

II. Theoretical Framework

Hard Power Theory

China's emergence as a global power and the impact on international stability is among the most heavily debated topics in international relations. A considerable amount of attention has been paid to analyzing China's "hard power,"¹² which refers to the ability to use military and economic means to coerce or induce another nation to carry out their intended policies. In the realm of hard power, Nation A may use this hard power to induce (carrots) or threaten (sticks) Nation B, ultimately achieving the goal of obtaining a desired outcome for Nation A.¹³ "China is seen as such a state that is foreordained to become a major power in the Asia-Pacific region. The size, population, and resources of the country, combined with the enormous potential of its economic and military strength, will empower China to achieve great-power status."¹⁴ This assessment of China's hard power is heavily weighted in the realist school of international theory. I argue this theory is outdated and cannot thoroughly explain the much more interdependent dynamics of today's international community. Far too many actors (NGOs, multinationals, interest groups etc.) are involved in the decision making process to believe nations' foreign policy is solely driven by economic and military factors. Therefore, I am personally driven to search for more humanistic variables which form the rules and norms of international relations.

Soft Power Theory

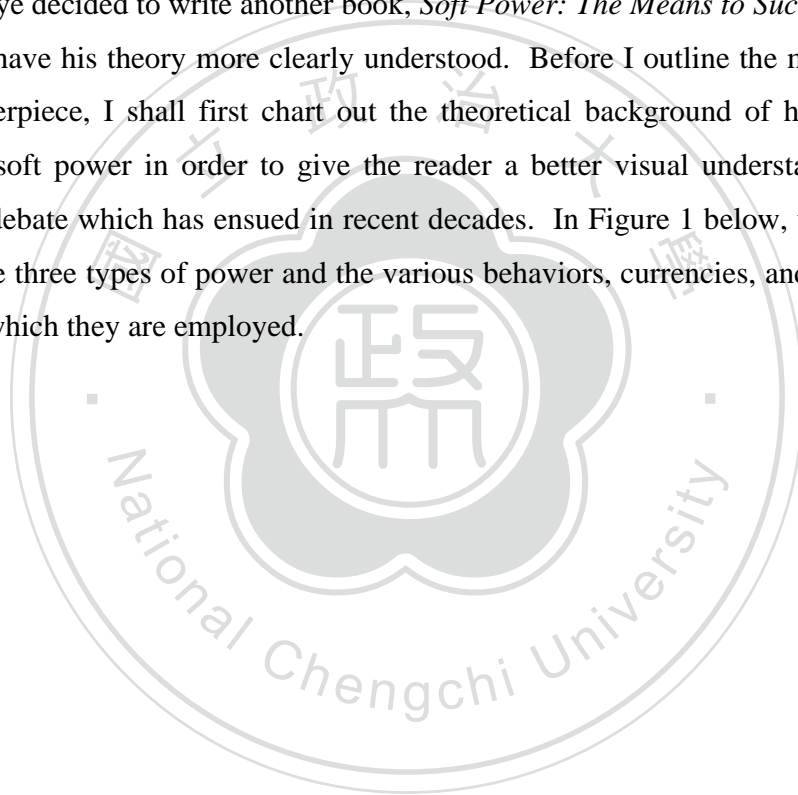
In order to thoroughly examine the research questions set forth in this paper, it is essential to first establish the theoretical framework, as a sort of lens, to focus in on this

¹² For a better understanding of China's use of hard power, please refer to the hard argument put forth by T.Y. Wang, "Introduction: The Rise of China and Its Emerging Grand Strategy," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 43, no. 5, (2008): 492-493. or Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?," *International Security*, Vol. 30, no. 2, (Fall 2005): 17-22. or Zbigniew Brzezinski and John J. Mearsheimer, "Clash of the Titans," *Foreign Policy*, no. 146 (January/February 2005): 46-50.

¹³ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004): 5.

¹⁴ Rex Li, "Security Challenge of an Ascendant China," in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior*, (Ed.) Suisheng Zhao, (New York, M. E. Sharpe, 2004): 26.

beckoning topic in international relations. This paper will employ the theory of “soft power” to illustrate China’s strategy against Taiwan to accomplish its ultimate goal of reunification. The term “soft power” was first coined by the Harvard professor, Joseph Nye, in his book *Bound to Lead*. His premise, at the time contrary to popular belief, was that the United States was not in decline. The United States was not only the strongest nation in terms of military and economic power, but also in a third dimension in which he called “soft power”. In the ensuing years, this term became widely used by policy makers and scholars alike. Partly out of frustration of misuse of the term “soft power,” Professor Nye decided to write another book, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, to have his theory more clearly understood. Before I outline the main tenets of Nye’s masterpiece, I shall first chart out the theoretical background of hard power in contrast to soft power in order to give the reader a better visual understanding of the theoretical debate which has ensued in recent decades. In Figure 1 below, we can easily delineate the three types of power and the various behaviors, currencies, and government policies in which they are employed.



	Behaviors	Primary Currencies	Government Policies
Military Power	coercion deterrence protection	threats force	coercive diplomacy war alliances
Economic Power	inducement coercion	payments sanctions	aid bribes sanctions
Soft Power	<i>attraction</i> <i>agenda setting</i>	<i>values</i> <i>culture</i> <i>policies</i>	<i>public diplomacy</i> <i>bilateral diplomacy</i> <i>multilateral diplomacy</i>

Figure 1: Three Types of Power According to Joseph S. Nye, Jr.¹⁵
Source: Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), p. 31.

Professor Nye argues for a third power, which he terms “soft power.” “Soft power is getting others to want the outcomes that you want--it co-opts people rather than coerces them.”¹⁶ Soft power relies on the use of attraction to achieve objectives. This idea of attraction can be equated on the personal level to romance or business, where Individual A has a set of values which are shared by Individual B. Many political leaders, especially those of democracies, have realized the power of attraction. In authoritarian regimes, the leaders have to induce or coerce to achieve their intended goals. Whereas, in democratic regimes, the leaders rely on the use of shared values to achieve their goals, and as a result, it costs them less to lead.

¹⁵ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

There are three sources of soft power: The first is culture, defined by Joseph Nye as the set of values and practices that create meaning for a society. Culture can be manifested in high forms, such as education, which appeals to the elites, or in low forms, such as popular culture, which appeals to the masses. Cultures which are more universalistic will obviously tend to have a broader audience who share the same values. The second are the values a government champions at home, in international institutions, and in foreign policy, which strongly affect the preferences of others. If a government leads by a good example, others will be attracted to its values and follow its actions.¹⁷ The third is a government's foreign policies. If government policies are hypocritical, arrogant, or indifferent to the opinions of others, then the government's soft power will be undermined. This can be supported by the fact that the recent policies of United States government, particularly the War in Iraq, have rendered it unpopular to many in the international community. However many people still distinguish between American culture and policies, and still find the former rather appealing.¹⁸

Hard power and soft power both provide the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behavior of others. Often it is the interplay of both that results in the most effective policy making. However, the distinction lies within the nature of the behavior and the tangibility of the resources. As depicted in Figure 2, the spectrum of behavior can vary from Command to Co-opt. Command power is the ability to change what others do. Command power utilizes the behaviors of coercion and/or inducement. The most likely resources are force, sanctions, payments, and bribes. Whereas, Co-opt power is the ability to shape what others want. It relies on the behaviors of agenda setting and attractiveness. The most likely resources are institutions, values, culture and policies.¹⁹ Hard power and soft power are very different in that hard power resources (militaries and economies) are real and profound. One cannot mistake the thousands of missiles or mega-cities filled with skyscrapers. However, soft power resources are not so tangible. One's values and institutions cannot be seen or touched by the rest of the world.

¹⁷ Ibid., 11-15.

¹⁸ Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Views of a Changing World June 2003*, Washington D.C., Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, (2003): 22-23.

¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

	Hard	Soft
Spectrum of Behaviors	coercion inducement Command ←	agenda setting attraction → Co-opt
Most Likely Resources	force sanctions payments bribes	institutions values culture policies

Figure 2: Power According to Joseph S. Nye, Jr.²⁰

Source: Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), p. 8.



²⁰ Ibid., 8.