THE SOFT POWER 30

2016

Portland f

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Explore our research and the index data in more detail on our interactive microsite

www.softpower30.com

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FACEBOOK

Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.

2016 RESULTS

1
United States

2
United Kingdom

3
Germany

4
Canada

5
France

6
Australia

7
Japan

8
Switzerland

9
Sweden

10
Netherlands

The Soft Power 30

A CHANGING GLOBAL CONTEXT

The question all countries face today is how best to achieve their foreign policy goals in an increasingly complex and interdependent world. Challenges and opportunities now rarely sit within national borders. Power has never been more diffuse, moving not just from West to East but also from governments to non-state actors. The digital revolution is accelerating this diffusion of power, enabling citizens to come together within and beyond countries in a way that was never possible before.

In this new world, countries are realising that an over-reliance on military might and economic clout – traditional hard power – can no longer bring about their desired outcomes. It is the ability to encourage collaboration and forge networks – to attract and persuade, rather than to compel – which works best. As Professor Joseph Nye, who first coined the phrase "soft power" 26 years ago said, "power with others can be more effective than power over others".

But while there is a growing enthusiasm for soft power in global capitals, it has not always been matched by the understanding and capability required to deploy it successfully. Getting this right must start with a clear and accurate measurement of a nation's soft power resources.

This is the aim of the Soft Power 30 index – the world's most comprehensive comparative assessment of global soft power. It combines objective data and international polling to build what Professor Nye has described as "the clearest picture of global soft power to date."

RESULTS

It can take many generations to build soft power. So it is no surprise that the results of the 2016 Soft Power 30 index are broadly similar to its first iteration last year. But while the same countries fill the top five spots and, in all but one case, have improved their overall scores, their positions in the rankings have changed. Our findings show that soft power capability is rising faster in North America and Asia than in Europe.

The US has replaced the UK at the top. Germany has fallen from second to third and France – the only country at the top whose score showed a reduction – has dropped from fourth to fifth. Canada, with a new energetic Prime Minister at the helm, has taken its place.

A look further down the table confirms that European soft power seems to be on the wane. Half of the continent's countries have fallen in the rankings. Europe's continued economic problems, the refugee crisis, and the way it has fuelled instability and support for political parties outside the mainstream appear to be having an impact. In contrast, Asian soft power is on the rise with China, Japan, and Singapore all in higher positions than last year.

● upward mover   ● downward mover   ● no mover

THE SOFT POWER 30 FRAMEWORK

The Soft Power 30 combines over 75 metrics across six sub-indices of objective data and seven categories of new international polling data. The composition of the framework and calculation of the index is illustrated in the figure below.

Included in the framework are metrics, provided by Facebook's data-science team, on the reach of a country's digital diplomacy. Using data from the Facebook pages of national leaders and foreign ministries, both followers and levels of engagement are assessed.

Importantly, Facebook's data-science team is able to geographically disaggregate data for these metrics, allowing us to separate domestic and international interactions. As a result, our metrics focus exclusively on international engagement. This allows us to capture the impact social media has on soft power.

Working with polling firm Alligator Research, we also made use of newly commissioned polling in 25 different nations to gauge the appeal of countries' soft power assets. Our polling surveys publics in every region of the globe. We asked respondents to rate countries based on seven different categories including culture, cuisine, and foreign policy, among others.
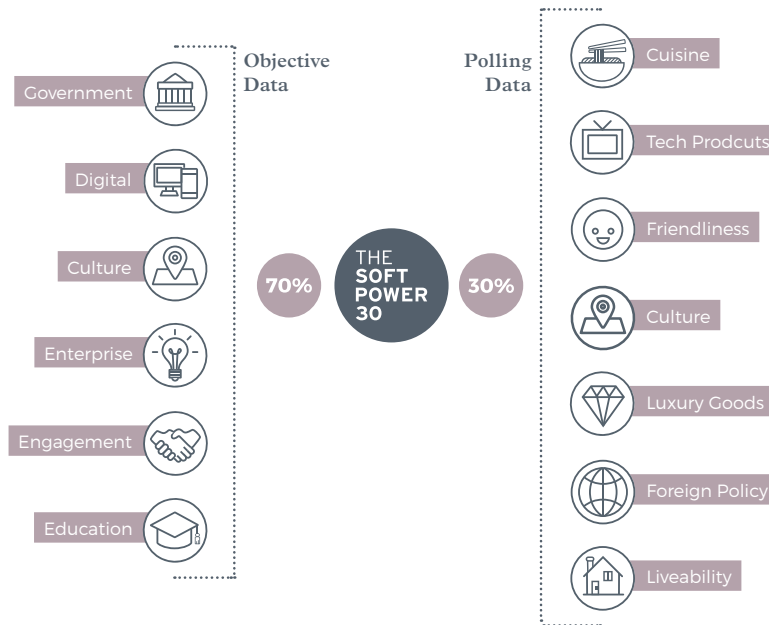
SOFT POWER GOES DIGITAL

The report gives a detailed overview of this year's Soft Power 30 results, placing them in the context of the past year's major international events. New to this year's publication, it also features essays on soft power from contributors based around the world. Finally, the report provides an overview of the current state of digital diplomacy and likely trends. It positions digital diplomacy within the theory and practice of soft power, using a set of case studies to illustrate the growing importance of digital tools in generating and leveraging soft power.

"The ability to engage with and attract global audiences has never been so critical to prosperity, security, and international influence"
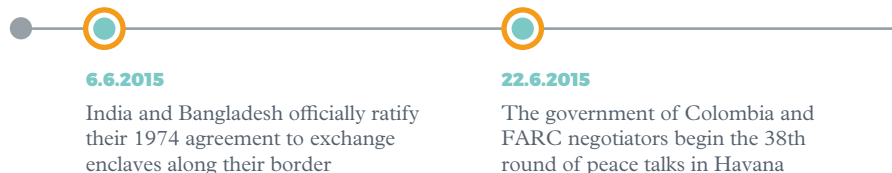
Jonathan McClory

1.
Introduction

"**R**eal power means you can get what you want without having to exert violence".[1] With these words, US President Barack Obama gave journalist Jeffrey Goldberg a compelling endorsement of soft power. Goldberg's "The Obama Doctrine" in the April 2016 issue of *The Atlantic* rapidly became the most talked-about article for years among foreign policy researchers, commenters, and practitioners. It also sparked a few diplomatic rows as several world leaders found themselves on the receiving end of sharp criticism from the President. But if one cuts through the court politics of the piece, Goldberg's distillation of Obama's foreign policy calculations reveals the overriding challenge facing all world leaders: how to strike the right balance on the three fronts of competing priorities, opposing ideologies, and divergent approaches to leveraging power.

The first component of this challenge is balancing foreign policy priorities. The idea that nation-states act in self-interest is a fundamental principle of International Relations. Indeed, the concept of national self-interest, often credited to France's 17th Century Chief Minister Cardinal Richelieu, could be said to have given birth to the idea of the nation-state itself.[2]

World Events Timeline
June 2015 – June 2016

IMPACT KEY

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

- Global
- Regional
- Local

6.6.2015

India and Bangladesh officially ratify their 1974 agreement to exchange enclaves along their border

22.6.2015

The government of Colombia and FARC negotiators begin the 38th round of peace talks in Havana

10.7.2015

Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras submits proposals for a third, three-year bailout programme, accepting the EU's bailout offer

14.7.2015

Iran and the P5+1 countries agree the JCPOA deal to limit Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief

20.7.2015

Cuba and the United States re-establish full diplomatic relations

08.2015

The refugee crisis in Europe worsens and develops significantly

Goldberg's distillation of Obama's foreign policy calculations reveals the overriding challenge facing all world leaders: how to strike the right balance on the three fronts of competing priorities, opposing ideologies, and divergent approaches to leveraging power.

Four hundred years later, national self-interest remains alive and well as a driver of foreign policy. But leaders also increasingly face calls to consider the greater global good, adding a moral dimension to their calculations. Throughout his dialogue with Goldberg, Obama illustrates the challenge of striking the right balance between the competing priorities of national self-interest and global altruism in the context of limited time, resources, and political capital.[3]

World leaders must also balance the conflicting pulls of realism, isolationism, internationalism, interventionism, and the wealth of other International Relations theories that provide a framework to analyse global affairs and develop policy. Ideologies tend to go in and out of fashion,[4] Even *Realpolitik*, a charged term in Anglo-American foreign policy circles, is currently enjoying a renaissance. However, a blind commitment to one ideology in all situations is unlikely to serve any leader or country well.

Again, Goldberg's article underlines Obama's struggle to strike the right balance between contradicting ideologies as events develop and contexts shift. In one exchange, the President describes himself as both a realist and an internationalist. Effective foreign policy requires a level of fluidity and adaptability to apply the appropriate framework to a given context.

The third challenge is when and how to use the full spectrum of power, from hard to soft. This is where the rubber meets the road, when plans are put into action and where outcomes are eventually determined. Getting this balance right is what Joseph Nye has termed "smart power".[5] Smart power holds that the exclusive use of either hard or soft power is less likely to lead to success in shaping global outcomes.

In his assessment of the Obama administration's foreign policy, Goldberg makes it clear that the President deliberately set out to rebalance America's approach to leveraging power. The Cairo speech, the "reset" with Russia, and the pivot to Asia all signalled Obama's intention to move away from the previous administration's perceived over-reliance on hard power, towards a consensus-

10.9.2015

US agrees to increase number of Syrian refugees for US resettlement to 10,000

18.9.2015

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issues a notice of violation of the Clean Air Act to German automaker Volkswagen Group

30.9.2015

Russia begins air strikes against ISIS in Syria in support of the Syrian government

5.10.2015

The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement is reached

based soft power approach. By 2008, two protracted wars in the Middle East had taken their toll on global public opinion of the US.[6] Addressing an ailing "Brand America" clearly required a recalibration of America's approach to foreign policy and its predisposition to hard power.

Understanding *how* to achieve the appropriate balance of hard and soft power in foreign policy must start with a clear account of each form. The very concept of power, in the context of International Relations studies, has historically carried a bias towards hard power. Indeed, power has traditionally been treated as a predominantly realist concept in International Relations.[7] Consequently, power tends to be framed in Dahlian terms: one actor – often a state – using its material resources to compel another state to do something it would otherwise not have done.[8]

According to the realist perspective, only the quantifiable components of power such as military capacity, population, territory, natural resources, and GDP deserve consideration in international politics. Early realist work tended to discount the effects of values, norms, and global public opinion, constructing a simplified concept of power for international politics that was easier to measure, map, and model.[9] Defining power in these abridged terms leads to a focus on military force and economic might – the sources of hard power – at the expense of the nuances and complexity of foreign policy.

In practice, hard power is the exercise of influence through coercion, relying on tactics like military intervention, coercive diplomacy, incentives of payment, and economic sanctions.[10] The purpose of hard power is to impose a cost on a given target, such that the cost of non-compliance is greater than the cost of compliance. Soft power, on the other hand, is the "ability to affect others to obtain preferred outcomes by the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuasion, and positive attraction".[11] Soft power was originally coined in 1990 by Joseph Nye, though Nye himself argues that in practice, soft power is older than the concept of the modern nation-state.[12]

8.11.2015

Landmark parliamentary elections held in Myanmar

13.11.2015

ISIS-inspired terror attacks in Paris kill 130 people and injure hundreds

22.11.2015

Mauricio Macri is elected as the new president of Argentina

24.11.2015

Turkey shoots down a Russian fighter jet in contested airpace

In reality, soft power is notoriously difficult to deploy effectively, and despite its growth in profile, capability in its use is patchy.

Soft power strategies eschew the traditional foreign policy tools of carrot and stick, working instead to persuade by constructing and mobilising networks, developing and communicating compelling narratives, establishing international norms, building coalitions, and drawing on the key resources that endear one country to another. In simple terms, "hard power is push; soft power is pull".[13]

As a viable approach to foreign policy, soft power has enjoyed a rapid growth in popularity over the last two decades[14] for three main reasons. First, soft power strategies are an appropriate response to the changing nature of foreign policy, which is driven by power diffusion and the digital revolution. Second, using soft power resources can be much more cost-effective than hard power tactics. Third, collaboration has become the most effective approach to shaping major global outcomes. In contrast, unilateral action has become increasingly difficult, costly, and open to challenge. The heavy economic cost borne by Russia following the annexation of Crimea is a testament to this. The imposition of economic sanctions and subsequent fall in foreign direct investment saw Russia's economy shrink by nearly 4% in 2015, and GDP is forecast to fall by a further 2% in 2016.[15]

Given these advantages, some governments have latched on to the concept of soft power, looking for ways to generate and leverage it. They are right to do so. Yet, there are plenty of states whose response to soft power's growing appeal has simply been to pepper speeches and whitepapers with the term in the hopes it will lead to better foreign policy strategy. In reality, soft power is notoriously difficult to deploy effectively, and despite its growth in profile, capability in its use is patchy.

For the majority of states, there is a significant risk of falling behind in the soft power race, as the digital components of engagement, attraction, and persuasion play a larger role. It may still seem trivial to the sceptical holdouts, but digital diplomacy has rapidly progressed from novelty to necessity for

12.12.2015

2015 UN Climate Change Conference: nearly 200 countries strike a landmark grand bargain on climate change, agreeing for the first time to take action to curb greenhouse gas emissions

16.1.2016

The China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is launched with 37 founding member states, including the UK and Germany

16.1.2016

Iran Deal: The International Atomic Energy Agency deems Iran to have adequately dismantled its nuclear weapons programme, which allows the UN to lift sanctions

28.1.2016

The Zika virus outbreak is declared as a public health emergency by World Health Organisation

world leaders and foreign ministries. As digital diplomacy has moved from a convenience to a requirement in the diplomatic toolkit, foreign ministries must to shift to a "digital first" approach in virtually every aspect of operation. Intelligence gathering, policy-making, public diplomacy, communications, and performance evaluation all need to be designed and implemented according to the principle of "digital first". This is the new reality of foreign policy.

The overarching aim of this report is to construct a clear picture of this new reality for diplomats and policy makers, which we approach with three objectives in mind. First, as with the 2015 edition, to provide a practical framework for understanding and measuring soft power, as well as establishing a benchmark for assessing the relative soft power assets of states. Second, to provide new insights into how digital platforms and social media channels are changing the way states develop and use soft power. We have sought to incorporate digital diplomacy firmly into the theory and practice of soft power. Finally, this report aims to give best practice examples in digital diplomacy and provide an overview of trends going forward.

Building on our inaugural Soft Power 30 from 2015,[16] this report gives a brief overview of the growing importance of soft power in foreign policy, reiterating the assertion that measuring soft power resources is the critical first step to using them effectively. Thereafter, the report provides a concise description of the methodology used in the formulation of the index and the calculation of this year's rankings. Following the methodology section, the report provides a full breakdown of the results of this year's index. In analysing this year's results, the report will compare changes from the 2015 index and highlight any major changes.

One new addition to this year's report is the inclusion of three countries outside of the top 30 that warrant closer inspection as countries to watch going forward. To put the results in a global context, the report draws together essay contributions from a range of foreign policy thinkers across the globe –

7.2.2016

North Korea launches a long-range rocket into space, subsequently violating several UN treaties and attracting criticism from around the world

12.2.2016

Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirril, the leaders of the Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches, meet for ther first time and sign an Ecumenical Declaration

21.3.2016

President Obama makes historic visit to Cuba

offering various perspectives on soft power. Finally, the report devotes significant attention to the growing role of digital engagement as both a source of soft power and a means to leverage it. We have selected a set of instructive case studies in digital diplomacy that aim to give a practical account of how digital platforms and social media can be incorporated into soft power strategies.

This report does not mean to argue that soft power will win the day in every eventuality. Returning to the challenge of striking a balance in the exercise of power, Nye's development of and advocacy for 'smart power' reflects the need to incorporate both hard and soft power in a nation's overarching foreign policy strategy. Assuming a state is up to the challenges of balancing priorities, ideologies, and approaches to power, this report aims to equip leaders with both a theoretical framework and practical examples for leveraging soft power in an increasingly digital world.

Intelligence gathering, policy-making, public diplomacy, communications, and performance evaluation all need to be designed and implemented according to the principle of "digital first". This is the new reality of foreign policy.

22.3.2016

Three coordinated bombings take place in Brussels, Belgium and kill 32 and injure at least 250. ISIS claims responsibility for the bombings

24.3.2016

Ex-Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić is sentenced to 40 years in prison after being found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity committed during the Bosnian War

27.3.2016

A suicide explosion takes place in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park, Lahore, killing over 70 and leaving almost 300 others injured. The bombing targeted Christians celebrating Easter

2.4.2016

Clashes take place between
Armenian and Azerbaijani military
in Nagorno-Karabakh, killing at
least 80. It is the biggest breach of
the 1994 ceasefire

3.4.2016

The International Consortium of
Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and
the German newspaper Süddeutsche
Zeitung publish the "Panama Papers",
proven by the largest data leak in history
highlighting global corruption

19.4.2016

Argentina issues the largest ever
sovereign bond sale ($16 billion)
for a developing economy, which
is over-subscribed with interest
from global investors

23.5.2016

President Obama's trip to
Asia ends with a lifting of
decades' old arms embargo
on Vietnam

The Hard Currency of Soft Power

The dominance of hierarchical, state-to-state classical diplomacy is fading away as networks increasingly determine the direction of global events.

"Diplomacy is Darwinian," according to Tom Fletcher, one of Britain's best-known and highly-regarded diplomats.[17] It has a long and storied history of evolving with the flow of politics and technology. Being at home with change is a valuable attribute, given today's rapidly shifting context. Global geo-politics are in a state of flux, throwing up a host of new challenges for leaders, policy makers, and diplomats. As argued in the 2015 Soft Power 30 report, two global mega-trends are shaping a world in which soft power is more critical to effective foreign policy.[18] The first mega-trend is the rise of networks as the driving force in global affairs. The second is the digital revolution continuing at pace, which means economic, political, informational, and social interactions – macro and micro – increasingly have an online dimension.

① Networks > States

The dominance of hierarchical, state-to-state classical diplomacy is fading away as networks increasingly determine the direction of global events. There are three main factors that are driving foreign policy away from bi-lateral diplomacy, toward a much more complex and interdependent world of network-driven change.

The first factor is the rapid diffusion of power between states. The centre of global economic and political power is drifting from West to East.[19] At the same time, it is shifting away from states altogether, as non-state actors – NGOs, multi-lateral organisations, corporations, trade unions, civil society groups, and even individuals – wield greater influence in world affairs.[20] The shift of power away from governments towards non-state actors is linked to the second factor underpinning the rise of networks: a much more crowded global stage. The result is heightened competition for attention and influence.

The third factor driving the shift to a networked world is the rise of cities as significant global actors in their own right.[21] The global trend of mass urbanisation has been a boon for the influence of cities. As globalisation has degraded the constraints of national borders, cities are better placed to cooperate internationally.[22] The rise of the city challenges the primacy of the nation-state as the sole government actor in international relations. It presents opportunities for national governments to wield greater influence with cities on certain issues. The C40 group of Mayors, for

example, illustrates the growing influence of cities on the issue of climate change. However, it also highlights the growing complexity of foreign policy as new actors further crowd the field.

With more and more actors vying for influence, networks offer a means to coordinate interests, pool resources, and ultimately shape global outcomes. Border-spanning networks may comprise a diverse set of actors, drawing together governments and a range of non-government actors. They may form to tackle complex collective action problems like climate change, or take up single issues like stamping out polio in developing states. The speed with which networks can now form, and the tools that allow them to coordinate, make them a major factor in driving global change. Indeed the rise of networks is reinforced by the second mega-trend: an increasingly digital world.

Ⅱ   Digital / Digitale / Numérique

There are now over 3.42 billion internet users across the world, and six new users take to the internet every second.[23] In economic terms, the internet economy is worth $4.2 trillion in the G-20 economies alone.[24] Billions of transactions take place online every day.

> **There are now over 3.42 billion internet users across the world, and six new users take to the internet every second.**

News and entertainment are increasingly delivered via web and app-based platforms. More of day-to-day life in developing and advanced economies alike has gone digital. This shift to digital is the core of the second global mega-trend: the world increasingly exists online.

Likewise, world leaders, foreign ministries, and diplomats have – with varying degrees of enthusiasm and competence – taken to social media, joining the conversation on major platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Snapchat. Looking at the two most popular platforms, Facebook and Twitter, there has been a huge uptake from governments to social media. According to a recent count, there are currently 169 countries that have a world leader or ministry of foreign affairs with an active Facebook page.[25] Over 190 countries now have some presence on Twitter, with more than 4,000 Embassies and Ambassadors owning active accounts.[26] Most NGOs and multilateral organisations with a global presence have followed suit, or in many cases lead the way in terms of best practice.

The growth in computing power, the speed with which information is disseminated around the globe, and the spread of the smartphone has transformed the way information is shared. The subsequent democratisation of access to information has created a more informed – and increasingly activist – global public. The combined effects of rapid technological advances on global events have been demonstrated in the Arab Spring, the rise of WikiLeaks, the #Occupy movement, citizen-journalism, and even the Panama Papers. The rapid

movement of information across borders, and the proliferation of platforms to share that information, has made individuals more powerful than they have been at any point in history. [27]

There are, however, downsides to the digital revolution. One worrying example is the evolution of propaganda, or said differently, its temporary death and rapid resurrection. For a relatively short period of time, arguably 2007 to 2014, governments faced constraints like never before on their ability to deploy propaganda, use doublespeak, and obfuscate any gaps between messaging and action. For those few short years, any discrepancy between a country's international messaging and its corresponding conduct was open to immediate criticism from media, other governments, pressure groups, and arm-chair auditors armed with smartphones and open-source data. But today, the proliferation of communications channels and digital platforms, while temporarily destroying propaganda, has actually given rise to new forms of subterfuge.

At no point in history have global publics been better informed, more able to engage, or more keen to participate in public debate and policy-making. Yet, rather than maximising the opportunities this provides for genuine dialogue, the response of some governments has been to develop new forms of propaganda using digital tools. Practices designed to confuse publics, harass dissenting views, offer counter narratives to consensus opinion, or undermine fact-based accounts of events through digital platforms are growing in prevalence and sophistication.[28] The practice is not limited to any one country and there is a lively debate as to where communications ends and propaganda begins.

The proliferation of communications channels and digital platforms – like technology itself – bring pros and cons. The pros undoubtedly outweigh the cons, but both are present and must be taken into account in soft power and public diplomacy strategies.

Today, the proliferation of communications channels and digital platforms, while temporarily destroying propaganda, has actually given rise to new forms of subterfuge.

Governments should build capability in using digital platforms for positive-sum engagement, creating forums for genuine exchange and working to cut through the noise of a crowded global stage. At the same time, governments need to develop strategies to combat the malicious forms of digital communications. This may come in the form of refuting state propaganda, or countering violent extremist narratives in a credible way.

The use of social media and digital platforms are constantly evolving, as technology tends to do. Regardless of how digital engagement tactics change, the determining factor in their effectiveness will ultimately be credibility. Soft power and credibility are intimately linked. States that have greater reserves of soft power will have a natural advantage in communicating with credibility, and thus a greater chance of success in projecting their narrative to the world.

III

Soft Power's Growing Importance

Developing and delivering effective foreign policy has been a core obligation of the nation-state since the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia brought it into existence. But given the shifts outlined above, this task is growing in complexity. Moreover, for many foreign ministries, these challenges are compounded by tightening fiscal constraints.[29] Foreign policy has never been simple, but the effects of the two mega-trends outlined above have led to an increasingly multi-polar world, with more actors, more platforms, and more interests all vying for global influence. Success depends more than ever on the ability to attract, build, and mobilise networks of actors to work collaboratively.

As the conduct of foreign policy increasingly operates not along traditional state-to-state lines, but through complex, multi-level, interdependent, and fluid networks, governments and their diplomats must adapt.[30] Those countries with the ability to form and mobilise networks will be the ones driving change and shaping major global events in the future.

If collaborative networks are now the engines of global change, then soft power is the fuel that drives them. Only through soft power can states hope to marshal trans-national networks towards cooperation. At the same time, the ability to generate and leverage that soft power increasingly rests on a state's capacity to engage through digital platforms.

3.

Methodology of the Index

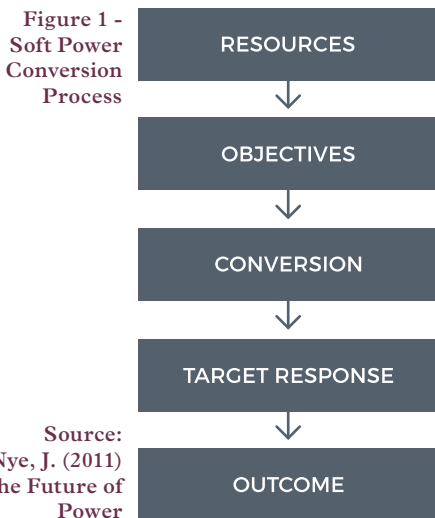As the two mega-trends outlined above lead to a world more suited to the exercise of soft power, those countries most adept in its use will be better placed to shape global events. This leads to the question: how can soft power be deployed effectively? Joseph Nye's own model for the conversion of soft power into a desired outcome comprises five steps.[31] As shown in Figure 1, the first step in the process of converting soft power into a successful outcome is identifying the resources that will affect the target(s) in question.

Figure 1 – Soft Power Conversion Process

RESOURCES
↓
OBJECTIVES
↓
CONVERSION
↓
TARGET RESPONSE
↓
OUTCOME

Source: Nye, J. (2011) The Future of Power

As illustrated by Nye's model for converting soft power, the process must start with a clear account of available resources and an understanding of where they will be effective. It is at this first hurdle – measurement – that most governments stumble. This, however, is understandable as the difficulty of measuring soft power is well documented.[32]

Nye has previously pointed to three primary sources of soft power: culture, political values, and foreign policy.[33] Based on a comprehensive review of academic literature on the subject, the Soft Power 30 framework builds on Nye's three pillars, capturing a broad range of factors that contribute to a nation's soft power. The Soft Power 30 index assesses the soft power resources of countries by combining both objective and subjective data. A more detailed discussion of the methodology used to build and calculate the Soft Power 30 rankings can be found in the 2015 Soft Power 30 report.[34]

## Objective Data

The objective data is drawn from a range of different sources and is structured into six categories. Each category functions as a sub-index with an individual score. The six sub-indices are: Enterprise, Culture, Digital, Government, Engagement, and Education.

The framework of categories was built on a survey of existing academic literature on soft power. Figure 2 below illustrates the six sub-indices that constitute the objective component of the soft power index. A full list of the metrics and data sources is given in Appendix A.

The Government sub-index is designed to assess a state's political values, public institutions, and major public policy

Figure 2 – The Sub-Indicies

DIGITAL

GOVERNMENT

CULTURE

ENGAGEMENT

ENTERPRISE

SOFT POWER

EDUCATION

28 | 120
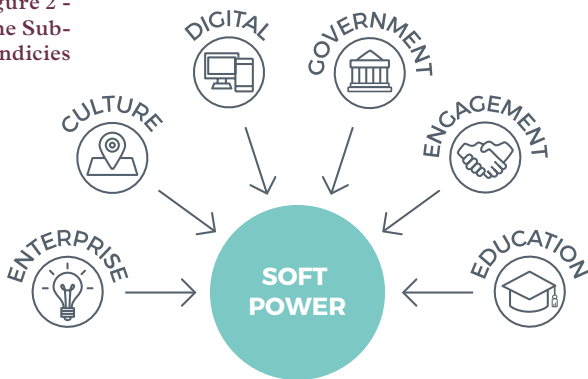
outcomes.

By including measures like individual freedom, human development, violence in society, and government effectiveness, the Government sub-index gauges the extent to which a country has an attractive model of governance and whether it can deliver good outcomes for its citizens. Potential partners for international collaboration are more likely to be drawn to states with well-functioning systems of government.[35]

When a country's culture promotes universal values that other nations can readily identify with, it makes them naturally attractive to others.[36] The reach and volume of cultural output is important in building soft power, but mass production does not necessarily

lead to mass influence. As a result, our index includes measures of culture that serve to capture both the quality and the international penetration of a country's cultural production. The Culture sub-index includes measures like the annual number of international tourist arrivals, the global success of a country's music industry, and even a nation's international sporting prowess.

The Global Engagement sub-index aims to measure a country's diplomatic resources, global footprint, and contribution to the international community. Essentially it captures the ability of states to engage with international audiences, drive collaboration, and ultimately shape global outcomes. The Global Engagement sub-index includes metrics such as the number of diplomatic missions a country has abroad, membership in multilateral organisations, and overseas development aid.

The ability of a country to attract foreign students, or facilitate exchanges, is a powerful tool of public diplomacy, even between countries with a history of animosity.[37] Prior research on educational exchanges gives empirical evidence for the reputational gains that accrue to a host country when foreign students return home.[38] Foreign student exchanges have also been shown to have positive indirect 'ripple effects' when returning students advocate on behalf of their host country of study.[39] The Education sub-index aims to capture this phenomenon as well as the contribution countries make to global scholarship and pedagogical excellence. Metrics in this sub-index include the number of international students in a country, the relative quality of its universities, and the academic outputs of

higher education institutions.

Though elements relating to the economy may seem more of a hard than soft power concern, the Enterprise sub-index is not a measure of economic power or output. Rather, this sub-index aims to capture the relative attractiveness of a country's economic model in terms of its competitiveness, capacity for innovation, and ability to foster enterprise and commerce. Economic might is more associated with hard power, but economic factors can contribute to soft power as well.

The Digital sub-index brings an important new component to the measure of soft power. The ways that technology has transformed everyday life over the last two decades is hard to over-exaggerate. Media, commerce, government, and our daily social interaction have all changed with technology. The same can be said of foreign policy, the practice of public diplomacy, and soft power. The Digital sub-index is designed to capture the extent to which countries have embraced technology, how well they are connected to the digital world, and their use of digital diplomacy through social media platforms.

Subjective Data

One of the biggest challenges to measuring soft power accurately is its inherently subjective nature. Rather than attempt to design against subjectivity, the Soft Power 30 index embraces it. The inaugural Soft Power 30 index published in 2015 was the first to measure soft power by combining objective data and

international polling. The second edition follows the same framework, using specially commissioned polling across 25 countries as the subjective data for the index.

Based on an overview of existing academic literature on soft power, we developed a series of short questions. The polling provides data on international perceptions of the most common 'touchpoints' through which people interface with foreign countries. The list of questions can be found in our 2015 report.
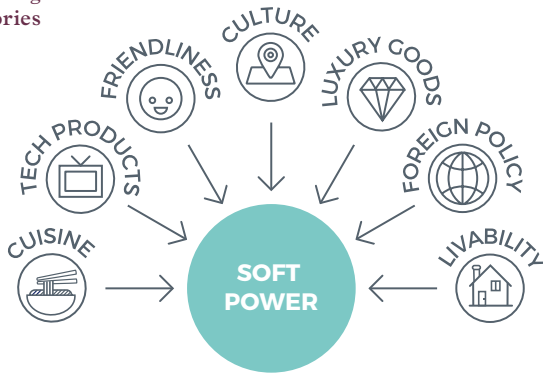
Figure 3 - Polling Categories

Figure 3 below gives an overview of the factors measured by the polling.

International polling for the index was run throughout every region of the world. In 2015, we polled a total of 20 countries. This year's study expands the polling to 25 countries, raising our sample size from 7,200 to 10,500. Countries polled for this year's study are given in Table 1.

The samples within each country were representative by age, gender, and region. The full sample was designed for broad coverage of a diverse range of cultures and perspectives.

The survey consisted of a series of

Table 1 - Countries Surveyed

Country	Region	Sample
Argentina	Latin America	500
Australia	Australasia	250
Brazil	Latin America	500
China	East Asia	500
Egypt	Middle East & North Africa	250
France	Europe	500
Germany	Europe	500
Greece	Europe	250
India	South Asia	500
Indonesia	South East Asia	250
Italy	Europe	500
Japan	East Asia	500
Malaysia	South East Asia	500
Mexico	Latin America	500
Nigeria	Sub-Saharan Africa	250
Poland	Europe	500
Russia	Europe/Asia	500
South Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	500
South Korea	East Asia	500
Sweden	Europe	250
Turkey	Middle East & North Africa	500
UAE	Middle East & North Africa	250
UK	Europe	500
USA	North America	500
Vietnam	South East Asia	250

Total Sample: 10,500

questions translated by native speakers into the most commonly spoken language of each country,

The following factors were covered in the polling (each rated on a 0-10 scale, where 0 represented a very negative opinion, and 10 represented a very positive opinion):

- **Favourability towards foreign countries;**
- **Perceptions of cuisine of foreign countries;**
- **Perceptions of how welcoming foreign countries are to tourists;**
- **Perceptions of technology products of foreign countries;**
- **Perceptions of luxury goods produced by foreign countries;**
- **Trust in foreign countries' approach to global affairs;**
- **Desire to visit foreign countries to live, work, or study;**
- **Perceptions of foreign countries' contributions to global culture.**

These eight metrics were used to develop a regression model, where "favourability towards foreign countries" was the dependent variable, and the remaining questions were independent variables. This measured the extent to which the remaining perceptions predict favourability towards a country in the dataset.

The regression model allowed each metric to be appropriately weighted, to minimise the impact of any bias in the choice of questions.

Changes, Limitations, and Shortcomings

This second iteration of the Soft Power 30 was an opportunity to improve upon the 2015 study. While we followed the same framework and methodology, we have made a few improvements to the index in the hope of providing a more accurate benchmark for global soft power. The first change was to update all of our data with the most recently available sources. The second change was the addition of a few new metrics. Starting with the objective data, the Engagement sub-index has two new metrics: number of consulates general abroad (further measuring the diplomatic footprint of countries) and a proxy metric for the global audience reach of state-funded international broadcasters like the BBC World Service or France 24. The Culture sub-index has one additional metric: the quality of the national airline. Where there is not a national carrier, a country's largest airline was used. The Government sub-index has two additions, and one re-assignment of an existing metric. The World Bank's Good Governance indicators for regulation and rule of law are new metrics, while the number of think tanks moves from the Education to Government sub-index. This is done as it is more a measure of policy debate and political discourse, rather than a proxy for education.

The Education sub-index sees only two changes between the 2015 and 2016 editions. In addition to the re-assignment of the think tank metric to

the Government sub-index, the second change is the addition of a metric capturing the average OECD PISA scores. This provides a comparable indicator to benchmark the quality of secondary education in participating countries. For countries that do not administer the test, imputation was used to complete the missing data for this metric.

Arguably, the most changed sub-index from 2015 to 2016 is Digital. Metrics on overall connectivity are improved by sourcing a more specific set of indicators, replacing previous proxy metrics. New metrics include the number of fixed broadband subscriptions per capita and number of secure internet servers per capita. Additionally, new indicators for digital diplomacy are included, including Instagram data for world leaders.

The Enterprise sub-index adds three new metrics for this year's rankings. The new indicators for 2016 are: the unemployment rate, new business start-up costs, and high-tech exports. These three are added

to provide a better picture of the economic dynamism of a country.

Turning to the subjective data, the polling expands to include five new countries, taking the total surveyed to 25, and raising the sample size to 10,500 respondents. The new countries are Greece, Malaysia, Sweden, Turkey, and Vietnam. The other key difference in the polling between 2015 and 2016 is that we re-calculated the weighting assigned to each polling category. This is done by running a new regression analysis with the 2016 data. The largest changes to the weighting are a fall in the importance assigned to "foreign policy" and a rise in the importance of "wanting to visit, live, work, or study".

As with every composite index, ours is not without its limitations and shortcomings. The subjective nature of soft power makes comparison across all countries difficult. Moreover, the total complexity of the dynamics of inter-state relations – where soft power is brought to bear – cannot be fully rendered by a comparative global index.

However, the index marks a continuation of the mission we set out to achieve in 2015: to develop a better and more accurate measure of soft power resources. Likewise, it reflects the ever-growing role that digital plays in the generation and exercise of soft power. It is our hope that future versions of this index will continue to improve incrementally in providing an accurate assessment of global soft power. Building a larger data set, establishing a stronger case for the weighting of indicators, and increasing the reach and scope of the international polling will all be priorities for future iterations. The growing importance of the digital components of soft power is something we also intend to address going forward. We recognise that reaching the ultimate goal of a definitive measure of soft power will be a long and iterative process. The work for this second version of the Soft Power 30 index was undertaken in the hopes of moving closer towards that goal.

4.

Results and Analysis

Following the process of normalising all of the data and calculating each country's score, the results of the 2016 Soft Power 30 index produce some interesting results. The 2016 rankings do yield some changes from 2015; yet with a few exceptions global soft power appears to be relatively stable. While the countries in the top five spots remain the same as last year's rankings, there has been movement between them.

The US finished in the top spot for the 2016 Soft Power 30. Rounding out the top five, the UK finished second, Germany fell to third, Canada moved up to fourth, and France slid down one place to fifth.

As this is our second Soft Power 30 rankings, we can now make comparisons to last year's results and observe changes in the country rankings. The following graphic provides a comparison of the rankings for 2016 and movement from the 2015 results.

2016 RESULTS

1 United States
77.96

2 United Kingdom
75.97

3 Germany
72.60

4 Canada
72.53

5 France
72.14

6 Australia
69.29

7 Japan
67.78

8 Switzerland
67.65

9 Sweden
66.97

10 Netherlands
64.14

11 Italy
63.79

12 Spain
63.47

13 Denmark
62.57

14 Finland
62.13

15 Norway
61.64

new entry

no mover

downward mover

upward mover
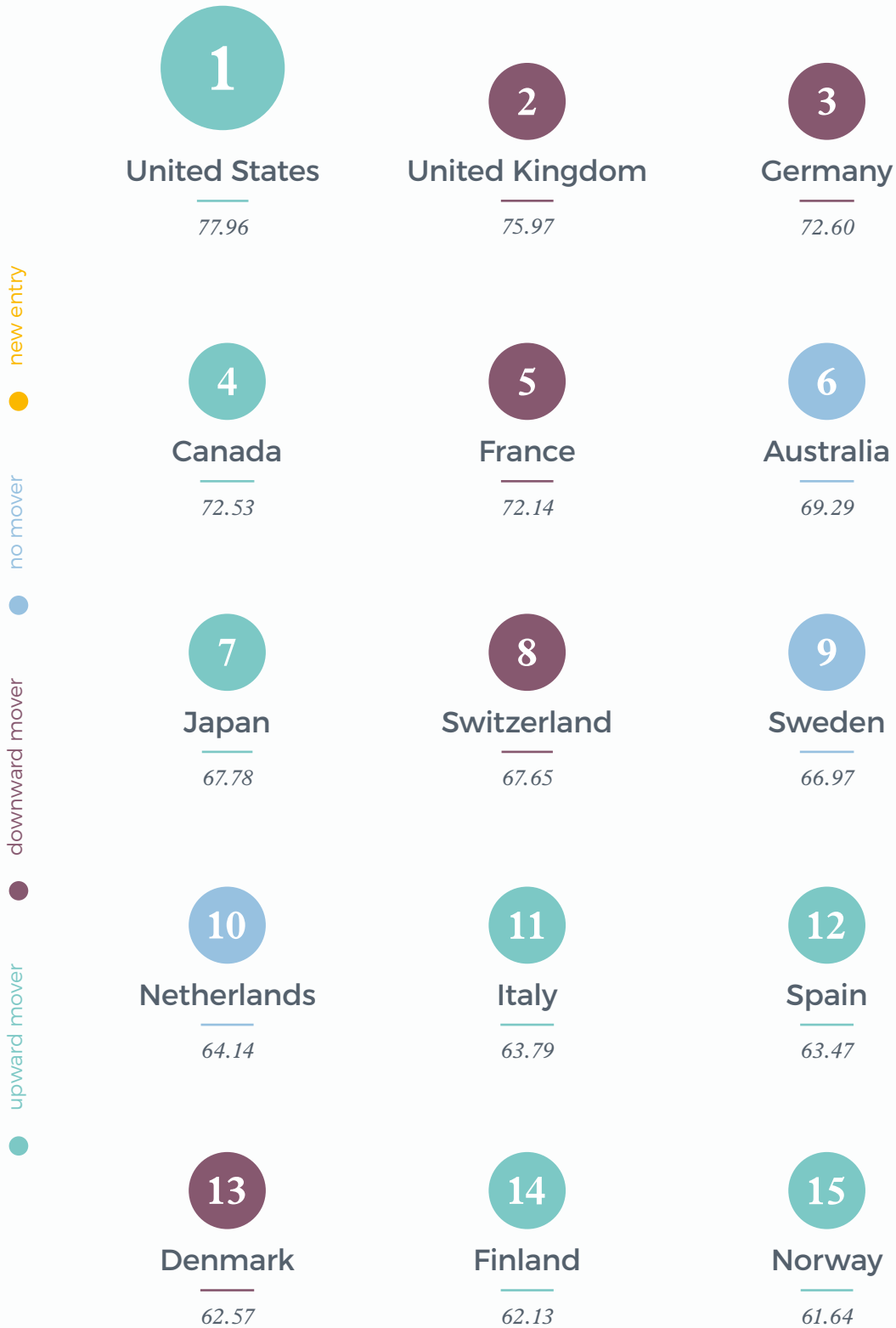
16 New Zealand

61.51

17 Austria

60.99

18 Belgium

59.70

19 Singapore

58.09

20 Ireland

57.02

21 Portugal

51.79

22 South Korea

51.44

23 Poland

48.07

24 Brazil

47.69

25 Greece

46.98

26 Hungary

46.96

27 Russia

46.58

28 China

45.04

29 Czech Republic

44.43

30 Argentina

44.17

American soft power is strongest across three areas, where it stands head and shoulders above the rest of the world: higher education, cultural production, and technological innovation.

As mentioned in the methodology section, several new metrics were added to the objective data, and the international polling was expanded to include five new countries. As a result, if we take a methodological-purist's perspective, we cannot claim that the 2015 and 2016 results are perfectly comparable. However, the 2016 methodology follows the same broad framework as 2015. There were no drastic changes to the index, just a refinement of the metrics and a larger sample size for the international polling. Bearing in mind the caveat of a few small changes to the metrics, we can still draw out some lessons and interesting trends that emerge from a comparison of the 2015 and 2016 rankings.

The Top Five

The US topping the table is not a huge surprise when considering the vast soft power resources that America generates. American soft power is strongest across three areas, where it stands head and shoulders above the rest of the world: higher education, cultural production, and technological innovation. The Soft Power 30 sub-indices that capture this – Education, Culture, and Digital – are all topped by the US. Looking at the Education metrics, America's universities are among the best in the world, as assessed by several global university rankings. The US attracts more international students than any other

country. The next closest behind the US, the UK, manages just over 400,000 international students, compared with nearly 800,000 that come from abroad to study at American universities.

Moving to the second area of strength for US soft power, American cultural outputs are ubiquitous. This is backed up by the results of the Culture sub-index. America topping the film metric is a good case in point. Hollywood has introduced billions of people to America, helping to create a feeling of familiarity even for people who have never set foot on US soil. Often doubling as a tourism promotion campaign, American cinema helps attract visitors to the US. In fact, only France welcomes more international tourists than the US. Music and sport also add to the US's soft power assets – despite Americans insisting on a different set of rules for "football".

The third component of America's soft power trifecta is technology and digital innovation. The most ubiquitous digital platforms and many of the most valuable tech brands in the world are of American provenance. There are, of course examples of a native competitor beating an established American brand. VKontakte in Russia has proved the most popular social media platform there. Likewise, Sina Weibo – China's home-grown micro-blogging site – has seen off foreign competition, albeit with help from government internet filters. But otherwise it is Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Android, Apple, and other brands that billions of people around the world are using on a daily basis. Silicon Valley itself has become synonymous with technology, innovation, and creativity.

Such is the power of the brand that tech clusters around the world have appropriated the name, whether "Silicon Allee" in Berlin, "Silicon Roundabout" in London, or Bangalore taking on the whole name as the "Silicon Valley of India".

Where US soft power tends to falter is on foreign policy, namely negative perceptions of US actions abroad. Last year, the US finished 17th overall in the international polling, which had a negative impact on its total score. This year, however, the US performed better on the polling, which contributed to a total score 4.3 points higher than last year. The lift was enough to see the US leapfrog Germany and the UK into the top spot of the Soft Power 30 ranking.

There are likely two contributing factors that produced a better polling result for the US. The first is that the US has been considerably less adventurous in its foreign policy over the last eight years. As President Obama's administration draws to a close, the world is seeing the full fruition of a rebalancing of American power away from military force. Indeed, Obama's most significant foreign policy legacies will likely be the diplomatic initiatives that resulted in the Iran nuclear deal, two trade deals across the Pacific and Atlantic, and the re-establishing of diplomatic ties with Cuba. These achievements are major soft power plays. Of course, completing the Iran Deal required the hard power of sanctions to make negotiations possible. But it was soft power that held together a fractious coalition of actors and eventually drove through a deal to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

Moving down the table, the UK finishing in second place should not be seen as a failure of policy or planning by the British government. On the contrary, the UK still maintains a strong balance across all elements of soft power. Publicly funded soft power resources include the BBC World Service, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Department for International Development. Additionally, the British Council, institutions like the British Museum, and the UK's higher education system are all pillars of British soft power.

The UK finishing in second place should not be seen as a failure of policy or planning by the British government.

The UK's rich civil society and charitable sector further contribute to British soft power. Major global organisations that contribute to development, disaster relief, and human rights reforms like Oxfam, Save the Children, and Amnesty International are key components in the UK's overall ability to contribute to the global good – whether through the state, private citizens, or a network of diverse actors.

Complementing the UK's state-backed soft power, many assets exist independently of the government. Britain's private sector is a key source of its soft power, particularly the nation's dynamic creative industries, from art, film, and music, to architecture, design, and fashion. Major sporting institutions, like the Premier League, project British soft power around

the globe. Likewise, highly regarded luxury brands like Rolls-Royce, Burberry, and Aston Martin help shape positive global perceptions of the UK. In addition to strong consumer brands, British soft power further benefits from London's position as the pre-eminent global city.

Some analysts and commentators might be tempted to link the Brexit debate and impending European Union referendum with the fall in the UK's soft power rank. However, Brexit is still a debate, at least at the time of polling (and publication). As a result it has not had an acutely negative impact on global perceptions of the UK. However, were the UK to leave the EU, there would likely be a negative impact on global perceptions of Britain thereafter. Forfeiting membership of a major multi-lateral organisation would also have a negative impact on objective measures of the UK's soft power.

Indeed, the UK's unique and enviable position at the heart of a number of important global networks and multi-lateral organisations is a significant soft power advantage. As a member of the G-7, G-20, UN Security Council, European Union, and the Commonwealth, Britain has a seat at virtually every international table of consequence. No other country rivals the UK's diverse range of memberships in the world's most influential organisations.

As with the UK, Germany may feel disappointed to have slipped to third in the rankings. However, there is no need for panic amongst the German foreign policy establishment.

Forfeiting membership of a major multi-lateral organisation would have a negative impact on objective measures of the UK's soft power.

Germany remains the primary driving force in European affairs. It is still widely admired for its advanced-manufacturing goods, engineering prowess, its cool-headed approach to foreign policy, and an economy that seems to translate growth into well-being better than most.[40] On the cultural side, the transformation of Berlin from divided capital to global hub of creativity has been remarkable.[41] Berlin is a living symbol of Germany's growing global cultural appeal. In foreign policy, Germany is unique in receiving constant encouragement from the global community to make a larger impact on international affairs. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has recently responded

these overtures by calling on Germany to adopt a more active foreign policy.[42] Where one might raise concerns for German soft power going forward is the ongoing challenge of managing the refugee crisis and the subsequent growth in far-right political support.

One final noteworthy move in the top five rankings was Canada and France trading places, finishing fourth and fifth respectively. There is not much that separates the two according to their total scores. However, Canadian soft power has received a significant boost this year with the election of a new Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. While Trudeau has only been in office for seven months (as of June 2016), he has made nine international trips, including a high-profile state visit to the US. The Prime Minister's social media savvy has also boosted Canada's performance on our digital diplomacy metrics this year, contributing to a higher overall ranking. Canada's soft power score was further lifted this year by stronger polling results, coming top overall in the international polling.
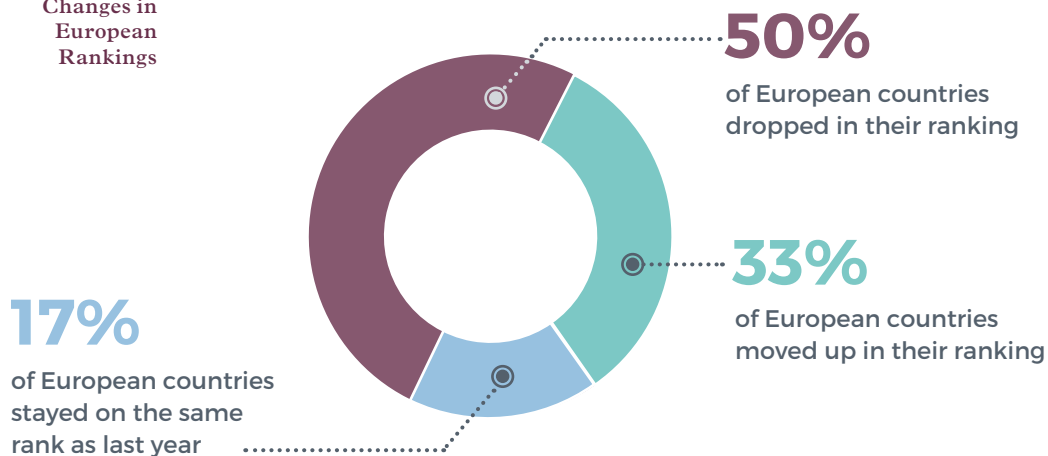
(II) Europe's Challenges

The movement within the top five has been covered above, but looking across the entire table, we can see a broader trend for Europe, and it is not positive. Of the top 30 countries in the index, eighteen are European. As shown in Figure 4 below, 50% of European countries dropped in their ranking. This includes the UK, Germany, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, and the Czech Republic. Moving the other direction, only 33% moved up: Italy, Spain, Finland, Norway, Portugal, and Poland. The remaining 17%, Sweden, Netherlands, and Greece, stayed on the same rank as last year.

As the majority of European countries have slipped down in the ranking, it begs the question: is there a common thread that might be bringing them down? Providing a definitive answer to that question with clear cause and effect evidence is beyond the scope of this study. However, Europe is – without question – facing an undercurrent of instability, uncertainty, and security concerns as it struggles with the largest refugee crisis

since World War II. The failure of some European states to integrate immigrant communities, and the clear threat of home-grown terrorism presents a challenge to the security and prosperity Europe has known for decades.

Singling out any one country would be unfair as the challenges facing Europe stretch across the continent. And the implications are worrying for European soft power and global perceptions of the continent as a whole. At the extremes, the refugee crisis has given oxygen to some frighteningly xenophobic, nationalist, and isolationist political movements. Likewise, the vacillation between empathetic welcomes to refugees one week and the erection of barbed-wire fences the next shows how severely European values are being tested. Comparing the 2016 Soft Power 30 rankings with last year's would suggest European soft power is feeling the strains of that test. How European nations respond, both individually and collectively, is likely to set the tone for Europe's soft power well into the next decade.

**Figure 4-
Changes in
European
Rankings**

50%
of European countries
dropped in their ranking

33%
of European countries
moved up in their ranking

17%
of European countries
stayed on the same
rank as last year

Asia on the Rise?

Turning East to Asia, China, Japan, and Singapore have all moved up in the rankings this year. Japan has moved ahead of Switzerland, to seventh place. Japan's improved rank comes off the back of higher scores in the Engagement and Culture sub-indices. A higher score for international polling in the 2016 index also resulted in an improved score for Japan. Looking across other studies assessing global perceptions, like the Anholt-GFK Nation Brand Index or the BBC Country Ratings Poll, Japan has always performed well globally. The biggest challenge to Japanese soft power is relations with its immediate neighbours, China and South Korea. Both countries still harbour resentment towards Japan for historical reasons, which is evidenced in the polling.

Singapore has jumped from 21st to 19th, breaking into the top 20. Singapore celebrated 50 years of independence in 2015, using the milestone as an effective platform to showcase the progress the country has made over the last five decades. Singapore topping the Enterprise sub-index is certainly a testament to the country's successful economic transformation since gaining independence. Singapore also performed better on the international polling in 2016, a contributing factor to an improved ranking.

Perhaps the biggest surprise in the results of last year's index was the fact that China finished last in the rankings. China's investment in soft power assets is well documented.[43] China's soft power push began in earnest with the successful hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, followed closely by the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. The government has since invested tens of billions of dollars into soft power efforts like expanding the global reach of Xinhua news agency, establishing hundreds of Confucius Institutes across six continents, and a broad range of aid and development projects throughout Africa and Asia. At a time when many countries are cutting back on the funding of such institutions and initiatives, China has been pressing ahead to expand its soft power resources.

As with last year, China performed best on the Culture sub-index, reflecting the richness of the country's cultural heritage. China's best performing metric was the number of UNESCO world heritage sites. Only Italy has more UNESCO sites than China. China's Culture score was also helped by its success in the Olympic Games, as well as attracting over 55 million international tourists last year.

However, China's restrictions on individual rights, lack of a free press, and an aversion to political criticism, resulted in a low score on the Government sub-index. Turning to the international polling data, China did not perform very well, though it made a slight improvement from 2015, finishing one place higher at 29th. The poor performance on polling was particularly acute on perceptions of China's foreign policy. Respondents to the international polling did not express much confidence in China to 'do the right thing in international affairs'. Thus despite some obvious soft power advantages, there are a number of fundamental weaknesses that undercut China's considerable efforts to invest in soft power.

While China has not made a huge leap, it has moved up the rankings two spots to 28th. It is hard to say conclusively that China's investments in soft power are paying off, but the move up the table is something China observers will want to keep an eye on going forward.

(IV) Promotion and Relegation

As with our 2015 study, the Soft Power 30 index actually collects data for more than 30 countries. A total of 50 countries were included in last year's study, which was expanded to 60 countries this year. Not only was there movement within the top 30, this year's results saw three countries drop out of rankings, replaced by three new entries.

The new entries for 2016 include Hungary, Russia, and Argentina. Hungary's addition into the top 30 marks another milestone for the transformation of central Europe from a bloc of one-party communist governments to free, open-market economies that have fully integrated into the European Union. True, the wave of populist politics sweeping Europe is hitting the central states particularly hard. Moreover, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's government is no stranger to criticism, particularly following Orbán's announcement of plans to build an "Illiberal Democracy".[44] Yet despite the political criticism, Hungary has other forms of soft power, and the polling showed in particular that people feel Hungarians are likely to be welcoming to tourists.

For Western observers, Russia's move into the top 30 may raise some eyebrows.

Russian displays of hard power have featured much more prominently than soft over the last several years. Currently under EU and US sanctions for annexing Crimea and supporting separatists in eastern Ukraine, Russia has not been endearing itself to its "Western Colleagues". Yet, despite the revanchist foreign policy, Russia has deep reserves of cultural soft power. It is, after all, the home of the Hermitage Museum, the Bolshoi Ballet, Chekov, Dostoyevsky, Malevich, Tchaikosvsky, and Bulgakov. Moreover, global opinion on Russia varies widely throughout the world. The Soft Power 30 index is a global snapshot of soft power. It does not reflect a purely Western view, but incorporates perspectives from a across the world. Further to that, Russia performed markedly better on the international polling in 2016, compared with 2015. Perhaps a (relatively) quieter period in eastern Ukraine, and an attempt to cast Russia as a leader in the fight against ISIS in Syria, is having a positive effect on global perceptions of Russia. Though this narrative does not find much support amongst Western publics, according to our polling data.

Argentina reaching the top 30 is not solely down to the election of new President Mauricio Macri, but if international investor sentiment is anything to go by, it has given an immediate boost to Argentina's credibility. Armed with a compelling reform plan and breathing new life into politics, Macri's new government managed the largest ever bond sale by an emerging economy.[45] Argentina did see a significant improvement in its international polling for 2016 as well, which suggests that the

public, along with investors, are excited about Argentina's future.

The three countries that fell out of the top 30 ranking in 2016 include Israel, Turkey, and Mexico. Israel's fall from the top 30 was definitely the most dramatic, sliding from 26th. Israel's drop out of the top 30 was precipitated by lower scores in the Education, Digital, and Government sub-indices. Further hitting Israel's overall rank score was a drop in its international polling score. Israel retains some considerable soft power resources, but few countries can match the country's polarising effect on global opinion. Mexico's struggles with crime, violence, and corruption are well documented.[46] Mexico's weaknesses are partially offset by the strengths of its dynamic culture and the global appeal of its cuisine. But a drop in scores for the Education and Digital sub-indices pulled Mexico just out of the top 30. Having finished in 29th place in 2015, Turkey has not had an easy twelve months on the domestic or international fronts. Turkey's fall out of the top 30 was driven primarily by a lower Digital sub-index score, and a drop in its international polling score.

BREAKING DOWN THE RESULTS

The design of the composite index allows us to treat each sub-index as a separate score, providing an opportunity for a deeper look at the relative strengths and weaknesses across the factors that contribute to a nation's soft power. Breaking down the results of the overall index by each of the six sub-indices affords more specific comparisons. As explained above, the six sub-indices are:

- Government
- Engagement
- Culture
- Education
- Enterprise
- Digital

Comparing the top 10 countries across the six sub-indices, the graphic opposite offers a greater level of detail into where the top performers in the index derive their soft power resources.

ENTERPRISE

EDUCATION

CULTURE

Finland
USA
Sweden
New Zealand
Denmark
Australia
Japan
S Korea
Switzerland

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2

Belgium
France
Finland
Denmark
Netherlands
Germany
Australia
Canada
UK

Japan
China
Canada
Italy
Spain
Australia
Germany
France
UK

USA

Singapore

USA

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

1

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

France

USA

UK

Norway

Canada
UK
Germany
France
Singapore
Australia
Sweden
Norway
Netherlands

Germany
USA
Japan
Spain
Sweden
Russia
Netherlands
Brazil

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Switzerland
Sweden
Netherlands
Finland
Denmark
New Zealand
Germany
Canada
Austria

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

ENGAGEMENT

GOVERNMENT

DIGITAL

● upward mover ● downward mover ● no mover ● new entry

GOVERNMENT

The Government sub-index uses a range of metrics that capture political values like freedom, human rights, democracy, and equality. It also includes measures of government effectiveness and broad metrics on citizen outcomes like Human Development Index scores. Nordic and Northern European countries regularly top global rankings for government effectiveness, prosperity, and human development. As a result, these countries also dominate the top ten of the Government sub-index.

ENGAGEMENT

By default, English may have eclipsed French as the "language of diplomacy", but France still sits atop the diplomacy-focused Engagement sub-index. The metrics in Engagement aim to measure the reach of states' diplomatic networks and their commitment to major challenges like development and the environment. In terms of influential reach, France is the best-networked state in the world and is a member of more multi-lateral organisations than any other country. When it comes to embassy networks, only the US has more diplomatic missions abroad than France.

EDUCATION

Along with culture and digital, education is the soft power resource where the United States outperforms the rest of the world. The Education sub-index is primarily focused on higher education. It measures the quality of universities, their ability to attract international students, and contribution to academic research publishing. The US attracts more international students than the next two highest countries combined. America's top-tier universities are the gold standard for international scholarship and the US has more top universities than any other country in both the Times Higher Education Global University Rankings and QS World University Rankings. The output of American academic research is also the largest in the world by far. The UK is the next closest to the US in deriving soft power from Education. Like the US, the UK does very well based on the quality of its universities and ability to attract international students.

DIGITAL

The results of the Digital sub-index put the US on top followed by Canada. Not only does US soft power benefit from the fruits of Silicon Valley's labour, but the US State Department sets the global pace for digital diplomacy. Interestingly, Canada made a big jump up the Digital sub-index from 2015. Of course, Canada has a well-developed digital and communications infrastructure, but the real bump in Canada's 2016 Digital sub-index score came from improved digital diplomacy metrics. As mentioned above, Prime Minister Trudeau's election win has given Canadian soft power an added boost by expanding the government's ability to reach larger international audiences through social media.

ENTERPRISE

Much like the Government sub-index, there are few surprises to be found in the Enterprise sub-index top ten. Metrics for this sub-index aim to capture the attractiveness of a country's business model, capacity for innovation, and regulatory framework. This year, Singapore has topped the Enterprise sub-index, jumping ahead of Switzerland. Singapore is no stranger to topping similar rankings and indices measuring economic competitiveness or business friendliness. But it is not just low taxes and efficiency that account for the top Enterprise score. Singapore also does very well on measures for innovation and posts a high rate of investment in research and development.

CULTURE

As noted above, when it comes to culture, America's cultural and creative outputs have tremendous global reach. Culture is the most potent of America's soft power resources. However, the UK is not far behind, particularly as a result of the global success of the British music industry. The UK leads the world in the number of top 10 albums sold in foreign countries, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry. The international success of One Direction, Adele, Sam Smith, Ed Sheeran, Coldplay, and Mark Ronson have kept global heads nodding along to the sounds of British soft power. France, Germany, and Australia round out the top five in the Culture sub-index for 2016.

SP30'S THREE TO WATCH

As mentioned above, the Soft Power 30 index is built on a data set of 60 countries in total. Our rationale for only publishing the top 30 is threefold.

First, to dedicate adequate time and resources to presenting the results in an insightful and accessible way. Doing so becomes more difficult with every additional country included in the final reporting of the study.

Second, to try to promote a constructive discussion of the results, focusing on best practice in developing and leveraging soft power.

Third, to guard against the tendency to dissect and agonise over rankings and maintain an emphasis on the framework of measurement. However, the downside to this conservative approach is that interesting countries can be left out of the discussion of the results. To mitigate against this, a brief look at three interesting 'powers to watch' that finished outside of the top 30 is provided on the following pages.

India

OVERVIEW:

Rising two places from last year's rankings, India narrowly missed the 2016 top 30, reaching 34th place. The rise can largely be attributed to the charisma and appeal of Prime Minster Narendra Modi. During his second year in the job, Modi has promoted India with an extensive schedule of state visits, travelling to more than 40 countries since assuming the premiership. The appeal of the Prime Minister has seen him pack out huge arenas in London, San Francisco, and Sydney to name but a few examples. He is also a bonafide social media phenomenon. Only President Obama has a larger international following on Facebook. But there is more to Modi than personal charm and social media savvy. At the historic COP21 talks in Paris, the Prime Minister demonstrated India's global player status, making a major impact on the final outcome of the agreement, ensuring India's interests were given their due.

India has long boasted the title of the world's largest democracy – an important pillar of its soft power. However, with a diaspora of 16 million Indians around the world, it can also lay claim to the largest cadre of unofficial ambassadors. This diaspora has influenced various layers of culture in societies across the globe. Making a clever official play of cultural promotion, India's "Yoga Dplomacy", an Indian-government sponsored UN International Day for Yoga, is now celebrated in 192 countries.

Further underpinning India's cultural appeal is the ubiquity of Indian cuisine and the sheer volume of films produced out of "Bollywood". India's cultural soft power falls down a bit on sport, where despite a towering history of achievement in cricket, football and Olympic glory have largely alluded the nation. While there will be many observers who feel India ought to be in the top 30 now, the upward movement is likely the start of a trend that will see them break through in the near future.

34

STRENGTHS:

India's digital diplomacy skills put many countries to shame. As Prime Minister, Narendra Modi is the most tech-savvy leader the country has ever had, with his social media accounts followed by millions of people outside of India, second only to Barack Obama in that respect. At the same time, Bangalore has become synonymous with digital dynamism and technological innovation.

> **India's digital diplomacy skills put many countries to shame. As Prime Minister, Narendra Modi is the most tech-savvy leader the country has ever had, with his social media accounts followed by millions of people outside of India.**

WEAKNESSES:

India would benefit from higher investment in education, as it scores lowest in the Education sub-index. India has low enrolment figures for tertiary education, a relatively small number of international students, and no universities in the global top 200. Investment in education would not only lead to better domestic outcomes, but boost India's soft power too.

South Africa

39

OVERVIEW:

More than 20 years after apartheid's official end, South Africa continues to struggle with wealth disparity and the problems associated with inequality. In fact, South Africa has the highest Gini coefficient of countries included in this study. It is not difficult to imagine how factors like crime and low testing scores are linked to inequality, as well as the country's turbulent history.

South Africa shows great potential for growth. Economically, it provides an ideal environment for investors, with a strong base of SMEs, plentiful natural resources, and a reliable mining industry. The only component missing is a stable political landscape and a highly effective government capable of delivering better outcomes for citizens. Culturally, the country's diversity and heritage has resulted in millions of narratives and artistic expression, all ready for export. But is it possible for a developing nation to take a double-pronged approach: to improve its international standing by dedicating resources to pursuits like Olympic training and cultural missions, while also working out how to feed, educate, and employ its citizens? If South Africa can find the right balance, we are likely to see it climb up the rankings soon.

STRENGTHS:

South Africa has long been the soft power epicentre of Africa. Its moral authority and assertiveness has won it leverage and a unique role in the continent's affairs: that of an anticolonial force, a mediator, and a champion of African development. In forums where it is the only African voice, such as the G20, it doesn't hesitate to pursue an "African Agenda". This position will continue to be an advantage, especially when South Africa inevitably leads on Pan-African trade and diplomacy.

South Africa has long been the soft power epicentre of Africa. Its moral authority and assertiveness has won it leverage and a unique role in the continent's affairs.

WEAKNESSES:

The index reflects badly on South Africa's ability to translate digital innovation for its population. A very low score on the Digital sub-index, coupled with issues around corruption, suggests that the current government is failing to unlock the full potential of South Africa's economy, society, and its soft power.

Turkey

OVERVIEW:

Turkey was pegged as one of 2015's most interesting states to watch – and interesting it was. Edged out of the Top 30 for 2016, the fall is not a dramatic one, but it is significant. Turkey's status as the only truly legitimate "Bridge Between East and West" has brought significant challenges, alongside the benefits of tourist charm and a role as a hub for foreign correspondents. On the frontlines of the migrant crisis, vulnerable to ISIS, and managing the ongoing issues with the regional Kurdish population, Turkey has not always projected the strong regional leadership and diplomacy of which it is capable and to which it aspires. The impression that it may have been exploiting the migrant crisis for EU visa-free travel gain, and the high-profile falling out with Russia, have impacted Turkey's reputation. Closer to home, while broad political crackdowns appear to have lessened, the government raid and closure of national newspaper Zamat was a highly visible sign of the country's unfortunate trend of media repression. That said, Turkey remains the highest ranked country for soft power in its region (only just falling out of the top 30). Likewise, it is the highest-ranking Middle Eastern and majority Muslim state. An embrace from the EU will only enhance the cultural and touristic appeal of the country, and it could see a return to the Top 30 in 2017.

32
POSITION IN THE RANKING

STRENGTHS:

Despite a recent string of terror attacks raising questions about safety, tourists have not been entirely deterred. Of the surveyed countries, Turkey attracts one of the highest numbers of annual visitors, drawing them in with ancient architecture, stunning beaches, and a magically blended international experience. As Turkish Airlines further ramps up its international branding efforts, Istanbul's role as global travel hub is a further boost to Turkish soft power.

President Erdogan has impressive levels of international engagement on his social media channels, but risks undermining these soft power gains by attracting global criticism for the government's treatment of journalists.

WEAKNESSES:

Press freedom is a major issue. Perceptions of a rapid downward trajectory on media freedom are likely among the reasons for Turkey's fall from the top 30. President Erdogan has impressive levels of international engagement on his social media channels, but risks undermining these soft power gains by attracting global criticism for the government's treatment of journalists.

5.

Views from Around the World

One of the critiques of the 2015 report was its overly "Western view". Some felt our first report did not reflect enough on perspectives from the rest of the world. This was an understandable criticism, and one that we wanted to address.

To provide a more global perspective, the following chapter features essays from experts, practitioners, and leaders from around the world.

While we have not managed to source contributors from every region of the world, we have collected a broader set of viewpoints on soft power.

The following essays provide a combination of regional perspectives and examples of global best practice in the use of soft power.

I

Does Asia Have Soft Power?

Ambassador Tommy Koh

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Ambassador-at-Large,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Singapore

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In the inaugural edition of The Soft Power 30, only four Asian countries made the list. They were: Japan ranked 8th, South Korea 20th, Singapore 21st and China at 30th.

The small number of Asian countries in the list and the fact that only one made it to the top ten have caused me to reflect on the question of Asia's soft power.

Asia is the home of some of the world's oldest and richest civilizations. Two of the world's great religions, Hinduism and Buddhism were born in Asia. Confucianism and Taoism continue to inspire millions of followers. Asian thinkers have made original and transformative contributions to astronomy, science, mathematics, medicine, navigation, printing, architecture, and much more. A thousand years ago, all the great cities of the world were located in Asia.

Asia has awakened from a long slumber. Asia is on the rise. Asian countries are growing stronger, militarily and economically, the two faces of hard power. The question is whether the soft power of Asian countries will also grow. I think the answer is yes.

Japan is much admired by the world. It wields considerable soft power. It has the world's third largest economy and affords its citizens a very high standard of living. It is egalitarian and socially inclusive. The environment is kept in a pristine condition. It is a peaceful and stable country. The Japanese enjoy all the political freedoms of the West without some of its excesses. The Japanese people are polite and civic-minded. The strength and admirable quality of the Japanese were on display following the Kobe earthquake and tsunami, and Fukushima disasters. Looting would have been unthinkable to the local citizens. The people were stoic, brave, and disciplined. Culturally, Japanese architecture, fashion, and cuisine have all made an impact on global trends. Japanese restaurants have grown exponentially throughout the world.

South Korea's transformation over the past 50 years has been nothing short of a miracle. Once dismissed as a basket-case, South Korea has emerged as an economic powerhouse. Most remarkably, South Korea's soft power has matched its economic progress. South Korean music, movies, television, and cuisine have legions of admirers. Samsung Galaxy phones are now as famous as Apple iPhones. Many Singaporeans, young

and old, are learning the Korean language. South Korea has become one of the most popular destinations for Singaporean tourists.

China was ranked 30th in the inaugural index. I have every confidence that China will progress up the rank in the coming years. I will never forget the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. What we saw was a reminder of China's great civilization and the many contributions it has made to the world. China's soft power will be enhanced by President Xi Jinping's campaign against corruption, by China's transition to a low carbon economy, and by the strengthening of the rule of law.

Compared to China, Japan, and South Korea, Singapore is a very small country. Does a small country, such as Singapore, have any soft power? If so, what are the sources of its soft power? I would suggest three.

First, Singapore has one of the world's most diverse populations, racially and religiously. One recent survey by Pew Research Centre concluded that Singapore is the most religiously diverse country in the world. The fact that harmony exists between the different races and religions is a remarkable achievement. It is a source of our soft power.

Second, we live in a very corrupt world. Asia does very poorly in terms of good governance and freedom from corruption. Singapore is an exception. It is regularly ranked by the World Bank and Transparency International as one of the world's fairest and least corrupt countries. This is another source of our soft power.

Third, we live in an urban world. The future of humanity will depend on how well we manage our cities. Will they be sustainable and liveable? Singapore is an example of a well-planned, sustainable, and liveable city. This is another source of our soft power.

The absence of India from the inaugural index was a surprise to me. India is the second most populous country in the world. It is the home of one of the world's oldest and richest civilisations. It has great strengths in philosophy, literature, film, music, and dance. Under the dynamic Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, India is one of the fastest growing countries in the world. India deserves a place in the index. That there has been movement upwards in the ranking for India in 2016 is encouraging and it will be interesting to watch it continue to progress in the future.

I will never forget the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. What we saw was a reminder of China's great civilization and the many contributions it has made to the world.

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Soft Power:
The Perspective from the Arab World

Rana Nejem

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Founding Director of
Yarnu and former Head
of Communications,
UK Embassy in Jordan

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The evolution and rise of soft power has had a personal impact on my work and career. As the British government and the Foreign Office began to realise the value and benefits of a good reputation and a positive perception, my job as press officer evolved to encompass "Press and Public Diplomacy". We were told that everything we did at the Embassy had to contribute to the overall objective of improving the image and perception of the UK in Jordan and the wider region. This was the essence of soft power.

I remember thinking how sad it was for us in the Arab world to remain stuck in the hard power era. However, I could see that it was not that we failed to understand the concept and value of soft power, but that we were bogged down with so many political problems that our governments and leaders could barely keep their heads above water. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the almost 70 year-old Israeli occupation of Palestine; the war in Iraq and its repercussions that continue to destabilise the region; and more recently, the upheavals in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen and the devastating war in Syria. Security, clamping down on extremism and economic recovery have thus been the top priorities across the Arab world, and the strategic thinking of soft power has gone to the far back burner.

I can hypothesise, from where I sit, that if they were able to take a step back, some of the leaders in the Arab world might realise that the easier way to resolve these issues might be through investing more in soft power. Or am I being too simplistic?

Some countries have been working hard to counter the negative perceptions that blanket the region. Jordan and Dubai have been at the forefront of this effort, though taking different approaches. Jordan represents a stable spot in an otherwise very rough neighbourhood; a troubled economy; over-burdened meagre natural resources but also a very young, educated population and an enlightened leadership that is leading from the front. Just as Queen Elizabeth II and the Royal Family have been one of the UK's sources for its soft power, King Abdullah and the Hashemites have played a major role in putting Jordan on the map.

Regrettably, we tend to shy away from that responsibility thinking we have enough to deal with on our plate, so why punch above our weight? Why risk upsetting any of our bigger neighbors? So, we take the safe

route and live by the Arab proverb: "Stay very close to the wall and ask for God's protection!"

The image that King Abdullah II and Queen Rania present to the world is "true Islam" – moderate, peaceful, and accepting of others.

It is still hard to say how much impact, if any, this has had on the negative perceptions of wider global opinion. Perhaps one of the factors, from my own perception, has been the lack of total buy-in from the Jordanian government and parliament. I have yet to see signs indicating that they have fully grasped the benefits that we would get from Jordan's reputation as the champion of true Islam.

Dubai, on the other hand, is about something completely different. Dubai is about excellence, innovation, and taking calculated risks. Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashed – the ruler of Dubai – is unlike any other in terms of his vision, drive, and determination. He has focused all his power and the financial resources available to him to create this dream city, which is open for anyone from anywhere in the world who shares the same drive for excellence, innovation and big ideas. Many Arabs refer to it as "planet Dubai" acknowledging how alien it is in comparison to the rest of the region.

While Dubai has been an undeniable success story in so many ways, can this be considered a form of soft power? And if so, are they converting this soft power into influence?

Soft power is, of course, also about culture, music and film; however, because of the language, the influence of some Arab countries' soft power in this area has remained locked within the Arab world. Egypt, for example, is known as the Hollywood of the Arab world, home to the bulk of Arabic film, television and music productions – some of which measure up to the highest international technical and artistic standards. The most famous Arab singers, musicians, actors, producers and directors come from Egypt. Lebanon is the second centre for music production and is home to some of the most famous talents in the industry. Damascus, before it fell to ruin, was a major centre for television drama production. As a result, the Egyptian, Lebanese and Syrian dialects and accents are understood across the Arab world.

Just as Queen Elizabeth II and the Royal Family have been one of the UK's sources for its soft power, King Abdullah and the Hashemites have played a major role in putting Jordan on the map.

So, if soft power forms the essential building blocks that underpin a country's reputation and its potential for influence, are these countries converting this soft power into influence?

We cannot talk about soft power in the Middle East without mentioning the unparalleled successful invasion of Turkish television soaps. Dubbed into Arabic by Syrian actors with a Syrian accent, these have been airing on pan-Arab satellite channels for almost a decade. Dramatic stories of love, heartbreak, revenge and family sagas, these television soaps are watched across the Arab world. The most popular of these is a historical fiction series based on the life of Ottoman Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, the longest reigning Sultan of the Ottoman Empire and his wife Hurem Sultan, a slave who later became Sultana.

As a result, the amount of tourists going from the region to Turkey has drastically increased with people wanting to go see the palaces and locations where these series were filmed. Arab investors have also followed with an increasing number investing and buying property in Turkey. And while the country's politics is currently the subject of an international criticism, Turkey's image in the mind of the average person on the Arab street has become quite positive. This is soft power at its best.

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III

GREAT: A Campaign Approach to Projecting Soft Power

Dr. James Pamment

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When the GREAT campaign was announced in 2011, we were still in the era of New Public Diplomacy, and were wrapped up in the potential of digital media to change the diplomatic landscape. Interconnected global publics were supposed to solve wicked global problems like climate change through inclusion and dialogue; by sharing knowledge and working together to shape social change. The role of governments was to facilitate this, and to use their power and influence to make the world a better place. The FCO was a thought-leader in New Public Diplomacy theory and practice, and the possibilities were limitless. Then came the banking crisis, the change in government, and in 2011, GREAT.

Many figures in the academic, think tank, and consultancy fields felt that GREAT ran counter to everything we had learned since 9/11. Countries do not win friends by boasting about how fantastic they are, and marketing campaigns for countries simply do not work. The GREAT brand identity relied on banal nationalism, and the marketing tactics were too traditional and unimaginative. Trying to coordinate British overseas promotional institutions was like herding cats; they had resisted every effort since public diplomacy was first used at the FCO in 1995, and there was nothing to suggest that GREAT was a brand identity capable of resolving those fundamental tensions.

GREAT, many felt, was "Cool Britannia 2.0". Did it really stand a chance? What followed took many by surprise. GREAT very quickly became "business as usual" across an array of organisations that usually resisted Union Jack-draped logos and cheesy slogans. Brands like the Premier League, Jaguar, Aston Martin, James Bond and Star Wars co-branded themselves with GREAT, raising some £70 million in cash and in-kind contributions. GREAT is now used by 17 government departments and is actively branding the British diplomatic and trade presence in over 150 countries. How did this happen?

Context is everything, and in this case the twin prerogatives of the austerity cuts of 2010 and the unprecedented levels of international media attention directed towards the UK in 2011 and 2012 (with the Queen's Jubilee and London Olypics) created the need for a cost-effective marketing tool that could focus everybody's efforts on the same goals: generating more trade, investments and tourism. But that's only part of the story. Several audacious organisational steps served to ensure that GREAT would succeed.

The first was saving jobs. While the FCO, British Council, UKTI, and Visit Britain had their budgets slashed in 2010, GREAT offered a new funding source that directly contributed to saving jobs and supporting new activities. Between 2012 and 2015, the FCO and UKTI received nearly £40 million from GREAT to run high-profile events, and VisitBritain more than £50 million. The attraction and glitz of the major brands that attached themselves to GREAT added an additional layer of motivation to a civil service under the continual threat of further cuts and spending freezes. Whatever they may have thought of the branding, staff had very good reasons to buy in to the GREAT project.

GREAT also possessed the advantage of having its budget, targets, and measures agreed directly with the Treasury. In practice, this means that whenever an organisation is commissioned to work on a GREAT event, they are required to evaluate the event according to GREAT's objectives. These are mostly economic, and can be summarised in the form of a target to raise up to £1.9 billion in new investments in the UK economy by 2020.

The result is that GREAT requires all the organisations it funds to demonstrate their contribution to the UK economy. The FCO and its partner organisations are effectively "tasked" to conduct GREAT activities, and to demonstrate how those activities made money for the UK. This is a markedly different organisational structure to those that existed previously, and reveals the simple means by which a highly targeted mission can be made mandatory across multiple organisations with different goals and ways of working.

This basic approach to controlling funds centrally has spread through government. GREAT exceeded its initial mandates and has seen its budget double since to £60 million a year. Furthermore, the National Audit Office stated that the FCO and other government departments should look to adopt GREAT's methods of planning and measurement in other areas of their work. In November 2015, the Government announced the creation of a series of specialised funds worth £3.5 billion, which follow GREAT's model in tasking otherwise under-budgeted overseas organisations to fulfil their specific goals.

Another important factor has been the linking of GREAT with the Coalition's new Prosperity Agenda. In 2011, the FCO created a Prosperity

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Directorate to better coordinate the relationship between political and commercial activities. GREAT became the outward face of this new way of working, which helped to institutionalise the promotional approach throughout the FCO, its overseas posts and its partner organisations in Whitehall.

The Prosperity Directorate and GREAT have been particularly assertive in finding opportunities to leverage the FCO's £400 million of aid expenditure for commercial ends. Some 70% of the FCO's aid spend is targeted to boosting trade with middle-income countries. GREAT has therefore been able to quite rapidly integrate itself into the FCO's political and commercial activities, and has been part of a process designed to reshape them to single-mindedly pursue the goal of economic growth.

This all takes place within the Government's 2010 soft power strategy. However, the version of soft power applied here doesn't have much to do with the common interpretation of the term as "attraction". It's more of a theory for "winning" globalisation, premised on the idea that advantages in certain sectors, such as in culture or technology, can be transferred to other sectors. In this case, everything that is identifiably British should be transformed into economic results. The branding, imagery, scripts, and slogans of the GREAT brand are all designed to that end, and they are coupled with targeted political and commercial interventions designed to raise revenues for the UK.

Throughout his work with Robert Keohane during the 1970s and 1980s, Joseph Nye argued that it was possible to manipulate interdependence across and between different networks, spheres and sectors. This line of argument was central to the earliest definitions of soft power, and Nye was explicit in declaring that "instruments such as communications, organizational, and institutional skills" are the key tools for manipulating interdependence in your favour. Although attraction has become the popular definition of soft power, its underlying principles are about how power can be leveraged from one area to another, on the understanding that globalisation has made everything connected.

GREAT is a creature of soft power. Its strength lies in its ability to coordinate a cohesive combination of communication, organisational, and institutional skills designed to leverage a positive projection of all things British into economic outcomes. Its branding and marketing strategies are sound, but not revolutionary by industry standards. However, the political and organisational skills that went into its creation are truly something special.

GREAT is an admirable initiative in many respects, though it is open to criticism in its narrow economic focus and jingoistic use of the Union Jack. Whether Britain ought to advocate how fantastic it is through marketing campaigns remains open for debate. There are certainly far more innovative and inclusive tools and methods for exerting international influence. One could argue that the UK should leverage its communication, organisational, and institutional advantages to facilitate solutions to global problems, rather than pursuing national and economic ends.

But GREAT shows how any modern diplomatic communication can be organised to succeed. Its lesson is that communication is not a bolt-on or an afterthought, but must be integrated into every area of a contemporary foreign ministry's work. Foreign ministries have come a long way in understanding the public part of their diplomacy, but the kinds of reforms required to truly leverage their potential are far more fundamental than many are prepared to entertain. Perhaps, in the future, the techniques used so effectively by GREAT will help governments re-tool their overseas promotional organisations to work equally effectively towards not just economic objectives, but major global challenges.

GREAT shows how any modern diplomatic communication can be organised to succeed. Its lesson is that communication is not a bolt-on or an afterthought, but must be integrated into every area of a contemporary foreign ministry's work

IV

I Say Poder Blando, You Say Soft Power

**Ambassador
Arturo Sarukhan**

—

International Consultant
and Former Mexican
Ambassador to the US
and Dean of the Latin
American Group of
Ambassadors to the US

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For most Latin American and Caribbean governments, traditional foreign policy concepts still trump soft power as the preferred and most comprehended instruments in the diplomatic toolbox.

Most countries in the Americas still approach global and regional geopolitics through the realist prism, underpinned by a Westphalian view of international relations. It's therefore no surprise that the great majority of Latin American foreign ministries do not consider that the ability to attract, coax, and persuade stems from soft power. Given the ze, brand, or mission statement will not alter fundamental geopolitical or diplomatic circumstances.

As the concept of soft power is almost alien to governments and public alike across the region, many pundits there postulate that it's an issue relevant only to the grand strategy designs and interests of world powers. This isn't helped by the translation of soft power into Spanish - "poder suave" or even worse, "poder blando" – which does little in dispelling preconceptions of regional foreign policy elites. It comes across as a mushy, over-boiled, fuzzy, and irrelevant concept for the foreign policy-making of their nations in a fluid, multipolar, and increasingly challenging world.

Making matters even more complicated, a foreign policy that seeks to garner public appeal and win favour for a country, whether it's via explicit public diplomacy efforts or the collateral effects of soft power, must rely on the moral, political, and intellectual ascent of populations and opinion leaders. At a moment in the region's history when human insecurity and endemic corruption seem to define the conditions and perceptions in which most Latin American nations operate today, this is a difficult goal to achieve. Moreover, a certain fundamental level of honesty, legitimacy, and consistency is expected. Some or all of these have been sorely missing over the years – and in some cases decades.

The silver lining is that some Latin American nations have important reservoirs of untapped positive attractions, whether it's arts, culture, sports, or heritage and tourism. Take the case of Mexico, the country that I represented for 23 years as a career diplomat. As the 14th largest economy in the world and with self-contained geopolitical and diplomatic aspirations and modest military capabilities, one would certainly be hard-pressed to identify it as a world power. Yet Mexico is one of the true global cultural superpowers, with unrivalled heritage sites,

a millennial history, compelling creative industries, a vibrant cultural and artistic scene, and one of the richest culinary traditions in the world. With the growing access to and use of digital platforms and social networking tools and technology that allow for the projection of those assets, the region should be home to at least three or four major public diplomacy and soft power players. But the persistent problem has been that Mexico, as with others in the region, has been unable to harness those assets. They have failed to implement proper strategies for promotion, nation branding, and public diplomacy. They have not trained generations of younger diplomats, to make them less resistant to change and less constrained by rusty diplomatic practices, paradigms and principles that stifle innovative public diplomacy. Furthermore, very few Latin American governments have tapped into the evident and logical interplay between the concepts of nation branding and public diplomacy, despite the budding efforts of some to use digital diplomacy as a tool that could articulate them both. When it comes to public diplomacy, nation branding and potential soft power projection, Latin America in general – and Mexico and Brazil, the two regional powerhouses, in particular – has consistently punched below its weight.

It is true that some efforts have paid off, despite many being targeted at narrow and specific issues. Peru launched a sustained nation-branding exercise built on gastro-diplomacy, heritage sites, and ecotourism. Mexico has done much the same, in an on-and-off fashion over the past nine years, with tourism and now increasingly with gastronomy too. Costa Rica has successfully cultivated its ecotourism brand, while Brazil has developed the most impactful Latin American international cooperation program, helping it develop and leverage a successful diplomatic footprint, particularly in Africa.

Ideas are infectious and Latin America is bubbling with them. But despite this advantage, few governments have realised the importance of the Internet. By significantly shifting and dispersing power and influence, it enables the implementation of a public diplomacy that could reach more people around the world, more effectively, in more places and in real time. Today, immediate and widespread access to information allows ideas to circulate virally. It levels voices. This means that most nations can no longer hope to control how, when, and through what medium people form their impressions of them.

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The persistent problem has been that Mexico as with others in the region, has been unable to harness those assets. They have failed to implement proper strategies for promotion, nation branding and public diplomacy.

More so now than ever before, public diplomacy needs to become a vital component of the foreign policy of Latin American nations. Engaging and telling stories to people around the world both advances their national interests – by connecting and creating narratives – and enhances their prosperity, wellbeing, and security. If we are not the ones telling our story, someone else surely will. Therefore, self-framing needs to be practiced by countries throughout the region, as part of their nation branding and public diplomacy activities.

We cannot be so naive as to believe that Latin America can build meaningful relationships with others, and attract and project power using nothing but social networking sites and digital platforms. But digital media and social networks can be the first stepping-stone to connect and engage directly with new audiences. This is why developing strong, coherent digital diplomacy efforts and strategies is a must for any foreign ministry.

Additionally, Latin American nations need to transition to a whole of government – and even whole of society – comprehensive and long-term approach to public diplomacy. This is needed to enhance their nation branding if they want to move the needle on how they convey soft power. They need an army of civil society, cultural, and corporate diplomats, from multiple sectors, as co-stakeholders of strategic public diplomacy efforts to shore up their soft power reserves.

Public diplomacy allows nations from the region, at a particularly complex time of economic downturn and trimmed budgets, to do more with lessened diplomatic presence on the ground, as embassies and staff are shuttered or trimmed. They also need to comprehend that public diplomacy can be an equaliser, winning over hearts and minds, particularly in a multipolar international system where non-state actors – whether cities and their mayors, NGOs, or corporations – occupy an increasingly relevant and global role. By helping shape a new rules-based international system that builds upon global public goods and fosters a global commons – whether in climate change, global governance, or disarmament – some of the region's nations could significantly enhance their soft power.

There are no risk-free or cost-free approaches as Latin American nations embrace public diplomacy as a central tenet of their respective foreign policies. Those who live by public diplomacy can also die by public diplomacy. But in this century, a risk-free diplomacy is a results-free diplomacy. Success in 21st Century Statecraft will belong to those who know how to effectively identify, build, and deploy soft power via public diplomacy and the effective use of digital tools and technology.

Towards a More Digital Diplomacy

As argued above, the rapid global change facing leaders, diplomats, and foreign policy makers is being driven by two mega-trends: the rise of networks and rapidly evolving information and communications technology. In line with those drivers of change – indeed because of them – the effects of globalisation and greater interdependence mean that many of the threats to wider international security and development do not emanate from linear, state-to-state conflict, but complex challenges, the solutions to which are beyond the purview and capability of any one government or even group of governments. These complex or "wicked" challenges[48] include international terrorism, global health epidemics, climate change, trans-national organised crime, and financial stability, among others. That there is no one source, owner, or agreed solution to these challenges means that collaboration across a wide network of actors is needed to address them – or at least mitigate their effects.

The interdependency that creates many of these "wicked" challenges is also the key to solving them. As collaboration has become the *sine qua non* of addressing such issues, governments hoping to marshal collaboration must engage a much wider set of actors. This means building and maintaining relationships not just with other governments, but civil society groups, NGOs, the private sector, and global publics at large. In this context, the broadest form of diplomatic engagement, "public diplomacy", has become a critical tool in the foreign policy toolkit. Public diplomacy does not have a single, universally-agreed-upon definition, but can broadly be described as the public-facing, interactive practices of diplomacy that engage a multitude of international actors and networks, with the aim of fostering mutual trust and building productive relationships.[49]

This, of course, is a favourable interpretation of modern public diplomacy. Others have argued that public diplomacy is nothing more than a euphemism for propaganda, buttressed by better technology and spin.[50] The truth – as is often the case – is somewhere in between. Whatever the interpretation, the aim of public diplomacy is to generate a favourable political and social environment, such that when one country suggests a specific policy, position, or initiative to another country, it is positively received with little need for arguing or lobbying.[51]

Public diplomacy is critical to both generating and leveraging soft power assets. It allows countries to build strong relationships, maintain existing ones, and – when necessary – engage in specific campaigns tied to a given outcome. While public diplomacy is important for achieving defined and discrete objectives, it is also a discipline that requires constant practice. Former US Secretary of State George P. Shultz captured the importance of regular positive engagement, analogising the importance of frequent visits to friendly states to meticulous gardening. When questioned by a journalist why he spent so much time travelling away from Washington, Shultz replied, "if you have a garden and you want to see things flourish, you have to tend to it".[52]

While Shultz understood the importance of regular engagement in maintaining good relations – even between allies – foreign policy has acquired a more frenzied pace than that of the 1980s. Complexity and speed are the defining feature of today's challenging foreign policy environment. The rate at which events develop and evolve, combined with the speed at which information is disseminated, is part of the challenge of "real-time diplomacy".[53] This means that the "regular" engagement of Shultz's era now needs to be "constant". Diplomacy must adapt accordingly.

The primary response has been the emergence of digital diplomacy, in particular its practice through public diplomacy. Digital diplomacy is the product of two key developments. The first is the emergence of "new public diplomacy", which established many of the principles that underpin digital diplomacy,

such as the importance of engaging with broad networks of non-government actors in genuine two-way dialogue, as opposed to the one-way broadcasting of messages.[54] The second development is technology itself – the proliferation of communications channels, internet access, and smartphones – that presents new opportunities to engage. Though in many ways, social media are not just an opportunity, but now more of an obligation. Governments and diplomats need to be present on key social media platforms or risk being left out of the wider public debate.

The rate at which events develop and evolve, combined with the speed that information is disseminated is part of the challenge of 'real-time diplomacy'.

Over a short period of time digital diplomacy has generated a great deal of literature, as practitioners, researchers, and academics have rushed to explore the potential of incorporating digital tools into foreign policy strategies. Likewise, researchers have been keen to establish a theoretical framework for the study of digital diplomacy in the wider context of public diplomacy.[55] Much of the literature focuses on social media platforms, and, while there is a danger of ignoring other elements of digital diplomacy, it is understandable why the focus is geared so heavily towards social media: that is where the largest audience is to be found. The appeal of social media is their ability to instantaneously reach millions of people.

Like the concept of soft power, there has been much enthusiasm around the theory and practice of digital diplomacy, but that enthusiasm has a way of outpacing strategy and capability. As such, it is worth raising a few principles to keep the use of social media bounded within a framework of utility and effective engagement. The first principle is that the practice of digital diplomacy via social media must be used in the pursuit of clearly established priorities and objectives. The non-strategic use of social media can distract diplomats from work more worthy of their time and attention.[56] Second, without coherent, compelling content, engagement through social media is pointless. This means that effective digital diplomacy requires both a clear and compelling narrative, as well as engaging content to deliver that narrative. Finally, digital diplomacy is an increasingly important element of public diplomacy, but it is not the only element. Effective public diplomacy strategies require a hybrid approach of digital and non-digital tools.[57]

Bearing in mind the above principles – and notwithstanding the caveat that digital diplomacy is a means not an end in itself – digital diplomacy will continue to grow in importance as a tool of public diplomacy and indeed of soft power. If digital is the future of diplomacy, it is necessary to ask: where is digital diplomacy headed? To adequately address this question, we need to look at three issues central to the future of diplomacy, diplomats, and foreign ministries: strategies and tactics; skills and structures for the modern foreign ministry; and trends in digital platforms and technology.

Without coherent, compelling content, engagement through social media is pointless. This means that effective digital diplomacy requires a clear and compelling narrative.

A #DigitalDiplomacy Typology

Like all tools of foreign policy, digital diplomacy must be deployed as part of a wider strategy to be effective. However, effective digital diplomacy requires a shift in the way strategy is developed, namely by adopting a "digital first" approach. The "digital first" concept is most closely associated with the media, marketing, and communications industries, but has important implications for foreign policy. As much of diplomacy is rooted in communications, a "digital first" approach means building communications plans with a primary focus on how messages will be disseminated through digital channels, rather than retro-fitting non-digital communications to digital platforms as an afterthought. A "digital first" approach should also extend to other work undertaken by foreign ministries, including intelligence gathering, knowledge management, negotiation, and consular services, among others.

Looking at the tactics of digital diplomacy, it is worth giving some structure to the emerging discipline. Figure 5 overleaf sets out a basic typology of the ways in which various diplomats, foreign ministries, and world leaders have engaged in digital diplomacy.

The list is by no means exhaustive and as platforms evolve, so too will the tactics of digital diplomacy. Starting with the most basic tactic, the use of digital platforms and social media channels to "Inform Publics" represents the most elementary form of digital diplomacy.

Figure 5 - Digital Diplomacy Typology

This is not to say it is ineffective or unimportant. On the contrary, when done well, it is a valuable tool not only to pro-actively inform international publics, but also to rebut misinformation. The example shown in Figure 6 is a response from the Dutch Embassy in Washington, DC, shared on social media channels to challenge misconceptions about Amsterdam. The Dutch Embassy developed an informative, accessible, and even humorous infographic to respond to what it felt was an unfair characterisation of Amsterdam's marijuana laws. Used well, social media platforms allow embassies and foreign ministries to communicate simple facts and information

Figure 6
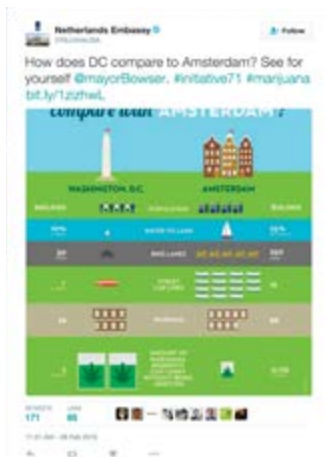
in an engaging way. It is hard to imagine a press release making the same points having anywhere near the impact of the Embassy's widely shared infographic.

One of the three pillars of soft power, as set out by Joseph Nye, is values. Advocating for values has long been a part of diplomacy and foreign policy. Indeed, it was a core component of both American and Soviet public diplomacy during the Cold War, even though advocating for values can also take place between countries with excellent relations. Figure 7a and 7b show the UK's Embassy in the US and High Commission in Australia advocating for equal LGBT rights, a policy area where the UK has set a more progressive pace than Australia and the US in establishing equal rights for same-sex couples.

Figure 7a

The British High Commission in Canberra fully backs up its advocacy by actually performing same-sex marriages and civil partnership ceremonies on "British Soil" in Australia. Figure 8 shows the French Embassy in Seoul marking its celebration of International Day Against Homophobia, #IDAHO on Instagram.

Advocating for values is, of course, not limited to governments. It is through this type of digital diplomacy that NGOs like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, or Global Witness can be very

Figure 7b

Figure 8

It may sound comical, self-defeating, and a waste of resources, but "Trolling for Effect" is an undeniable component of digital diplomacy. As trolling has rightly become a charged term, it is easy to assume this is a tactic for harassing dissenting public opinion – both foreign and domestic. There has been a fair amount of media attention on this practice,[58] but over-running comment sections or flooding social media with propaganda is not "Trolling for Effect". The term is meant to capture the use of social media platforms by one country to land important arguments through the humorous sending up of another. Canada can lay claim to the mantel of doing this best, following their much-circulated social media spat on Russo-Ukrainian geography.

Figure 10 captures the comical, though very serious, exchange. The purpose of Canada's clever combination of maps and sarcasm was twofold. First, it was a blunt public rebuke of Russia's annexation of Crimea and its material support for Ukrainian separatists – clearly stating Canada's position on the issue. Second, having been communicated by Canada's Delegation to NATO, it served as a reminder to international publics that Canada is an active member of the NATO alliance and a contributing partner to global security. Trolling for effect is not necessarily something foreign ministries should aspire to, nor is it likely to be appropriate for many situations. But in the right context, and with a deft touch, it can be a useful tactic of digital diplomacy.

effective. Amnesty International's work alongside a number of governments in the march towards the global Arms Trade Treaty is an excellent example of using all means of communications, particularly digital, to advocate for new norms and rules-based on values. Figure 9 shows an Instagram post from Amnesty International's account marking the start of the enforcement of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Turning to a more collaborative form of digital diplomacy, "Co-creating Communications" captures the process of networks of actors jointly shaping and perpetuating a given narrative. A

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

recent effective example of this is the completion of the Iran nuclear deal, which is covered in greater detail in a case study below. Arguably the most comprehensive use of traditional and social media in foreign policy to date, the co-creating of content and the use of shared platforms to engage the public and shape the debate, ultimately helped deliver the intended result.

The Iran deal made use of multiple channels, including Medium, as shown in Figure 11, setting out to win the arguments and get the deal done. Senior officials and ministers from multiple countries were sharing both content and platforms, effectively co-creating communications and working to amplify their effect through the largest possible network – going well beyond the immediate governments involved. The deal has not been without its critics, but the communications used to conclude the deal, and then promote the merits of the agreement, will be the subject of much future study.

Linked to advocating for values, "Campaigning" is the use of digital platforms in the pursuit of a specific, one-off outcome. This can be directed towards

long-term objectives or short-term efforts. Figures 12 and 13 illustrate both short-term and long-term examples. The short-term example is taken from New Zealand's successful election campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council. While campaigning for a UN Security Council seat may seem like the ultimate insider form of high diplomacy, New Zealand used digital platforms to bring a public dimension to the country's campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council. Looking at the long-term, UN Women has been running the campaign #HeForShe since September 2014. The campaign has a strong digital component with dedicated social media accounts aiming to engage men and boys globally to act for greater gender equality around the world. A website built for the campaign asks for individuals to pledge specific action to help support gender equality. Countries are even ranked according to the share of commitments they

generated, and a map reports the most and least engaged nations in driving change for gender equality.

While there are plenty of examples of these types of digital diplomacy, the final tactic, "Collaborative policy making" is more aspiration than reality at present. This is what digital diplomacy should be aiming to develop. There are examples of this in domestic policy making, particularly at the municipal level of government.[59] At the national level, a number of platforms have been developed to allow for greater public participation and direct input into policy- making and even setting the

Figure 12

Figure 13

political agenda. Petition websites like "We the People" in the US, the UK's version on gov.uk, or Germany's Bundestag petition system all provide an opportunity for members of the public to put issues before their respective governments.

Granted, there are additional challenges to throwing open the process of foreign policy making as if it were a town planning consultation. However, the movement towards greater collaboration in foreign policy and the need to operate through networks means foreign policy must adapt accordingly. Part of that adaptation should come in the form of digital platforms that provide opportunities for global publics to give input into foreign policy decisions. Doing so would increase transparency and should further facilitate collaboration between governments and non-government actors.

Such is the importance that it bears underlining: listening is the action that underpins all of these digital diplomacy tactics. Indeed, with the exception of large-scale (and expensive) public polling, social media provide diplomats and foreign ministries with unprecedented access to public opinion and sentiment. Constant listening should inform both policy and communications initiatives.

The 21st Century Foreign Ministry

In May 2016, the UK's FCO published an internal review that set out to understand the way major global changes – technological, economic, and geopolitical – are shaping the future of foreign policy and how the FCO (or any foreign ministry) needs to respond. The review, *Future FCO*, starts with underscoring the scale of the challenge: "Diplomacy itself is being disrupted".[60] Many of the recommendations made are core to the discourse on digital diplomacy. The most relevant recommendations can be split into three categories: people/skills, technology, and operation.

Starting with people, the report calls for "a permanent cadre of digital professionals who can drive digital diplomacy across the network".[61] The report makes clear that the modern foreign ministry needs an army of diplomats that can use "new digital tools in an authentic, engaging, and purposeful way".[62] The report recognises the need to actively recruit 'digital natives' between now and 2020, arguing that the skills and culture of those who have never known a world without digital technology will be vital in shaping the FCO's future. Recruiting younger digital natives will also help in the upward-training of older staff.[63] Going further, the review identifies new skills that the diplomats will need by 2020: programme, open source data, digital diplomacy, and stabilisation and mediation skills.[64] The soft skills of diplomacy, language, and area expertise will be needed long into the future, but they now must be complemented by new digital know-how.

Effective digital diplomacy requires a shift in the way strategy is developed, namely by adopting a 'digital first' approach.

On technology, the report captures the frustration of diplomats saddled with inadequate IT, outdated devices, and unreliable networks. This is not to single out the FCO, becasue the vast majority of government IT across all countries leaves much to be desired. However, the cost of underperforming IT is growing more acute as diplomacy goes digital. The modern foreign ministry needs a technology overhaul that can unleash the full capacity of its diplomatic corps. Going into some detail, the review calls for "wifi across the UK [diplomatic] estate and [global] network, new android smartphones, and lightweight laptops, faster and more reliable infrastructure via "the cloud" and an array of new software".[65] The review even suggests that the FCO should develop a series of its own apps, both public facing and internal for staff use.

Turning to how the FCO operates, the review points to two key priorities relative to digital diplomacy. First, the FCO needs to accelerate its work by building digital into country-specific soft power strategies for each diplomatic mission. Second, the report is forthright in calling for greater transparency, recommending that 95% of the work the FCO does should be unclassified, making more of that work accessible to the public.[66]

While the *Future FCO* review was specific to the UK's diplomatic service, the themes and issues covered are universal and applicable to every modern foreign ministry. As more diplomatic services around the world face up to these challenges, the 2016 report will serve as a useful touchstone for plotting out the reform agenda of the 21st century diplomatic service.

III Technology and Platforms

Accurately predicting the future of technology is a fool's errand. However, in the short to medium-term, there are a few emerging trends on tech and platforms that may offer some insight to the direction of digital diplomacy over the next few years. These trends can be structured into four categories:

- Going live
- Virtual Reality and 360° video
- Closed platforms
- Better digital government

A now established trend, but one that will populate social media more is the proliferation of live "broadcasting". Facebook's "Live" feature and Twitter's "Periscope" have become useful tools that allow anyone to broadcast on the spot. The ability to create rich video content is a huge asset for savvy, well-spoken diplomats with something to say. Likewise, foreign ministries and world leaders can now open up meetings, speeches, events, and other diplomatic activities to the public with a smartphone and a Wi-Fi connection. These live video apps will likely become a regular feature of digital diplomacy practiced through social media platforms.

While the use of Virtual Reality (VR) and 360° video is still in the early stages of development, the potential for its expanded use is tremendous. Last year, RYOT Media, a production company founded by film-makers and aid workers, made a 360° film in Aleppo, showing the devastation of the city and the desperate state of affairs facing the remaining population there.[67] VR's potential to bring an emergency, issue, or conflict to life – and

make a subsequent impact on public opinion thereof – is hard to overstate, though the level of access to VR remains a hurdle. If the VR audience grows, 360° films could be an important tool in raising awareness of international crisis issues. On the lighter side, it also holds promise as a potent medium for promoting tourism destinations.

The appeal of digital diplomacy – particularly social media – is in the ability to engage with huge international audiences instantaneously. Social media platforms continue to add new users every day, yet one of the emerging trends in digital and social media is the growth of "'closed platforms" like WhatsApp, Snapchat, and WeChat. The public-facing platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn – are not going anywhere, but the move to closed platforms presents new challenges to digital diplomacy. Closed platforms make people more difficult to find and require content to be extremely well developed. Snapchat presents an interesting model for place branding. A number of cities and destinations have used it to present an attractive "day in the life" montage of video content with a strong sense of authenticity. If the growing trend of closed platforms continues, diplomats and foreign ministries will need to develop new tactics that go beyond those suited to established public social media platforms.

The final trend worth mentioning is that governments are getting better at making use of digital platforms, not just social media, but owned websites as well. The US State Department has even developed several apps, including a Smart Traveller

iOS app to provide better consular services to US citizens abroad. More foreign ministries will likely follow suit, and there is a huge range of digital capability and capacity between governments.

As the FCO's 2016 review makes clear, foreign ministries will have to make considerable strides to catch up with technology. This means making internal improvements to their IT systems, data and knowledge management, and intelligence gathering. At the same time, foreign ministries need to make external-facing improvements like better services for citizens, stronger digital diplomacy capabilities, and much, much better websites. Growing calls for greater transparency from global publics should help push foreign ministries to drive the digital agenda forward. For those who believe in the potential of digital diplomacy, the hope is that these changes will help foreign ministries and diplomats develop new means to realise the elusive final form of digital diplomacy: "Collaborative policy making".
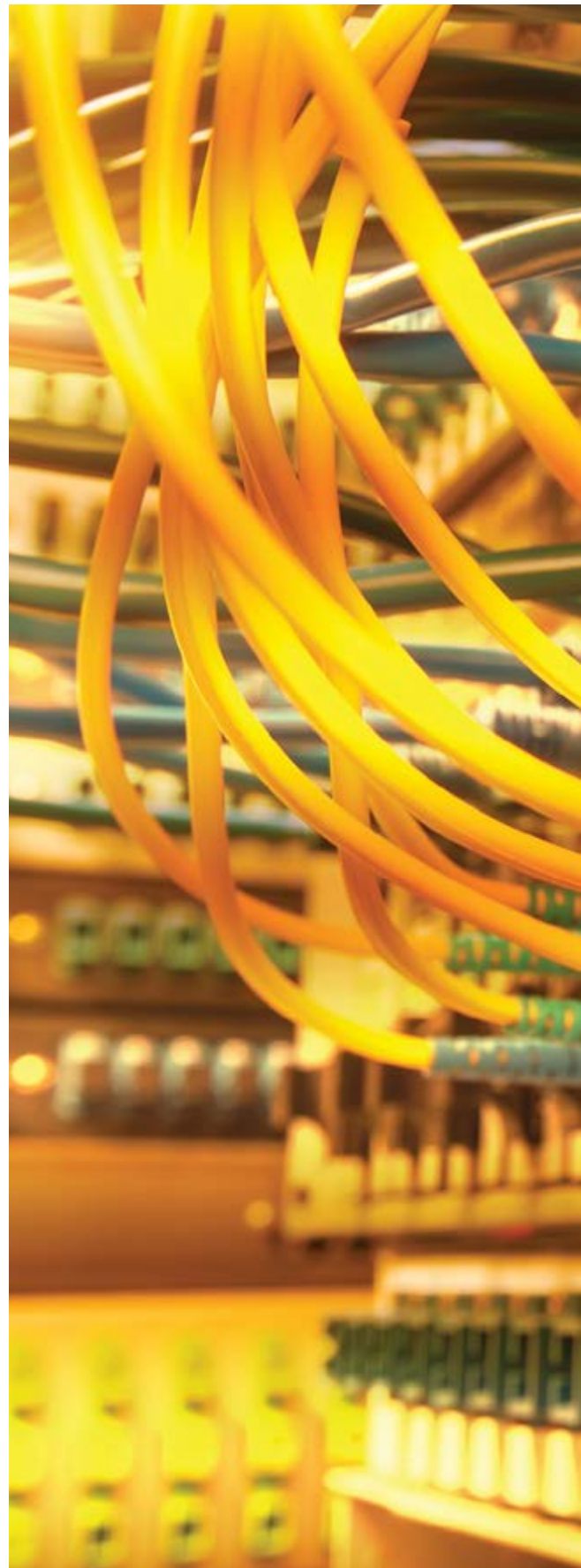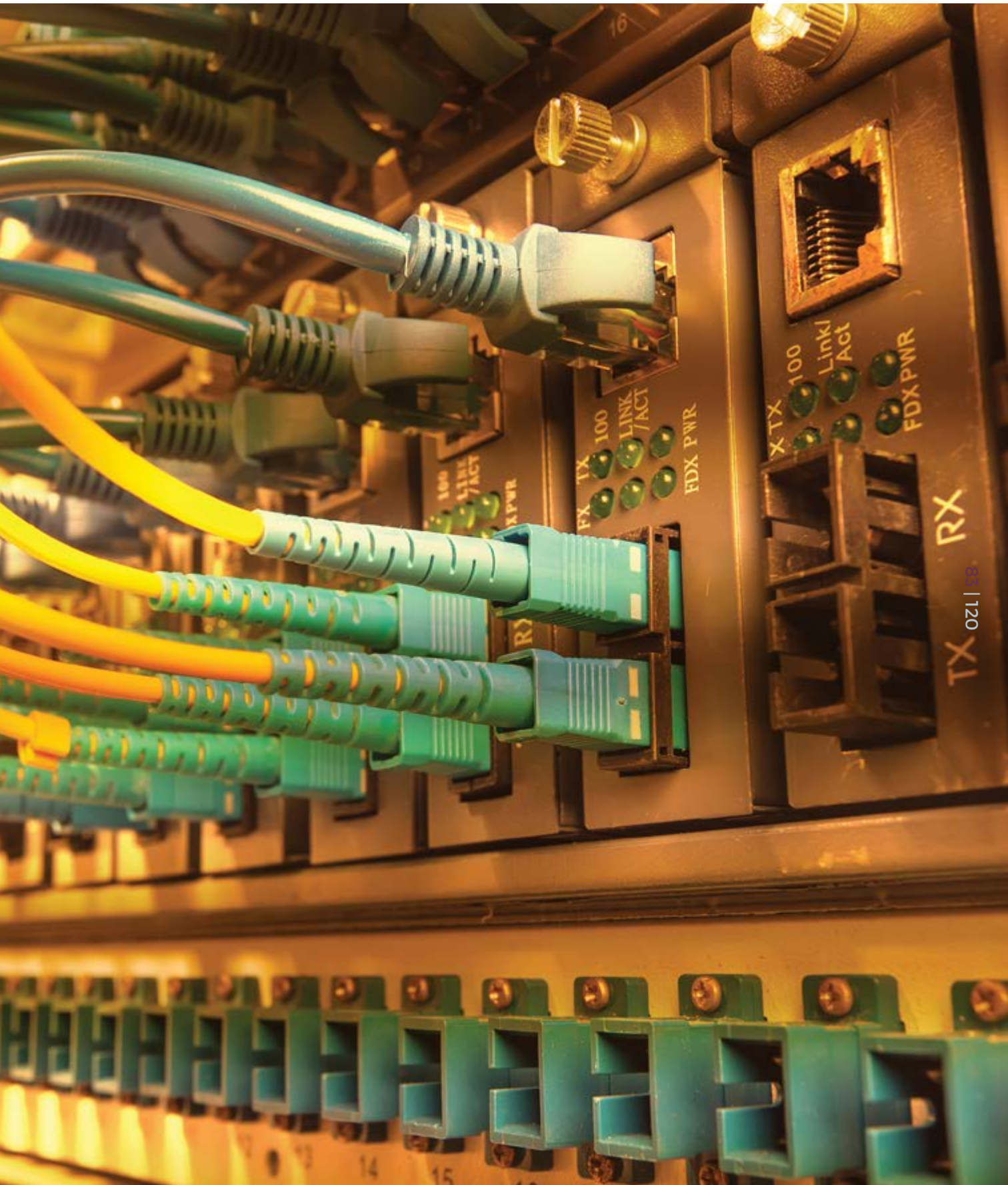
DIGITAL CASE STUDIES

Singapore's Personality Politics in the Age of Facebook

For political leaders, when done right, social media provides the perfect tool to reach and influence audiences both domestically and abroad. In practical terms, a successful social media operation can help strengthen transparency, authenticity, and legitimacy. Social media also provides a channel through which heads of state can bypass the traditional media and present these attributes to their audience free from other people's agenda.

Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has proved to be an incredibly skilled operator in the world of digital communications. His page recently passed the one million likes mark - not bad for a country with a population of 5.5m - yet more impressive when viewed through the context of how the page is used: specifically as an online extension of the Prime Minister's personality.

The mission statement to his page reads: "On this page I talk about the things I'm doing and thinking about, but I would also like to hear from you, about what we can do together for Singapore." Unlike the majority of political leaders the Prime Minister plays an active role in the operation of his channels, with his team suggesting approaches rather than just managing on his behalf.

This position has been cultivated through experiment and feedback. Lee is supported by a small team who pass ideas to him around different formats and topics - some serious, and many light-hearted personal ones. This has allowed them to refine their style and approach for their audience, ensuring that even dry topics are presented in ways that the community will best engage with.

A key factor in this approach is Lee's openness to new ideas. One of his most popular posts shared the code for a Sudoku solver he had written, which resonated beyond expectations with the tech community. The idea arose from a speech to a group of tech entrepreneurs, where he mentioned that he used to write code in the past. His social media team asked him if he still had his old code and suggested that he publish it.

The lesson here is the way in which the Prime Minister has managed to replicate his character, affability, and personality through his online proxy. By replicating his public persona as accurately as possible and personally overseeing the channel, his authenticity shines through. Over time, through trial and error, Lee and his team have become more comfortable and clearer about their communication strategy. The Facebook posts give the public an insight into the persona of the Prime Minister — open, approachable, a bit of a geek and someone who appreciates the beauty of nature and has a bit of a photographer's eye. With social media becoming a primary news source for digitally engaged citizens, this allows the Primer Minister to project his personality to a much larger audience than he ever would be able to do offline, spreading his personal brand both at home and abroad.

On a practical level, the engagement that takes place on digital platforms strongly complements face-to-face contact. It not only allows the Prime Minister to reach citizens, but gives them a glimpse into what their elected leader is working on and give feedback, by sharing their thoughts and opinions. A worthwhile pay-off if it helps residents to feel more empowered in the political process and invested in the state. A popular format on Lee's page is his #facesofsg posts - photos and stories of the people he meets on walks or at events. Coupled with informal sessions where Lee is able to meet his fans, his page enables him to bridge the online and offline worlds. Inviting citizens to reflect on and contribute to these commonly shared experiences has helped to construct a genuine connection and opportunity for dialogue between citizens and their leader.

Of course, the page is more than just a way to humanise the Prime Minister – it is a multi-purpose political tool that allows him to communicate domestic and foreign policy, support diplomatic efforts and advocate for Singapore around the world. For example, during a dry spell this year, the water level in Malaysia's Linggiu Reservoir, which supplies half of Singapore's water needs, fell to its lowest level ever. [Raising the issue on his page](), Lee asked Singaporeans to conserve water and explained what Singapore was doing to diversify its water sources.

When Lee invited Indonesian President Joko Widodo to breakfast at the Istana (the official residence and office of the President of Singapore), he posted a photo of them having nasi lemak (a Malay dish of rice cooked in coconut milk). They were in formal surroundings, but eating street food from a very popular hawker stall. The post worked well not only because of the passion for food that Singaporeans and Indonesians share, but also because it showed the comfort level between the two leaders.

It is with a clear strategic framework that social media works best. Digital diplomacy can often become lost, with no clear idea of what it is being used for, without a defined set of goals that support wider policy objectives. Lee's approach combines the strength of his personal brand with a clear vision for how it can support foreign and domestic goals – an approach that is clearly working, given the fast growth and positive engagement seen on the page.

Singapore jumped two places in this year's index, unsurprising for a country that has placed a renewed emphasis on establishing itself as more than just an economic destination through greater global engagement. With its leader's efforts clearly geared towards helping achieve that goal, Singapore has a great chance of rising even higher in years to come.

Max Kellett
Portland

Building a Coalition

When the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS formed in September 2014, it outlined five core areas to concentrate efforts. The most prominent is the military action to degrade and destroy the terrorist organisation. The other elements include stopping foreign fighters from travelling to join ISIS, cutting off sources of funding, stabilising liberated areas, and strategic communications – or, in the Coalition's words, "exposing ISIS's true nature (ideological delegitimisation)".

Despite these strands appearing equally weighted on paper, the urgency accorded to each has varied. Strategic communications has failed to make the intended progress. Undermined by limited funding and a lack of cooperation among partners, the Coalition's communications work achieved little impact its first year, leaving ISIS' ideological momentum largely unchecked.

Efforts have improved since the Coalition Communications Cell, led by the UK, was created seven months ago. It offers a vehicle through which Coalition partners can deliver a unified, coordinated campaign attacking ISIS propaganda and promoting the Coalition's achievements in the non-military strands. But it still faces those same obstacles, which, unless fixed, will continue to hinder anti-ISIS messaging programmes, and diminish the Coalition's ability to control the narrative.

The US is the most powerful country in the Coalition, both in hard and soft terms. It is clearly committed to it militarily – it has repeatedly demanded contributions from partners and has publicly criticised those not carrying their weight. But it is not so committed to collaboration when it comes to communications. It has pushed forward on its own capability building and messaging initiatives, which cuts across the Communications Cell's efforts.

The US State Department has been hard at work setting up messaging centres in partner countries. The Sawab Center, based in the United Arab Emirates, has been operating since July 2015 and is often cited as a good example of counter-ISIS messaging operations. Encouraged by this, the US has continued down this path of overt partnership. Malaysia and Nigeria are setting up similar centres, while countries like Jordan are also increasing direct collaboration with the US.

At the same time, the Coalition has been pushing out its own content and working bilaterally with individual partners to develop messaging. The Global Engagement Center (GEC), the rebranded Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) and the primary vehicle for these efforts, publishes a half dozen tweets every day. One current campaign, #LifeUnderDaesh, aims to expose "Daesh's Lies" about life under its stewardship, while other content focuses on Coalition successes.

This is not productive in the long-term. It creates a "my way or the highway" environment and undercuts the Coalition's multilateral approach. From a communications perspective, the basis for the Coalition is an understanding that communications is as much about where you can speak and where you cannot, and that members must collectively enable partners – whether countries or actors at the local level – to speak where they themselves can't. The US' insistence on unilateral action and overt bilateral partnerships undermines this.

To start, the GEC is repeating many of the CSCC's mistakes, just on a larger scale and with better funding. Developing and implementing messaging and campaigns from a Western perspective and position does not create a great chance for success when speaking to audiences abroad. It also does not create a good environment for generating buy-in from partners who could view following the US' approach as a necessary condition for receiving funding.

The bilateral, overt efforts to create messaging centres are similarly flawed. The Sawab Center was pioneering, and it is reasonable to expect the centres in Southeast Asia and Africa will be for those regions as well. But transparent support from a government like the US delegitimises messages in the eyes of target audiences.

The combined effect of these factors is to pull the communications fight's centre of gravity away from the Middle East and the Coalition towards the US. Everyone knows that the US is the best-funded and most powerful member of the Coalition, so it is easy to understand why partners might not immediately look for support from the Coalition Communications Cell, which has a budget of just £10 million. But the US is not best positioned to lead communications across the entire Coalition to achieve its goal of "ideological delegitimisation". This will be most successful if it is a collaborative and locally-driven effort.

Solving this imbalance is important both immediately and looking further down the road. Building a global coalition that can empower local actors isn't just relevant to the fight against ISIS. The communications of terrorist organisations from Nigeria to the Philippines have evolved along with ISIS' own propaganda. Similarly, whatever comes after ISIS will likely continue this communications innovation. Fighting this will require the flexibility and insight that can only be drawn from empowered local actors.

The Coalition Communications Cell recognises this and is looking past the first year of the anti-ISIS campaign. But a major obstacle to this vision is funding. Coalition members are loathe to commit significant sums to initiatives over which they will not have direct control, while the "results now" mentality endemic to politics makes long-term funding difficult to secure.

Unlocking more funds will rest on the Coalition's ability to demonstrate concrete return on investment beyond traditional communications engagement metrics like retweets and media coverage. Evaluation should be geared to test the underlying conditions of the environment in which the Coalition is communicating – public attitudes towards specific indicators associated with religion or government, for example. It will also require decision makers to demand less than total certainty when choosing where to allocate funds. When the measure of success is in effect an absence of action over a long period of time – a potential recruit not traveling to join ISIS, for example – it is more subtle measurements of public opinion that demonstrate the value of communications work.

If this return on investment can be seen, it will cement the understanding that strategic communications is an integral part of national security. There is a growing recognition of this – soft power and strategic communications appear in the 2015 UK Strategic Defence and Security Review, for example – but communications remains more associated with the soft aspects of international relations than hard. We saw the power of collaborative advocacy in the comprehensive and unrelenting communications campaign surrounding the Iran deal. Can the Coalition achieve the same?

Jordan Bach-Lombardo
Portland

Digital Milestones in the Obama White House

The Obama Administration is rounding out its eighth and final year in the White House. Over the course of these years, the Obama team has built a substantial digital operation, developing it off the success of two strong presidential election campaigns. They brought into the White House a new approach to digital engagement and the use of technology "on the job". Social media, digital government, websites, blogs, and more – the Obama White House changed the game again and again. The White House has come to use technology and digital tools to achieve goals, advocate for change, and upgrade the US government's operations. In the process, the White House has created a powerful system for engaging with and influencing others - both at home and abroad.

A new website, a new blog, and a shift towards a more digital and social government - that's how the Obama administration kicked-off in 2009. From the beginning, the administration aimed to be different online, to take a new tone from previous ones. It even launched an official mobile app. Unsurprisingly, the Obama White House has been instrumental in shaping the United States' digital infrastructure and its capabilities in digital government and digital diplomacy.

The First Amendment of the US Constitution guarantees Americans the right to petition their government. The White House sought to make this task even easier, more transparent - and more readily available to citizens.

In 2011, the White House launched "We The People", a platform that allows individuals to create and share an online petition on nearly any issue. Petitions that rise above the site's signature threshold are reviewed by White House policy teams and receive an official response. Currently, to receive an official response a petition must gather at least 100,000 signatures within 30 days. The aim was to better engage American citizens and use digital tools to make them a bigger part of the political and governing process.

While the White House started out with a strong digital first approach, central digital coordination and digital service delivery was still lacking across other areas of government. This finally caught up to the administration. Modeled after a similar programme in the UK, the White House launched the US Digital Service in August of 2014. Earlier that same year, the General Services Administration launched the internal digital services agency, 18F. The two new government teams sought tech talent from across the US with a goal of making the government more digitally natured by building what has been called 21st century digital government: to make government services "simple, effective, and efficient", and in the process making the government work better for the people and more open and accountable. Technology has impacted and transformed the way citizens do just about everything in their daily lives. Between the US Digital Service and 18F, the aim is to ensure the government is keeping up as well.

The White House has an expansive social media presence, across nearly every mainstream social platform. Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Medium, and even Snapchat – the White House uses them all and more. But the White House goes beyond mere presence. A team of savvy communicators sits at the helm of its social media apparatus, sharing content, engaging with users, communicating policy and having a bit of fun.

The White House has an expansive social media presence, across nearly every mainstream social platform. Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Medium, and even Snapchat – the White House uses them all and more.

The White House's official Facebook page remains an active resource for content, news stories, calls to action, and behind-the-scenes looks at how the administration works. In November 2015 the President himself launched an official POTUS Facebook page. The page opened new doors for the President to engage beyond the White House page with a more personal take. The content comes more directly from him, rather than from the scope of "'the administration". Unlike individual politician pages, this one belongs to the government and will transition to the next President.

The initial @WhiteHouse Twitter account launched in April 2009 and @POTUS launched in June 2013. Twitter remains a crucial social platform – especially for quick-fire information sharing and engaging with the world's media and followers globally via #askObama and other activities. The @WhiteHouse, @POTUS, and many other official White House Twitter channels all remain highly active. They are a piece of the operation's rapid communications arsenal, enabling a more social government.

Not just a social presidency but a highly visual one, the White House is also very active on Instagram, YouTube, Vine, Pinterest, and Flickr. From photos to videos, visual storytelling has left its mark on the White House. Whether discussing day-to-day activities, fun times had by the team, or hard policy, the White House frequently uses photos, graphics, gifs, data presentations, and other creative resources to tell its story to audiences at home and abroad.

The latest social craze is Snapchat, which the White House joined earlier this year. Building on successful visual storytelling, the White House has taken to the wildly popular mobile app to engage with photos and videos to offer a light hearted, behind-the-scenes look at the White House and the Obama Administration in real time.

The White House has come far, and in doing so created a global online broadcasting framework and engagement mechanism to bring the United States' highest office to both domestic and worldwide audiences – without a media filter – directly where people are already actively consuming, sharing, and engaging with information. It has created a strong infrastructure for a digital government that continues to innovate.

The White House's reach boasts unprecedented public diplomacy and soft power implications, and it seems clear that, no matter who next holds the US Presidency, this system will grow in influence and reach.

Scott Nolan Smith
Portland

The Modi Effect Marches On

India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, stated in 2015 that "the strength of social media today is that it can tell governments where they are wrong and can stop them from moving in the wrong direction." Elected in 2014, Modi has quickly cemented his reputation as one of Facebook's most prolific and influential users. His rapid accession is no surprise. Modi understands the power of social media in strengthening his government's programme, but hasn't lost sight of Facebook's original intent to build relationships in an entertaining and innovative way.

Use of Facebook by world leaders is by no means a new phenomenon. Since Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, Facebook has become the must-have platform for politicians wanting to secure votes, promote political viewpoints, and appeal to the masses with more authenticity and a human touch. Burson-Marsteller's World Leaders on Facebook study identifies profiles for 87 heads of state, 82 prime ministers, and 51 foreign ministers, and notes that the governments of only 24 countries don't maintain a Facebook presence at all.

In 2015, there was no leader more successful on Facebook than Modi. While he hasn't yet surpassed President Obama's 48 million likes (his page currently has around 34 million), Modi is the undisputed champion in terms of interactions, garnering more than 215 million in 2015 alone, five times as many as Obama's page.

Prime Minister Modi's Facebook posts attract more engagement than any other world leader, whether he is discussing domestic or foreign policy. He is responsible for the platform's second most popular post – a candid embrace with President Obama that received 2.4 million likes and 81,000 shares. Other popular posts from 2015 include a before and after photo of the Prime Minister cleaning his local area and another series of images celebrating Modi's mother returning home to Gujarat.

Modi's greatest strength, and the reason he is so popular, lies in the fact that while his posts may at times seem light-hearted and unscripted – he once promoted the importance of sanitation by posting an animation of himself sweeping a street – they are often designed to promote a new policy or advocate for collective behaviour change. He has cultivated a rare Facebook presence that combines a good-humoured approach with a serious policy agenda.

It's worth noting that the Prime Minister's success is part of a wider effort by the Indian government, which has seen 47 of its 50 cabinet ministers maintain a verified and active Facebook presence. Prime Minister Modi, President Pranab Mukherjee, and External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee are the three most "liked" leaders on Facebook in the Asia Pacific region. And the Indian government has used the social media platform to garner public support for a range of domestic initiatives, including "Make in India", "Digital India" and "Skill India".

Domestically, Facebook has been instrumental in pushing Modi's Digital India agenda. A champion for digital connectivity, the leader launched his campaign last July to "ensure government services are made available to citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity". He has since used Facebook to promote the initiative to India's 280 million internet

users, a population he might not have been able to reach without the platform. Modi introduced "Digital India" to the world during his visit to Facebook HQ last year when he sat down with Mark Zuckerberg for a Town Hall Q&A. Zuckerberg showed his support for the initiative by emblazoning his profile picture with the Indian tri-colour, and the discussion resulted in one of Modi's most engaged with Facebook posts ever.

Facebook has also been an invaluable tool for Modi's evolving approach to foreign policy, and is in large part responsible for the leader becoming synonymous with the term "selfie diplomacy". In his first year since taking office, Modi posed for selfies with leaders around the world, including Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama and former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott. Ahead of Obama's visit to India, the Hindustan Times wondered, "Where's the Modi-Obama selfie we've been waiting for?"

Observers note that Modi was not always expected to take such an active approach to foreign policy. His Bharatiya Janata Party dedicated one page out of 40 to foreign policy in its campaign platform and the issue was barely mentioned by the Prime Minister during his August 15th Independence Day speech. But Modi's engaging brand of "selfie diplomacy" and his ability to build relationships with other world leaders over Facebook has far exceeded expectations. While sometimes unorthodox, India's Prime Minister is building bridges and carrying out foreign relations in a way that few other leaders have managed before.

The rare ability of Prime Minister Modi to engage online audiences so effectively through social media is a huge asset for India's soft power. Our own data found that Modi's engagement with Facebook users is not limited to Indian citizens, but that he has a huge international following as well. The key question for India's soft power going forward is whether it can catch up to, and indeed build on, Modi's success in digital diplomacy. If India can improve on the other elements of its soft power, it will doubtless break into the top 30 in the near future.

Olivia Harvey
Portland

The Iran Deal

On 14 July 2015, the P5+1 countries (China, France, Russia, UK, US, and Germany) and Iran completed negotiations in Vienna and reached agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), better known as the Iran Deal. The JCPOA was the fruition of 20 months of negotiations and arguably the most important diplomatic event of the decade. The deal curtails Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons, while inviting it back into the international economy by lifting sanctions. For most of the P5+1 states, particularly the US, diplomatic communications efforts had to be waged on two fronts – international and domestic. Not only was sound strategy and tireless diplomatic work required to complete the deal, but redoubtable communications efforts were required on the home front to "sell" the deal to American and Western publics. These efforts resulted in one of (if not the) largest and most comprehensive foreign policy communications campaigns, deploying the full spectrum of traditional and social media tactics.

In October 2015, the JCPOA came into effect. Seven months later, controversy erupted in American foreign policy circles over a [Sunday New York Times Magazine](#) profile of Ben Rhodes, President Obama's Deputy National Security Advisory for Strategic Communications. The piece sparked a heated debate on the extent to which Rhodes' and the White House's impressive communications strategy massaged facts and cajoled journalists into presenting the American people with a favourable assessment of the nuclear deal. The focus was particularly on the use of digital communications to achieve public consensus on the Iran Deal and avoid a congressional delay or derailment. The article itself has received heavy criticism, but the controversy surrounding the communications practices it revealed speak to just how effective and powerful the White House's combined use of traditional media and digital platforms was in achieving its objective of securing the deal.

Regardless of one's view, the recent debate brought to light a top policy area where digital played a key role in the White House's global engagement toolkit. The Iran Deal was widely discussed across social and digital channels, and the White House was a key player in the conversations.

The Administration launched a dedicated [@TheIranDeal](#) Twitter handle, [a new page](#) on the White House website, and deployed active and engaging content across White House and broader US Government digital channels, including the State Department, Department of Energy, the Treasury, and members of Congress. To give the argument more weight when 140 characters were not enough, the White House launched a [dedicated Medium publication](#). This allowed the administration to publish the full text of the deal, feature pop-out commentary, deliver detailed arguments in support of the deal, and provide a platform for long-form discussion pieces. The Medium publication gave a platform for various members of the Administration to argue the case for the deal. Secretary of State John Kerry, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, and Treasury Secretary Jack Lew all contributed posts. Content also included statements of support from members of Congress and allies of the United States, including British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond and UK diplomats in Washington.

As a truly collaborative digital diplomacy effort, the communications campaign surrounding the Iran Deal was a huge undertaking. However, activity supporting the campaign has almost completely halted

over the last few months. A Twitter analysis highlights the drop in communications around the JCPOA, which poses challenges to its continued support and to full and faithful implementation by all parties. @TheIranDeal Twitter account tweeted 1,014 times between its first post on 21 July and 2 February. It has not tweeted since.

Activity around the Iran Deal from accounts dedicated to the White House and the State Department follow a similar trajectory. Profiles representing the White House (@WhiteHouse), President Barack Obama (@POTUS), and Josh Earnest, the President's Press Secretary (@PressSec), tweeted about the deal 103 times between 21 July and 2 February.

The State Department's Twitter profiles (@StateDept; @JohnKerry; and @statedeptspox) have been only slightly more active. They have tweeted about the deal a combined 21 times since 2 February, compared to 168 tweets posted from 21 July to 2 February.

But, in contrast to this decline, conversation about the deal has continued. #IranDeal was used in over 2.1 million tweets during @TheIranDeal's period of activity. In the four months since 2 February, it has been mentioned over 62,000 times per month. While a decrease compared to the July-August peak, it demonstrates a level of digital conversation that is much higher than the activity shown by profiles representing the administration – the main proponents of the deal.

The administration's powerful digital push helped sell the Iran Deal domestically and abroad. It required convincing audiences of America's commitment to enforcement and its willingness to re-impose sanctions should Iran break the deal. It also required concealing some of the more controversial aspects of the Iranian government's policies to make it appealing enough to the general publics of both in the US and the other P5+1 countries.

The deal, though concluded diplomatically, is steeped in the context of hard power. The impetus behind the deal was to halt Iran's development of nuclear capabilities for alleged military ends. Iran was willing to come to the table because it had suffered so dramatically from crushing economic sanctions imposed by the US and EU. These sanctions were enforced with vigilance and rigour, as evidenced by BNP Paribas' $8 billion fine for violating them.

These hard power foundations are reflected in posts by @TheIranDeal. A majority of its content focused on the core objectives of preventing Tehran from gaining a nuclear weapon, arms restrictions on Iran, and containing its post-Deal activity.

However, the US, joined by its European allies and by Iran's own representatives, aggressively pushed a softer angle to the deal by using language like "re-engaging with the international community", "pursuing a path of cooperation over conflict", and "political good will… exercised with sincerity, patience, and constancy". This presentation has helped ease the image of Iran as an source of regional instability and hostility towards the West, and attempted to shift perceptions of Iran as more cooperative, open, and modernising.

As the Obama administration's digital push has waned, the US has lost control of the narrative and soft language is now absent from the debate. The result is that Iran's harder aspects are coming back

to the fore. This trend will only accelerate as concerns over security and regional stability continue to go unchallenged, now that the JCPOA is in place and the digital machinery built to promote the Iran Deal remains silent.

Aiming to realise the full scope of the Iran Deal, many European powers are now making efforts to establish new economic ties with Iran, seeking out trade deals and investment opportunities. On the flip side, hawks in the US Congress and elsewhere have only continued to push their anti-Iran rhetoric. If this rhetoric is not countered by authoritative voices pushing the soft argument, the digital battleground will remain dominated by hardliners. This could have real-world consequences for the future of the deal and full implementation.

The digital push led by @TheIranDeal helps illustrate two lessons. First, that changes in image can be achieved if sufficient force is applied comprehensively across multiple outlets and digital channels – best implemented through a strategic campaign. Second, that any shift in perception generated by a concerted communications campaign are not necessarily permanent – lasting change requires lasting effort.

The Iran Deal campaign was led by the White House, but brought into the fold by the broader US government, elected political leaders, and included US allies. It was truly the first of its kind for a US digital policy push. It was strategic, collaborative, and engaging. Up to this point, it should be judged a success, but the let-up in communications around the deal may cause problems for a major diplomatic bargain that is still in the early phases of implementation.

FREQUENCY OF DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT ON THE IRAN DEAL
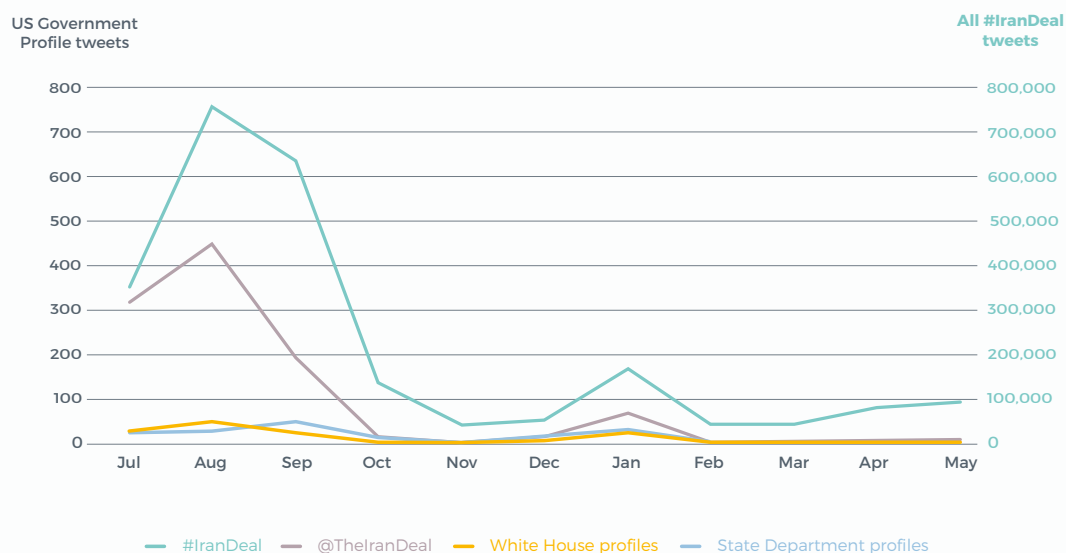
Scott Nolan Smith and **Jordan Bach-Lombardo**
Portland

A New Prime Minister, A New Approach

Since his win in October 2015, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has emerged on the global scene as one of the most popular world leaders.

Trudeau has come to represent a new generation of politicians: vibrant, accessible, and authentic. By recognizing the power of the internet and social media as an organizing tool, Trudeau has used Facebook as a way to reignite public interest in government, and bring politics directly to Canadians on digital platforms. As Trudeau himself once noted, "The new public square is online."

With nearly 2.5 million followers, the Prime Minister's Facebook account has seen an increase of over 1.9 million followers since first taking office in October 2015, making him the seventh most popular world leader by number of interactions on Facebook. His dedication to making his government as open and transparent as possible through social channels has kept public interest engaged well beyond the campaign cycle. This commitment to transparency is demonstrated in his tracking of Trudeau's #First100 days in office through a series of Facebook statuses, photos, and videos.

Trudeau has used Facebook's vast audience to bring Canada to the global stage: over 42% of the Prime Minister's Facebook fan base hails from outside of Canada. His followers represent every continent, including large fan bases in countries such as Australia, Brazil, Egypt, France, Germany, Pakistan, India, the Philippines, UAE, UK, and the US. The Prime Minister has actively made Canada part of the larger global conversation, for example, through a video posted to Facebook announcing that Canada would open its doors to Syrian refugees. He also documented his state visit to the United States on Facebook, using Facebook Live to stream his arrival at Andrews Air Force base, as well as his question and answer session at American University. By posting about the momentous state visit – the first for a Canadian Prime Minister in 19 years – Trudeau created an atmosphere of celebration, allowing both Canadians and Americans to be a part of this significant moment in time.

Trudeau has also used Facebook as a platform to celebrate the rich diversity and culture of Canada, flaunting his national pride before the Invictus games, unveiling Toronto Zoo's panda cubs, and celebrating Vaisakhi and the contributions of Sikh Canadians. This dedication to diversity began with his Cabinet appointments – the most diverse in Canada's history – and the first to have equal gender representation, and continues through his government's commitment to improve diversity and representation across all government appointments both at home and abroad. A recent campaign promoting the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) included the participation of Canadian embassies worldwide, notably including those in India, Venezuela, and Tunisia, who posted messages of support on their Facebook pages and additional social channels. For the start of Pride Month, the Prime Minister streamed the raising of the Pride Flag on Parliament Hill for the first time in history, directly on Facebook Live.

Trudeau's active online presence fashions a sense of vitality, and creates a trusting and loyal supporter base that is more likely to be spurred into action. His willingness to engage with followers has resulted in a surge in popularity and an engaged fan base. For example, during his campaign, Trudeau used Facebook Live to unveil the Liberal platform, allowing anyone to ask him questions in real-time.

By recognising the internet's potential as an avenue for both democratic political engagement and spreading global influence, Trudeau has been able to break down the distance between politicians and voters, world leaders and global citizens, and is speaking directly to people and engaging with their concerns. He is reigniting a new generation's enthusiasm in their government, and bringing a renewed sense of agency back to Canada's position on the global stage.

Kevin Chan and **Trisha Gopal**
Facebook

President Mauricio Macri and La Casa Rosada

Argentinian President Mauricio Macri proved that the effectiveness of Facebook to engage with citizens does not end on Election Day. In fact, his government has continued using Facebook as a tool to allow a more open, transparent, and inclusive political process – both domestically and diplomatically. An example of this engagement came during US President Barack Obama's state visit to Buenos Aires. On that occasion, the office of the Argentine Presidency – Casa Rosada – announced that both leaders, Obama and Macri, would answer a question submitted through Facebook at the end of their joint press conference. They invited people to post their questions as comments on a Facebook post.

This marked the first time President Obama answered a question from social media during a joint press conference. The decision to include a question from Facebook reflects the Argentine government's understanding that, in order to reach millions of people, they needed to engage through a platform that people rely on to get their news. The post reached 240,000 people organically, had 11,500 interactions, and 2,600 questions were submitted.

Following the joint press conference, La Casa Rosada posted a video to thank all those who sent in questions and to share the exact moment when the selected question was asked during the press conference.

This example highlights the rise in use of online engagement for real world application. It engages a local audience, but also expands to reach wider global publics. President Macri's heavily social media-focused campaign for the Argentine Presidency, and the efforts his team have made since taking office, have further enabled both Macri and the government to tell their story globally – engaging new audiences, speaking locally, and with global citizens and other world leaders.

This is not to say, of course, that the previous Argentinian President was absent from social media. In fact, former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was active online and her Tweets sometimes landed her in uncomfortable diplomatic situations – including a tweet where she poked fun at how Chinese people speak. However, Macri's government has set a new tone, and arguably a new bar, for digital engagement for the region.

Scott Nolan Smith
Portland

7.

Conclusion and Look Ahead

The purpose of our inaugural Soft Power 30 study was to develop a framework to measure and compare the soft power resources of the world's leading nations. We are clear that we do not see it as a finished product, but something we will continue to strengthen. This year, we have set out to refine the index by expanding the international polling, improving the composition of the objective metrics, and adding new digital diplomacy data to better capture the increasingly important role that digital capabilities and infrastructure play in a country's soft power. We believe these changes have produced a more rigorous framework for mapping and assessing a nation's soft power resources.

As the report has underlined, the ability to leverage soft power effectively is more important than ever to achieve foreign policy goals. The global political and economic landscape is undergoing a fundamental shift driven by the digital revolution and the rise of networks. The collective impact of these changes means that addressing the world's major challenges – which are increasingly global rather than local – requires collaboration not just between states, but non-state actors as well.

Soft power is essential to building and marshalling the collective-action networks needed to address these challenges.

It is why a state's ability to achieve its foreign policy goals in the 21st century will rest increasingly on its ability to generate and leverage soft power. But the first step to doing this effectively is to understand what soft power a country has. We hope the Soft Power 30 framework provides a much more rigorous way of identifying these resources.

So while the country rankings of our Soft Power 30 may grab reader's immediate attention, the real value lies in the insights to be gained from breaking down the resources of a country by sub-index. This provides a clearer picture of a state's relative soft power strengths and weaknesses, suggesting ways a government could work to increase its nation's global influence.

ⓘ Trends and Lessons

With only two years to compare, it is difficult to infer any definitive trends in the global distribution of soft power. However, the changes between the 2015 and 2016 rankings may offer hints about the direction of travel. Comparing 2015 and 2016 we can draw out three broad lessons. The first is what the movement in the rankings can tell us about what is happening around the world.

Starting in Europe, we have seen a majority of the continent's countries dropping a place or two in the rankings. Current challenges including imbalanced economic growth, the refugee crisis, growing nationalist movements, and the impact of a possible Brexit are likely weighing on the continent's collective soft power.

In contrast, across the Atlantic, a new Canadian Prime Minister, and a resurgent President Obama nearing the end of his term, seem to be having a positive effect on global perceptions and boosting the soft power of their respective countries. The revival in the standing of US soft power coincides with a concerted push from the Obama Administration to strengthen international ties, as demonstrated by a string of diplomatic initiatives. The Iran nuclear deal, the re-establishment of diplomatic ties with Cuba, the Trans-Pacific Partnership deal, improved relations with Vietnam, and the progress of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations all point to a more multi-lateral foreign policy approach and a commitment to soft power.

Carrying on across the Pacific, the Asian states in the Soft Power 30 have, for the most part, moved up the table as well. China, Japan, and Singapore have all risen in the rankings, though South Korea slid two spots, from 20th to 22nd. The upward trend for the majority of the Asian countries in the Soft Power 30 seems an accurate reflection of Asia's growing economic and geo-political clout. It will be interesting to track the movement of Asian states in the years ahead to test whether this is the beginning of a long-term trend.

The second lesson is that while the concept of soft power originated in the West, and does have some Western bias in the way it is constructed, it must be assessed with a global perspective. There is no doubt that some observers will find Russia's entry into the top 30 for 2016 surprising. Likewise, those same observers might find China's jump up the rankings two places a curious development. However, the West does not have a monopoly on soft power, nor on global public opinion. It is possible that expanding the international polling to include more countries may have had a positive impact on Russia and China's overall scores in the index. With a larger sample across more countries, the 2016 Index provides a more globally representative picture of soft power.

The third lesson is digital's growing importance as both a component of soft power resources and as a means to leverage them. The improved rankings for both Canada and the US highlight the importance of digital diplomacy to a nation's soft power. Both states benefit from leaders with a strong social media presence, which translates to a strong performance on our digital diplomacy metrics. The US and Canada finished first and second respectively on the Digital sub-index. In fact, the UK, Germany, and France – the other nations in the top five for the sub-index – are also in the top five for the overall ranking. The strong correlation between performance in the Digital sub-index and overall ranking should be of interest to foreign ministries and world leaders. If a nation can build a sound digital infrastructure and effectively engage in digital diplomacy,

then it is likely to perform well across other elements of soft power. Regardless of any correlation, we have seen that effective digital diplomacy practices allow governments to reach large international audiences.

The Conversion Challenge

Soft power resources form the essential building blocks that underpin a country's reputation and its potential for international influence. As our framework illustrates, the sources of soft power are diverse, but they all have an impact on how a country is perceived. Global public opinion is largely informed by a country's soft power resources and what a country contributes to the world.

For many nations – particularly those based outside of our top 30 ranking – the challenge of converting soft power into influence is threefold. First, there is likely to be remedial work required to improve performance on the factors that contribute to soft power. This could mean anything from reforming political institutions and expanding individual freedoms. to improving human capital and education, or even expanding a country's diplomatic network. An analytical framework for assessing the relative strengths and weaknesses of a country's soft power will help identify where action should be taken.

The second challenge is how to ensure that improvements in soft power resources translate into better global perceptions of a country. This is a particular challenge for smaller and middle-sized nations without a large

global profile. Such countries often struggle to find an effective platform to communicate their value to potential international partners, investors, and markets. The result can be that while an improvement in soft power resources certainly gives a country a higher potential for influence, it fails to realise that potential.

The final challenge, which affects all countries regardless of size or standing, is how they leverage existing soft power strengths to the greatest possible effect. Again, a reliable framework of measurement helps leaders, policy makers, and diplomats develop strategies to make the best possible use of available soft power resources. Governments also need to ensure that resources are deployed where they will be more effective, as different types of soft power assets will spark different responses according to the audience in question. This is where soft power and a modern and effective communications strategy must go hand-in-hand, as argued by James Pamment in his essay on the GREAT campaign.

Soft Power, Communications, and Influence

As power becomes more diffuse and networks more important to achieving global outcomes, the currency of soft power will continue to appreciate. Having soft power resources is, of course, essential but they are of little use without an effective communications strategy to reach and engage target audiences. The relationship between soft power, communications, and influence is interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Soft power resources are the building

blocks of reputation; communications strategies bring those resources to the fore, using them to shape a narrative and advocate a policy position. When soft power and communications are wielded together effectively, the result is greater international influence. Without the ability to shape soft power resources into a compelling narrative, these resources will have little impact on a country's ability to influence global events.

Recognising the relationship between soft power and communications, our 2015 report set out a model for the process of converting resources into influence, which is illustrated in the figure below.

The first step is establishing a clear account of a country's soft power resources. As argued throughout this report, soft power cannot be deployed effectively without a clear picture of the resources available. An initial analysis of soft power resources – using the framework we have built – provides a government with an overview of strengths and weaknesses and an evidence base, on which it can shape a strategy.

Figure 5-
Converting
Soft Power
into Influence

2. Strategy

3. Action

1. Resources

4. Communications

6. Adjustment

5. Evaluation
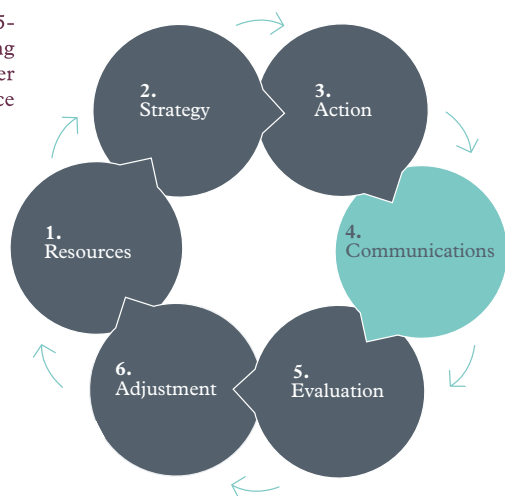
If the initial analysis of soft power resources carried out in Step 1 identifies significant areas of weakness, these will need to be tackled. Credibility and reputation ultimately stem from behaviour. Turning soft power into influence will often mean incorporating new actions into a strategy.

With a clear understanding of a country's soft power resources, foreign policy makers can shape a strategy that will make the best possible use of those resources. A good strategy will establish clear national priorities, articulate how a country will contribute to the global community, and appropriately deploy the right soft power resources according to objectives.

For most countries, translating soft power into global impact requires action to underpin strategy. Such action is likely come in the form of new policies, initiatives, or programme funding. Actions – not just words – will be critical for many countries to build credibility and strengthen their soft power resources.

With a strategy in place and implementation under way, communications is the step in the process where resources are deployed and target audiences are engaged, with the aim of bringing about a change in perceptions and ultimately, behaviour. Communications, be it through traditional media or digital platforms, is the moment of truth in the conversion process. It is ultimately how a country begins to express – explicitly or implicitly – what it wants from a target and attempts to shape their behaviour accordingly.

Such efforts may come in the form of direct appeals through public diplomacy,

Communications, be it through traditional media or digital platforms, is the moment of truth in the conversion process.

a campaign around a specific issue, or demands for a new structure of global governance to overcome a trans-national challenge. Whatever the issue in question, bringing soft power to bear on a solution requires effective communications. And the digital elements of communications strategies and tactics are growing in importance. As we have tried to illustrate in the case studies, digital diplomacy, particularly social media, have become a critical tool for building and converting soft power.

The final two steps of the conversion process are closely linked: evaluation and adjustment. The use of soft power as a means to wield influence must be rooted in evidence. An analysis at the beginning of the process is used to inform strategy, while a robust evaluation methodology should be employed to assess the impact of soft power strategies and communications campaigns. Evaluation means establishing the right set of key performance indicators to assess clear objectives. Impact evaluation should, in turn, be used to make any adjustments to strategy, action, and communications as necessary. If evaluations show an initiative is not delivering on its objectives, then adjustments must be made. But only with an accurate and robust evaluation methodology can a foreign ministry know how to adjust its soft power efforts.

GOING FORWARD

The results of the 2016 Soft Power 30 will hopefully further the debate amongst researchers and practitioners on the importance of metrics and evidence in the use of soft power. As we stated in our 2015 report, we see the Soft Power 30 as a living research project which will benefit from any and all feedback, critiques, and wider input. For our part, we are especially committed to strengthening the Index's ability to assess digital diplomacy and connectivity. As global public debate increasingly plays out on digital channels, it is critical to understand how governments can make better use of platforms to meaningfully engage with publics.

We are also determined to improve our understanding of the impact of the various components of soft power resources on the overall reputation and influence of a country. While we felt confident in assigning different weighting to the seven categories of public polling in our index, we were less confident in extending weighting to the objective sub-indices. We will, at a later date, publish new polling research that aims to gauge what global publics find most important when it comes to shaping perceptions of a

country, determining levels of trust, and ultimately determining which elements of soft power are most potent in shaping opinions.

We also believe there is a need for future research that can gauge the effects of soft power – essentially measuring the impact on outcomes. Better measures of cause and effect would be of great use to researchers, policy makers, and diplomats in the field. At present, success or failure of a soft power initiative is too often judged – as in the case of the UK's GREAT campaign – according to a return on investment figure. While this may satisfy the demands of finance ministries, it cannot capture the wider effects on perceptions and overall influence of a country.

However, as our conversion model above illustrates, the first step to using soft power is understanding the resources at a country's disposal. The framework used in calculating the Soft Power 30 provides a reliable tool for assessing these resources, making the conversion of soft power into influence a less complex and more credible endeavour.

8.

Appendix

Ⓘ Appendix A – Metrics

Sub-Index	Metric	Data source
Culture		
	Total number of international tourists	UN World Tourism Organisation
	Average spend per tourist (total tourism receipts divided by number of tourists)	UN World Tourism Organisation
	Number of films appearing in major film festivals	Various
	Number of foreign correspondents in the country	Gorkana Media Database
	Number of UNESCO World Heritage sites	UNESCO Statistics
	Language Index score	Weber, G., 'The world's 10 most influential languages'. Language Monthly, 3: 12-18, 1997
	Annual museum attendance of global top 100	1997 The Art Newspaper
	Size of music market	IFPI Recording Industry in Numbers 2016
	Number of top 10 albums in foreign countries	IFPI Recording Industry in Numbers 2016
	Olympic medals (Summer 2012 / Winter 2014)	International Olympic Committee
	FIFA Ranking (Men's)	FIFA/Coca Cola World Rankings
	Quality of national air carrier	Skytrax Arline Equality Review
Digital		
	Facebook followers for heads of state (outside of country)	Facebook
	Facebook engagement score for heads of state or government (outside of country)	Facebook
	Facebook followers for ministry of foreign affairs (outside of country)	Facebook
	Facebook engagement score for ministry of foreign affairs (outside of country)	Facebook
	Instagram followers for heads of state	Facebook
	Number of internet users per 100 inhabitants	World Bank
	Secure internet servers per 1 million people	World Bank
	Mobile phones per 100 people	International Telecommunication Union
	Internet bandwidth thousands Mpbs	International Telecommunication Union
	Government Online Services Index	United Nations E-Government Survey
	E-participation Index	Web Index
	Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 people	World Bank

Education

Average of OECD PISA science, maths and reading scores	OECD
Gross tertiary educational enrolment rate	World Bank
Number of top global universities	QS World University Rankings
Number of academic science journal articles published	World Bank
Number of international students in the country	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
Spending on education as percentage of GDP	World Bank

Engagement

Total overseas development aid	OECD / World Bank
Overseas development aid / GNI	OECD / World Bank
Number of embassies abroad	Lowy Institute / Various
Number of embassies in the country	Lowy Institute / Various
Number of consulates general abroad	Lowy Institute / Various
Number of permanent missions to multilateral organisations	Lowy Institute / Various
Membership of international organisations	Various
Environmental treaty signatures	United Nations Treaty Collection
Asylum seekers per 1,000 people	World Bank
Number of diplomatic cultural missions	Various
Number of countries a citizen can visit visa-free	Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index 2014
Size of weekly audience of state broadcaster	Foreign Correspondent Associations / Various

Enterprise

Global patents filed (percentage of GDP)	World Intellectual Property Organization
World Economic Forum Competitiveness Index score	World Economic Forum
Foreign direct investment as percentage of GDP	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Statistics / Various
Heritage Economic Freedom Index score	2015 Index of Economic Freedom
Corruption Perceptions Index score	Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2015
R&D spending as a percentage of GDP	World Bank
Global Innovation Index score	The Global Innovation Index 2015
Number of SMEs as a percentage of labour force working in SMEs	International Finance Corporation
World Bank Ease of Doing Business Index score	World Bank
Unemployment rate as a percentage of labour force	World Bank
Hi-tech exports as a percentage of manufactured exports	World Bank
Log of business start-up costs as a percentage of GNI per capita	World Bank

Government

Human Development Index score	UNDP Human Development Report
Freedom House Index score	Freedom House
Number of think tanks in the country	McGann, J. (2015) The Go to Think Tanks (or) NIRA's World Directory of Think Tanks (NWDTT)
Gender Equality Index score	UNDP Human Development Report
Economist Democracy Index score	Economist Intelligence Unit
Size of shadow economy as a percentage of GDP	Buehn, B. & Schneider, F. (2011) 'Shadow Economies Around the world: novel insights, accepted knowledge, and new estimates'. International Tax and Public Finance
Homicides per capita	World Bank
World Bank Voice and Accountability Index score	World Bank
Capital punishment carried out in 2015	Amnesty
Income inequality - gini coefficient	World Bank
World Economic Forum Trust in Government Index score	World Economic Forum
Press Freedom Index score	Reporters Without Borders
World Bank Government Effectiveness score	World Bank
World Bank Good Governance Regulation Quality score	World Bank
World Bank Good Governance Rule of Law score	World Bank

Polling

Cuisine	International polling
Welcoming to visitors	International polling
Technology products	International polling
Luxury goods	International polling
Trust to do the right thing in global affairs	International polling
Appeal as a place to visit, work, or study	International polling
Contribution to global culture	International polling

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