in each country who believe it is mainly positive or mainly negative for China to become significantly more powerful economically and militarily

	Significantly More Economic Power		Significantly More Military Power	
	Mainly Negative	Mainly Positive	Mainly Negative	Mainly Positive
Korea	41	59	68	31
China	7	91	6	90
United States	46	47	75	19
India	39	46	46	40

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the*

Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion, 2006, p. 37.

Note: When evaluating the development of China as a world power as a potential threat, the highest level of concern was found in Korea, where 49 percent of the Korean public perceives it as a critical threat.

Table 8: Increase in India's Power

Percentage in each country who believe it is mainly positive or mainly negative for India to become significantly more powerful economically and militarily

	Significantly More Economic Power		Significantly More Military Power	
	Mainly Negative	Mainly Positive	Mainly Negative	Mainly Positive
Korea	44	53	71	26
China	26	56	26	56
United States	39	53	69	24
India	25	63	24	65

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 44.

Table 9: Feelings Toward China

Average rating given to China by respondents in the following countries

	Feelings Toward China
Korea	60
United States	40
India	54
Australia	61
Japan	30

(0: a very cold and unfavorable feeling 50: not particularly warm or cold 100 a very warm, favorable feeling)

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 39.

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Japan Economic foundation, Global Views 2006, *The United States and Japan: Responding to the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 16

Table 10: Feelings Toward Japan

Average rating given to Japan by respondents in the following countries

	Feelings Toward Japan
Korea	39
China	36
United States	58
India	54
Australia	64

(0: a very cold and unfavorable feeling 50: not particularly warm or cold 100 a very warm, favorable feeling)

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 46

Table 11: Extending UN Security Council Membership to Japan

Percentage in each country who favor or oppose Japan becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council

	Oppose	Depends	Favor
Korea	72	8	18
China	75	8	10
United States	29	3	66
India	29	16	46
Japan	7	24	69

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 46

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Japan Economic foundation, Global Views 2006, *The United States and Japan: Responding to the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 26

Table 12: Extending UN Security Council Membership to India

Percentage in each country who favor or oppose India becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council

	Oppose	Depends	Favor
Korea	34	18	46

China	32	20	37
United States	42	4	53
India	11	7	75
Japan	25	45	30

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 45

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Japan Economic foundation, Global Views 2006, *The United States and Japan: Responding to the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 23

Table 13: China's Role in Resolving Key Problems in Asia

Percentage in each country who believe that China plays a very or somewhat positive role or a very or somewhat negative role in resolving key problems facing Asia

	Negative	Positive
Korea	44	53
China	10	80
United States	47	44
India	21	62
Japan	48	52

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 39.

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Japan Economic foundation, Global Views 2006, *The United States and Japan: Responding to the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 54

Table 14: U.S. Role in Resolving Key Problems in Asia

Percentage in each country who believe that United States plays a very or somewhat positive role or a very or somewhat negative role in resolving key problems facing Asia

	Very or Somewhat Negative	Very or Somewhat Positive
Korea	40	58
China	29	59
United States	15	77
India	17	66

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 39.

Table 15: India’s Role in Resolving Key Problems in Asia

Percentage in each country who believe that India plays a very or somewhat positive role or a very or somewhat negative role in resolving key problems facing Asia

	Negative	Positive
Korea	42	50
China	30	48
United States	41	50
India	14	69

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 45

Table 16: U.S. as World Policeman

Percentage who agree with the following statements about the United States playing the role of “world policeman.”

	The US does not have the responsibility to play the role of world policeman	The US is playing the role of policeman more than it should be
Korea	60	73
China	61	77
United States	75	76
India	35	53
Australia	69	79

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 51

Table 17: U.S. Influence in Asia

Percentage from each country who believe U.S. influence in Asia has increased, remained about the same, or decreased in the past ten years

	Increased	Remained about The Same	Decreased
Korea	14	47	39
China	19	24	43
United States	18	48	29
India	13	21	46
Japan	11	38	51

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 50

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Japan Economic foundation, Global Views 2006, *The United States and Japan: Responding to the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 33

Table 18: U.S. Superpower Status in the Next 50 Years

Percentage who agree with the following statements about what will happen over the next 50 years

	The US will be surpassed in power by another nation	Another nation will become as powerful as the US	The US will continue to be the world's leading power
Korea	17	51	31
China	27	33	23
United States	16	39	40
India	23	30	28
Japan	17	39	44

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 51

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Japan Economic foundation, Global Views 2006, *The United States and Japan: Responding to the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 30.

Table 19: Views on the Iraq War

Percentage who agree with each statement

	The threat of terrorism has been reduced by the Iraq war	The war will lead to the spread of democracy in the Middle East	The war has worsened America's relations with the Muslim world	The experience of the Iraq war should make nations more cautious about using military force to deal with rogue states
Korea	17	24	73	73
China	25	41	55	56
United States	35	32	66	66
India	42	43	56	51
Australia	14	27	91	85
Japan	21	31	82	85

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the*

Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion, 2006, p. 52

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Japan Economic foundation, Global Views 2006, *The United States and Japan: Responding to the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 34

Table 20: U.S. Military Presence in East Asia

Percentage in each country who think the U.S. military presence in East Asia should be increased, maintained at its present level, or decreased

	Decreased	Maintained	Increased
Korea	24	15	59
China	64	15	9
United States	30	57	8
India	38	13	30
Japan	59	35	6

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 51

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Japan Economic foundation, Global Views 2006, *The United States and Japan: Responding to the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 35

Table 21: U.S. Troops in Korea

Percentage in each country who say the 30,000 troops that the United States currently has in South Korea is too many, too few, or about right.

	Too Many	About Right	Too Few
Korea	36	8	54
China	65	8	9
United States	42	10	42

Table 22: Trust of Countries to Act Responsibly in the World

Percentage in each country who say the following countries can be trusted somewhat or a great deal, or not much or not at all to act responsibly in the world

	Trust of U.S.		Trust of China		Trust of Japan		Trust of India	
	Not much or Not at all	Somewhat or a great deal	Not much or Not at all	Somewhat or a great deal	Not much or Not at all	Somewhat or a great deal	Not much or Not at all	Somewhat or a great deal
Korea	53	46	61	38	81	19	50	46
China	59	35	-	-	79	14	68	23
United States	-	-	58	37	24	71	46	49
India	52	39	49	42	41	46	-	-
Japan	34	65	83	16	-	-	51	49

Source: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and Asia Society, Global Views 2006, *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion*, 2006, p. 57

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