



THE SOFT POWER 30

A Global Ranking of Soft Power

2017

Portland

USC Center on Public Diplomacy

CONTENTS

06

Contributors

10

Executive summary

14

Introduction

28

Methodology of the index

Objective data

Subjective data

Changes, limitations, and shortcomings

38

Results and analysis

Changes to methodology

The top five

Opportunities - nations and regions on the rise

Challenges

Promotion and relegation

Breaking down the results

SP30's ones to watch

62

Global perspectives

Ugly rhetoric first

China's soft power: A comparative failure or secret success?

Japanese strength in soft power foreign policy

Soft Power and public diplomacy in Latin America: A view from Argentina

Brexit Britain: What future for the UK's soft power?

86

The democratisation of influence: The soft power of non-state actors

Digital diplomacy and the power of citizen networks and advocacy organisations

The new network effect: A model for influence

Virtual exchange, an evolution in citizen diplomacy

The soft power of museums

Beyond the rot: Cities and the future of public diplomacy

City diplomacy: San Diego's local leadership in a global age

114

Supporting the practitioner

How to become a soft power superpower

Challenges in measuring public diplomacy

Making the foreign familiar through cultural relations

Trends and counter-trends in digital diplomacy

You got followers, now what?

Practical advice from the USC Center on Public Diplomacy

132

Conclusion and look ahead

Trends and lessons

Putting soft power to use

Going forward

142

Appendix

Appendix A - Metrics

Appendix B - References

Creator and Author



JONATHAN MCCLORY

Jonathan is the author of *The Soft Power 30* and a specialist in soft power, public diplomacy, cultural relations, and place branding. Based in Singapore, he is Portland's General Manager for Asia. He has advised senior government clients in the UK, Europe, and Asia on reputation, policy, and effective global engagement.

Before working in the private sector, Jonathan was Senior Researcher at the Institute for Government (IfG), where he remains an Associate. While at the IfG, Jonathan created the world's first composite index for measuring the soft power of countries. This prior research helped inform the development of *The Soft Power 30*, which is now used as a benchmark by governments around the world.

PORTLAND

Portland is a strategic communications consultancy working with governments, businesses, foundations, and non-governmental organisations to shape their stories and communicate them effectively to global audiences.

USC CENTER ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The USC Center on Public Diplomacy (CPD) was established in 2003 as a partnership between the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California. It is a research, analysis, and professional education organisation dedicated to furthering the study and practice of global public engagement and cultural relations.

With special thanks to contributors whose efforts in research, editing, guidance, and design were instrumental to the completion of this report

| Deema Alchami | Warren Aspelng | Zoe Brennan | Eleanor Dickinson | Henri Chosn | Olivia Harvey | Kate Joyce |
 | Aigerim Kazykhanova | Max Kellett | Lisa Koh | Deirdre Livingston | Natalia Zuluaga Lopez | Katie Mihailovits | Olivia Pienaar |
 | Sarah Sharpe | Scott Nolan Smith | Nicholas Tan | Alex Waite |

Contributors



Moira Whelan *p.64*

Moira previously worked as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Digital Strategy at the US State Department and Deputy Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs at the US Agency for International Development.



Sir Martin Davidson *p.70*

Sir Martin Davidson is Chairman of the Great Britain-China Centre, Chairman of the Adam Smith Institute, and a non-executive director for House of Fraser.

Sir Martin served as Chief Executive of the British Council for eight years. He spent 15 years living and working in China, first living in Beijing in 1984.



Dr Yoichi Funabashi *p.74*

Dr Yoichi Funabashi is Co-founder and Chairman of the Asia Pacific Initiative.

Dr Funabashi is also former Editor-in-Chief for the Asahi Shimbun and has been a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University as well as Ushiba Fellow at the Institute for International Economics. His publications include “Managing the Dollar: From the Plaza to the Louvre”, “Asia Pacific Fusion: Japan's Role in APEC”, and “Alliance Adrift”.



Tomás Kroyer *p.78*

Tomás Kroyer is Ambassador and General Coordinator for Public Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship in Argentina. His role includes advising the Foreign Affairs Minister on institutional and international communications.



Victoria Dean *p.82*

Victoria Dean is a Partner at Portland, leading the Brexit Unit.

Victoria is a former UK diplomat, having served as British High Commissioner to the Eastern Caribbean as well as at postings in Paris, Brussels, and Washington. She was the UK's spokesperson in Brussels, and then later deputy director of Europe for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Laura Kyrke-Smith *p.88*

Laura Kyrke-Smith is Head of Communications at the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

Laura previously worked as a speechwriter and assistant policy analyst for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office before becoming a Partner at Portland in the International team.



Philip Hall *p.92*

Philip is a Partner at Portland and leads the firm's disputes practice. He has particular expertise in litigation, conflict and crisis communications, and in developing complex digital campaigns. Qualified as a Barrister and Solicitor in New Zealand, Philip has a Master's degree (LL.M Hons) in international public law.



Jordan Bach-Lombardo *p.92*

Jordan Bach-Lombardo is Senior Account Manager at Portland.

Jordan specialises in government advisory and the Middle East with expertise in digital communications. He was previously a social media consultant at the Royal Hashemite Court of Jordan.



Erin Helland *p.96*

Erin Helland is Director of Virtual Exchange at Youth For Understanding.

Erin is in charge of programme development, partnerships, and the overall execution of the project, which aims to bring intercultural learning opportunities to underserved communities around the world.



Gail Lord *p.101*

Gail Lord is President and Co-Founder of Lord Cultural Resources.

Gail has extensive experience in the museum and cultural sector and has led a large number of projects during her time as President of Lord Cultural Resources.



Prof. Nicholas J. Cull *p.105*

Nicholas J. Cull is Professor of Public Diplomacy and the founding director of the Master of Public Diplomacy programme at USC.

Nicholas is also a Faculty Fellow at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy.



Dr Joel Day *p.109*

Dr Joel Day is Executive Director of the City of San Diego’s Human Relations Commission and International Affairs Board.

Joel is also a Visiting Research Scholar at the University of San Diego’s Kroc Institute of Peace Studies.



Tom Fletcher *p.115*

Tom Fletcher is a British diplomat and former HM Ambassador to Lebanon. He is also Visiting Professor of International Relations at New York University and the Diplomatic Academy, as well as an Honorary Fellow of Oxford University.

Tom is the author of “Naked Diplomacy: Power and Statecraft in the Digital Age”.



Dr Katherine Brown *p.119*

Dr Katherine Brown is an International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and a Non-Resident Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).



Dr Jay Wang *p.123*

Dr Jay Wang is Director of the USC Center on Public Diplomacy and an Associate Professor at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.



Dr Corneliu Bjola *p.126*

Dr Corneliu Bjola is an Associate Professor of Diplomatic Studies at the University of Oxford and a Fellow Faculty at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy.

The Soft Power 30

2017 RESULTS

01

France

Score | 75.75

02

United Kingdom

Score | 75.72

03

United States

Score | 75.02

04

Germany

Score | 73.67

05

Canada

Score | 72.90

The nature of power has never been more complex. It had long been held that traditional hard power involving armies and economic might ruled the day. This resulted in a straight-forward power exchange – whoever was stronger was dominant.

Now, we are living in an increasingly complex, multi-dimensional, and interdependent world. Power has become more diffuse, moving from West to East, as well as away from governments altogether as more non-state actors leverage international influence. This is in large part due to the digital revolution, which has eroded national borders, creating challenges and opportunities in equal measure. It has also allowed citizens to mobilise in new ways, and build bridges across geographical divides.

What does this mean for global affairs? Countries are realising that old-world hard power can no longer influence outcomes and achieve their foreign policy goals as they might desire. Instead, it is the ability to encourage collaboration and build networks and relationships which is the new currency.

As Professor Joseph Nye, who first coined the phrase "soft power" 27 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.

Fundamental to deploying this is 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."

It can take many generations to build soft power. So it is no surprise that the results of the 2017 Soft Power 30 index are broadly in line with those seen in 2015 and 2016. But while the same countries fill the top five spots, their positions in the rankings have changed. Our findings show that European soft power is recovering. North America's capability is on the decline, while Asia is on the rise. The US has dropped two places from last year's top spot, while France has emerged as the overall world leader when it comes to soft power.

 upward mover

 downward mover

 no mover

The index illustrates the threat to the global standing of both America and the UK, due in part to the recent Brexit decision, and the election of a mercurial US President in Donald Trump. Trump's "America First" doctrine has played poorly abroad, alienating allies, and damaging links with the rest of the world. The Pew Research Center's recent study on global perceptions of America reported similar findings. Asia's soft power continues its steady upward march from our 2015 benchmark. This is particularly evident in the case of China, as it takes on larger global leadership role, just as the US has entered a period of retreat from the world.

The Soft Power 30 framework

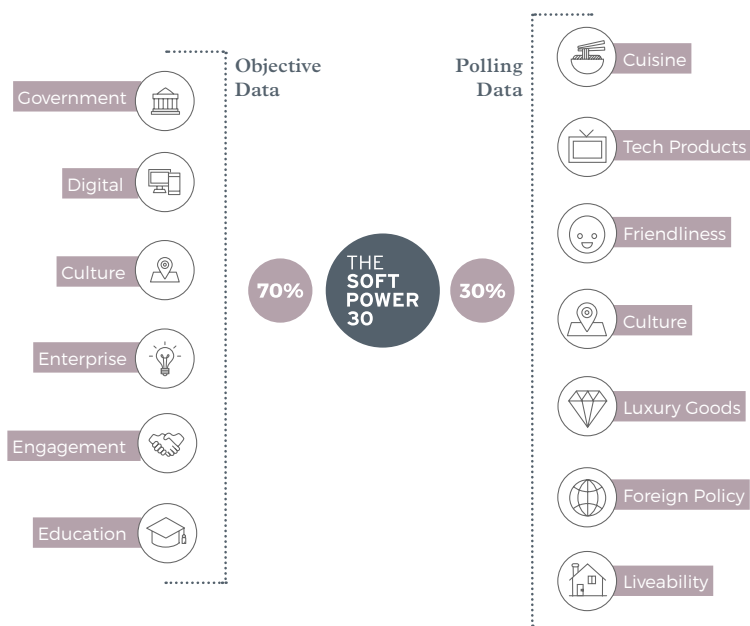
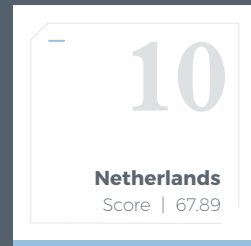
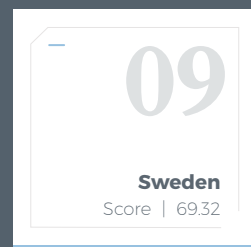
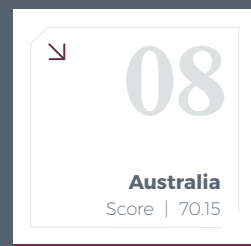
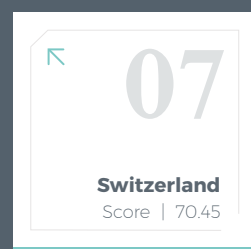
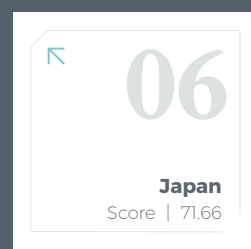


Figure 1 - The Soft Power 30 framework

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.



In order to deliver greater practical insights on soft power, public engagement, and digital diplomacy, this year's report draws on a new partnership with the University of Southern California's Center on Public Diplomacy – the world's first academic institution dedicated to the study of public diplomacy. USC's Center on Public Diplomacy has a longstanding track record for bringing academic rigour to the discipline of public diplomacy, and translating cutting-edge research into actionable insights for diplomats and policymakers.

For the third edition of The Soft Power 30, we shift our focus from theoretical debate around soft power and digital diplomacy to an exploration of the practical issues associated with both.

In addition to contributions from experts at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, this report also features thought provoking pieces from current and former diplomats, senior government officials, and NGOs working in foreign policy.

The report then concludes with a final look at the key lessons and trends from the 2017 index, and a look to the year ahead and plans for the 2018 Soft Power 30.



1. Introduction

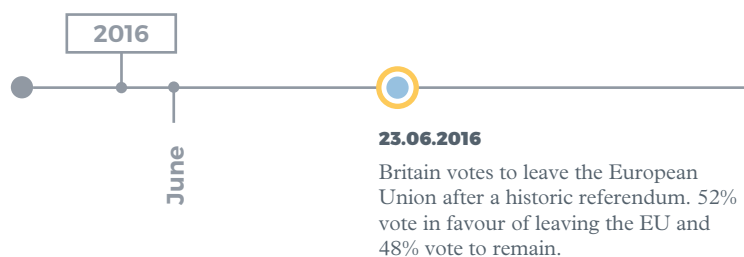
When last year's Soft Power 30 report went to print in June 2016, it did so under the long shadow of the impending Brexit vote. At the same time – on the other side of the Atlantic – another shock to the status quo was crystallising, as Donald Trump launched his eventually successful campaign for the presidency of the United States. While many commentators have sought to link Brexit and Mr Trump's election victory as two pieces of the same puzzle, this analysis ignores the major differences in their respective causes, contexts, and relative global impact. Yet despite their differences, the combined effect of these two events is clear: they have significantly accelerated a comprehensive global rebalancing with far reaching consequences for the future of political, economic, and security relationships around the world. As this rebalancing unfolds over the coming years, those global actors – state and non-state alike – most adept at developing and deploying their soft power assets, will be best placed to navigate the uncertainty ahead.

It is well outside the scope of this report to make any value judgements as to whether Brexit or a Trump Presidency are positive or negative in the totality of their effect on their respective countries. However, in soft power terms, there are significant downside risks for both. These risks have already come into sharp relief for both the UK and the US. For the UK, HM Government will spend the next two years expending nearly all of its energy on a bitter divorce with its largest trading partner and close allies. It will also likely foot an exit bill approaching \$110 billion for the privilege.¹ Once the UK loses its voice in the

World events timeline June 2016 - June 2017

IMPACT KEY

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| ● Positive | ○ Global |
| ● Neutral | ○ Regional |
| ● Negative | ○ Local |



world's largest trading bloc, it is hard to see how it will enjoy the same level of influence in Europe (and beyond) that it did as of 22nd June 2016. At the same time, the US is test-driving its new "America First" foreign policy, which – at least initially – has put allies on edge, left the post-World War II security architecture creaking under the weight of uncertainty, and knocked back global efforts to combat climate change. All of which come at a price to America's global reputation.

There are, of course, counter-arguments as to why Brexit and America First could leave the US and UK in stronger positions in the future. Whatever the merits of those counter-arguments might be, the immediate effect of both events is a fundamental change to the calculus by which global leaders are making foreign policy decisions. A number of governments around the world have made bold, significant moves in just the first half of 2017 alone. Even in those capitals known for stubbornly stable foreign policy strategies, policymakers are reviewing, revising, and adjusting their objectives, tactics, risk registers, and core diplomatic and security relationships.

As this global rebalancing accelerates and uncertainty spreads, foreign policymakers need to understand the wide-ranging implications for the prosperity and security of their respective nations. Doing so needs to start with a look at the factors driving the rebalancing underway. Recent events and pre-existing trends point to three key drivers accelerating the global rebalancing. The first two are well-established: first, the devolution of power and, second, evolving means of influence through digital platforms. However, it is the third driver – sudden and volatile geopolitical shifts – that has greatly accelerated the global rebalancing.

With political uncertainty emerging as the dominant theme of 2017, global affairs will be governed by two important principles. First, everyone matters now – from small-power states, to NGOs, to sub-national governments, cities, multinational corporations, and even individuals. As long-standing relationships, rules, and norms fold under the pressure of geopolitical shifts, there will be a scramble to forge stability, requiring much more than standard state-to-state diplomacy. Second, in this more complex and volatile context, soft power will be all the more critical to reshaping and mobilising fluid networks in pursuit of stability, prosperity, security,

July



13.07.2016

Theresa May is appointed prime minister of Great Britain after David Cameron steps down following the EU referendum.



14.07.2016

A terrorist drives a lorry into crowds at a Bastille Day ceremony in Nice, killing at least 84 people and injuring many more. Islamic State claims responsibility for attack.

and meeting global challenges. Despite the rise of non-state actors, national governments are still the primary movers in global affairs and hold most of the cards. For them to utilise their soft power, they must start with an accurate account of the resources they command, and then build the appropriate strategies to make the most of them. Supporting that end through the development of a worthy evidence base and analytical framework is the primary focus of our ongoing research project and this report.

Volatility everywhere

The geopolitical component of the global rebalancing is not only the most significant of the three drivers listed above, but also the most complex – playing out in real-time, with no part of the map left untouched. While Brexit was certainly the first sign of major geopolitical disruption – at least in the West – it has been the Trump administration’s “America First” doctrine that has truly altered the strategic calculations of world leaders. President Trump’s inauguration speech heralded what is arguably the most radical recalibration of American foreign policy since Warren Harding reversed Woodrow Wilson’s vision for a globally engaged America, replacing it with an isolationist doctrine that would endure throughout the interwar period. The Trump administration’s America First foreign policy has set both friends and adversaries scrambling to adjust to a potential new world order where the US no longer takes a leading role in addressing the major challenges of the day, and at times even undermines international norms, established conventions, and longstanding commitments.

As America’s foreign policy priorities undergo the most significant change in a generation, four key policy changes define this shift. First, the US has effectively ended the decades-old, bi-partisan orthodoxy to pursue and support free trade and open markets. The Trump administration withdrew from President Obama’s Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement, and has threatened to terminate the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico. Second, the administration has called into question the value of traditional security alliances like NATO and even raised concerns about America’s commitment to Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which defines the principle of collective defence. Moreover, the American guarantee of security for Japan and South Korea no longer appears ironclad. Third, the current administration



07.2016

Multiple terrorist attacks take place across Germany, including an axe-attack, a shooting, a suicide bombing and a machete-attack.



15.07.2016

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accuses Fethullah Gülen, an exiled cleric, of being behind a failed military coup attempt.



August



05.08.2016

The Olympic Games begin in Rio de Janeiro.



September



has announced its intention to pull out of the landmark Paris climate accord, a deal which only two other countries – Syria and Nicaragua – rejected.² Finally, as set out by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, the US will no longer prioritise the longstanding, bi-partisan objectives of promoting American values like democracy, human rights, and free speech.³ The overarching message – whether explicitly intended or not – is that American global leadership on a range of issues has effectively ended.

Arguably the most striking and immediate effect of America turning in on itself – and central to the global rebalance underway – is the rise of China as the world's primary advocate for economic openness, free trade, and even combatting climate change. President Xi Jinping's speech at the World Economic Forum in January served as a prominent marker for this accelerating change in global geopolitics, as China – bolstered by a retreating US – takes up the mantle of champion for both globalisation and environmentalism.⁴ Of course China's

07.10.2016

The US Intelligence Committee officially accuses the Russian Government of attempting to interfere with the US presidential election process.

17.10.2016

An Iraqi operation begins to recapture the city of Mosul, the last major stronghold of Islamic State in the country.

31.10.2016

Former army commander Michel Aoun is elected president of Lebanon, ending a political stand-off that meant the post was empty for over two years.

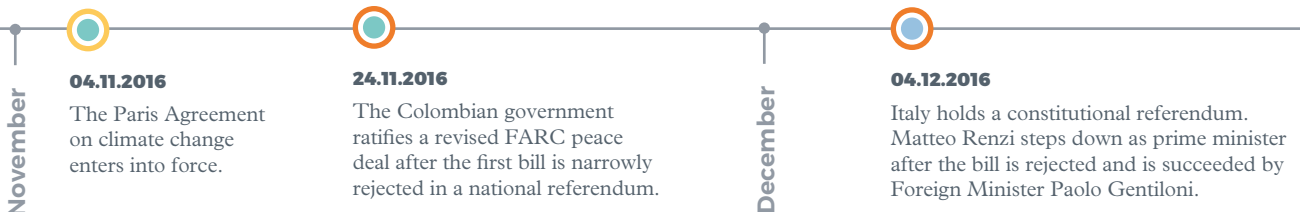
As this global rebalancing accelerates and uncertainty spreads, foreign policymakers need to understand the wide-ranging implications for the prosperity and security of their respective nations.

global rise is hardly a new phenomenon, but it is only recently that the context has changed enough to give Beijing the space, conditions, and clout to push its own ambitious designs for international trade, development, and cooperation.

At the centre of China's push for a more outsized global leadership role is President Xi's One Belt, One Road initiative. It was only four years ago that President Xi launched China's ambitious vision for the "New Silk Road", yet the progress made in under half a decade has been considerable. Xi's vision truly came together when China established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in December 2015. The founding of the multilateral financial institution – currently at 70 member states that stretch from East Asia to Western Europe – was a diplomatic triumph for China. The attraction of AIIB membership was enough to overpower intense American lobbying against joining. The UK was arguably the highest profile American partner to rebuff US pressure and sign up to the Beijing-backed multilateral financial institution.

With the strategic vision, political will, and financial capital in place – and against a backdrop of waning American interest in Asia – Beijing set in motion its plan to shape the future of Asia with a New Silk Road Summit in May. Inviting 28 nations, China initiated the work of developing the detailed plans for its ambitious One Belt, One Road initiative. The summit brought a four-year-old ambition to fruition with huge sums of money committed to infrastructure projects that will open new corridors of trade, investment, and development.

China's flagship international initiative is set to reshape the region, giving Beijing the opportunity to control the regional agenda in a way that has not been possible for centuries. What sets the One Belt, One Road initiative apart is that, for perhaps the first time in the contemporary era, China has managed to combine the hard power of its economic muscle with the soft power of a cooperative, inclusive narrative that emphasises shared prosperity and regional development. The combined effect of China's new balanced approach that incorporates soft power, and the concurrent withdrawal of American influence in the region, will be transformative for Asian – and global – geopolitics.



Looking beyond China's rise towards the rest of Asia, many states appear to be making plans for a post-American Pacific as well. China's One Belt, One Road initiative will no doubt be the defining feature of the Asian rebalance, but there are plenty of other geopolitical shifts disrupting the global balance of power. Japan, for example, is looking more likely to move away from its pacifist constitution. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe recently set a deadline of 2020 – which coincides with the Tokyo Olympics – to amend Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which effectively outlaws all acts of war. Prime Minister Abe has long espoused his desire to drop Article 9 from Japan's constitution, but the country's pacifist identity has long commanded majority public support. However, given the now mercurial nature of American security guarantees, Mr Abe might find the required room to manoeuvre and bring about a challenge to the regional balance of power through constitutional change in Japan. Doing so would likely result in a swift move to build up Japan's overall military capabilities, with knock-on effects for the whole of East Asia.

Turning to South East Asia, the middle powers that comprise the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are likely to mark the 50th anniversary of their cooperative club by embarking on a programme of greater economic integration. There may also be frequent and fervent calls for a unified approach to security concerns around the South China Sea. However, it has historically been difficult for ASEAN to reach unanimous consensus on security issues relating to China and the South China Sea. But if US presence in the Pacific – which guards the principle of freedom of navigation – shrinks, ASEAN countries might need to develop a mechanism for taking stands on security issues without unanimity. Moreover, ASEAN states may soon face the dilemma that many leaders have been dreading for decades: a forced choice between explicitly aligning with a rising China or a now retreating US.

Turning to Europe, another significant realignment – one that is touched by both Brexit and the new Trump administration – is in progress. To start with the former, over the next two years the UK and the European Union face the monumental task of reinventing their relationship and hopefully arriving at an amicable solution that minimises regional disruption. For the UK itself, there are two divergent paths that a post-Brexit Britain might take. The first, and clearly the most damaging to Britain's global influence and future prosperity, is the

2017

**12.12.2016**

John Key resigns as prime minister of New Zealand and is succeeded by Bill English, leader of the New Zealand National Party and former deputy prime minister.

**22.12.2016**

The Syrian army announces it has retaken full control of Aleppo as the last group of rebels are evacuated. Thousands of civilians are also removed from eastern Aleppo during the assault.

January

**01.01.2017**

António Guterres, former President of Portugal, becomes the ninth Secretary-General of the UN, succeeding South Korean diplomat Ban Ki-moon



protectionist-nationalist path. As populist anti-immigration forces clearly played a role in the campaign for Britain to leave the European Union, it is certainly possible that the UK could move towards protectionism and turn in on itself.

The second path – which is backed by some prominent Brexit advocates – is an internationalist one. This would require the UK to become the most committed and vocal champion for global free trade and open markets. The internationally-minded Brexit backers have argued that leaving the EU could give birth to a truly “global Britain” – one that continues to work with Europe but aggressively looks for opportunities and partnerships around the world. It remains to be seen which direction the prevailing political winds will take the UK, or whether “global



01.01.2017

A mass shooting occurs at a nightclub in Istanbul as revellers celebrate New Year's Eve. At least 39 are killed and many more injured. Islamic State claims responsibility for the attack.



17.01.2017

The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting takes place in Davos. President Xi Jinping delivers the opening plenary, defending globalisation and free trade.



20.01.2017

Donald Trump is inaugurated as 45th President of the United States of America, having defeated Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in the November 2016 elections.

Britain” is possible in practice. What is clear, however, is that a new minority government headed by a politically-weakened Prime Minister will not make forging the UK’s path ahead any easier.

Standing in stark contrast to the political uncertainty across the English Channel, the remaining 27 members of the European Union now appear resolute in shifting towards greater integration and an ever closer union. EU member states agreed their joint negotiating position on Brexit in remarkably swift fashion and appear to be holding a unified line. Moreover, Europe’s brief flirtation with right-wing populism was seen off in March with the Dutch elections and quickly put to the sword just two months later with the electoral victory of French President Emmanuel Macron. The supposed domino effect – set off by Brexit – failed to materialise on the continent.

Along with Brexit, the EU also faces a completely new set of challenges stemming from President Trump’s America First foreign policy. Immediately after Trump’s first visit to Europe, EU leaders made clear that the US and EU now hold strongly divergent views on trade, Russia, and climate change. German Chancellor Angela Merkel went so far as to suggest that Europe needed to construct and follow its own vision for the future, and that the time for relying on the US and UK was over.⁵ It could well be that the current divergence between the US, UK, and Europe is an aberration, but it is clear that the three are no longer operating in lockstep, and they currently hold a number of widely divergent values and objectives in the immediate term.

Looking back across the Atlantic to North America, Mexico and Canada find themselves presented with a challenge that would have seemed unthinkable at the start of 2016: how to manage a now reluctant (or even hostile) American partner. After initial threats to “tear up NAFTA” from President Trump, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto had to work a diplomatic tag-team on the White House, using a coordinated set of calls to head off what would have been a huge disruption for the whole of North America.

Yet, it would seem the threat to regional economic stability has only been put on hold. The Trump administration is still threatening a renegotiation of NAFTA, which is likely to add to economic and political uncertainty in a region that has



23.01.2017

President Donald Trump signs an executive order to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).



27.01.2017

President Donald Trump signs an executive order halting all refugee admissions and temporarily barring people from seven Muslim-majority countries. Both this order and the revised version run into legal difficulties.



February



15.02.2017

The European Parliament votes in favour of the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

otherwise been an exemplar of stability and prosperity. Rather than building on an already strong North American partnership, Canada and Mexico now have to consider how they can work together to balance against the worst instincts of a mercurial and protectionist partner.

Heading south to Latin America, the China-US dynamic is again at play, and – as in Asia – we see an expanding Chinese presence and a shrinking American one. Just as the largest South American economies are moving away from populism and protectionism, the US seems to be heading in the opposite direction. While American foreign policy has turned both inward and adversarial, China is busy expanding trade and investment with Latin American states. During a trip to Latin America towards the end of 2016, Xi Jinping made it clear that China was not only looking West with its One Belt, One Road initiative, but also East across the Pacific. It was on this trip that Xi announced government plans to increase trade and investment between China and South America by 150% over the next ten years.⁶ America's movement in the opposite direction is again illustrated by the collapse of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The TPP actually included three Latin American countries: Chile, Mexico, and Peru. China's rising influence in the region, combined with an isolationist US administration might even call into question the contemporary relevance of the Monroe Doctrine.

Moving back across the Pacific to Oceania, Australia and New Zealand have their respective diplomatic corps working in overdrive to save what is left of the Trans-Pacific Partnership minus the United States. The focus of commentary and analysis around the TPP has gravitated towards Asia, but Australia and New Zealand were both key members of the proposed twelve-nation trading bloc. Australia and New Zealand share historically close ties with the US and both are members of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance. However, Australia certainly got off to a rocky start with the new American administration, following a heated phone call between President Trump and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.⁷ According to a recent Lowy Institute report, Australians no longer see America as their top ally, citing fallen trust in the US.⁸ Moreover, it is not just trade relations with the US, but also questions around America's security commitment to the Pacific region that are likely cause for concern in Canberra and Wellington. One potential upside in the geopolitical upheaval for Australia and New Zealand, however, is the potential for deeper economic relations with the UK following Brexit.

March



10.03.2017

The Republic of Korea's constitutional court upholds a parliamentary vote to impeach President Park Geun-hye over a corruption and cronyism scandal.



15.03.2017

Prime Minister Mark Rutte's centre right VVD wins the general election in the Netherlands, defeating the anti-immigrant party of Geert Wilders.

The ongoing devolution of power away from national governments effectively means the ability of non-state actors to engage in international debates and ultimately shape the outcomes of global affairs is growing.

Finally, looking to Africa, the Chinese rise and American retreat dynamic is again the dominant trend. China's growing presence in Africa, through development aid, investments, and increased trade is well documented. The figures that capture the extent of that growth are staggering. China's trade with Africa has increased fortyfold over the past two decades.⁹ Last year, China established a \$60 billion fund to finance new infrastructure projects in Africa. This is in addition to railways, ports, schools, and stadiums that have already been built through billions of dollars of Chinese investment. Comparing Chinese investment in Africa with that of the US is telling. From 2000 to 2015, China's Export-Import Bank made \$63 billion in loans to Africa, while the US Export-Import Bank made just \$1.7 billion in loans to Africa over the same period.¹⁰

But it is not just the hard power of investment that China is leveraging in Africa. The Chinese government has complemented investment with the soft power of new Confucius Institutes (now numbering 48 in Africa alone), creating academic and professional exchange programmes, and even launching a China-Africa Think Tanks Forum to promote dialogue between political opinion formers and policymakers. These efforts are impressive, but in reality, China still has a great deal of work to do on public opinion in Africa. The US, despite being outmanoeuvred over the last decade by China in Africa, is still viewed more positively in Africa. However, China's recent efforts at a more balanced approach to hard and soft power, as well as framing their African presence as a "win-win partnership", shows a growing sophistication that further accelerates a global rebalancing driven by an internationally-minded China and an inward-looking US.

Devolving power

At the same time these major geopolitical shifts are playing out, there are two further major contextual and practical drivers of the global rebalancing. The first – a theme touched on in this report – is the devolution of power. This is an established trend that Joseph Nye and other scholars have argued – that power is moving from West to East, as well as away from states towards non-state actors.¹¹ These non-state actors can be corporations, NGOs, multilateral



29.03.2017

Article 50 is triggered, signalling the start of negotiations for Britain to leave the European Union.



April



07.04.2017

President Donald Trump launches an unexpected missile attack on Syria in response to a deadly gas attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun, suspected to be carried out by the Assad regime.



16.04.2017

Turkey narrowly votes in favour of a constitutional referendum, giving President Erdogan greater powers as president.

institutions, civil society groups, municipal and regional governments, or even individuals. The ongoing devolution of power away from national governments effectively means the ability of non-state actors to engage in international debates and ultimately shape the outcomes of global affairs is growing.

Addressing major global or even regional challenges is now seldom left to states alone. Indeed, the dominance of hierarchical, state-to-state classical diplomacy is fading as networks increasingly determine the direction of global events. Non-state actors like NGOs are not new players to addressing global issues. NGOs have been central to addressing major global challenges – from international health crises like the Ebola outbreaks in West Africa; to the Ottawa Process to ban landmines; to working to provide better education for child refugees in the Middle East. Non-state actors have two primary means of influencing global events. First, they can directly provide services like disaster relief or housing for refugees. Second, they can mount advocacy campaigns designed to change behaviour or to bring about changes to norms, conventions, international law, or national policy.

The influence of individuals and smaller civil society groups is growing in importance as well, and their power is closely tied up with that of larger-scale non-state actors. NGOs, whether working towards advocacy or action, require large-scale public participation or at least implicit public support in order to maintain legitimacy. Likewise, individuals can now quickly mobilise to take action as well-organised single-issue pressure groups. Consumers are able to quickly organise boycotts of products or demand changes to regulation. Individual citizens can also apply pressure on their municipal and regional leaders to take action on trans-national issues.

Many city leaders are responding accordingly. Indeed cities are increasingly active and influential in issues that extend well beyond traditional municipal boundaries. City leaders recognise this and are forging their own trans-national links through various cooperation agreements. Formal groups like the Compact of Mayors, provide a forum for sharing knowledge and best practices. In terms of solidifying cultural and economic relations, a number of large cities (and regional governments) are opening international trade offices in major global capitals that function like de facto embassies. On one of the most pressing contemporary global issues – climate change – cities have been crucial in driving the consensus on the need to adopt solutions. The C40 Group of Mayors,

May



07.05.2017

Emmanuel Macron is elected president of France, beating far-right candidate Marine Le Pen.



09.05.2017

Moon Jae-in is elected president of the Republic of Korea.

in particular, has been a major force in the efforts to reach agreement on combating climate change.

While non-state actors comprise disparate and varied groups, they are most effective in leveraging influence when they cooperate and collaborate through networks of shared interest. The most recent – and certainly most relevant – example of this has been Michael Bloomberg’s call to action following President Trump’s decision to pull the US out of the Paris Agreement. Donating his own money to make up the US Government’s financial commitments under the Paris accord, Bloomberg has helped mobilise a coalition of cities, states, businesses, and consumers to deliver on America’s obligations under the accord. At the time of publication, twelve American state governors, 30 city Mayors, 80 universities, and more than 100 American corporations have signed a declaration committing to the Paris accord guidelines on reducing CO² emissions. Should the initiative succeed, it will be a case study in how non-state actors (including sub-national governments) can not only advocate for action but also deliver on the obligations of international treaties – with or without national-level government involvement.

Digital love

Working in concert with the geopolitical changes and the devolution of power, the third driver of the global rebalancing is the evolving means of influence. As mentioned above, this is a trend we have explored in the 2015 and 2016 Soft Power 30 reports, but as the process continues to evolve, it warrants constant attention and study. We will look at multiple aspects of this trend throughout the report. Much of the theoretical discussion on the issue has been covered previously. However, at the heart of this issue is the ongoing advancements in digital and communications technology. As digital tools become much more commonplace and adapted by more and more state and non-state actors, the strategy and tactics for how best to use them is evolving – in most cases for better, but in some for worse.¹²

As we have argued since the inception of The Soft Power 30 research project, the digital component of soft power continues to grow in relevance and importance. We see the use of social media and other digital platforms serving two important functions for countries’ soft power. The first is as a resource of soft power itself. Building ready access to large international audiences is a tremendous public diplomacy advantage. But doing so requires strategy,



20.05.2017

President Donald Trump embarks on his first international trip, visiting Saudi Arabia, Israel and the West Bank, Rome, Vatican City, Brussels, and Sicily for the G7 Summit.



22.05.2017

A suicide bombing is carried out at a concert in Manchester, killing 22 people and injuring many more.



25.05.2017

Leaders meet at the NATO summit in Brussels, where President Donald Trump fails to endorse NATO’s Article 5 mutual defence clause.

time, effort and capability. While he was not talking about digital diplomacy at the time, former US Secretary of State George P. Shultz captured the importance of regular positive engagement. Analogising the importance of frequent engagement with allies, he said, “if you have a garden and you want to see things flourish, you have to tend to it”. Effective digital diplomacy can be thought of in much the same way. But in addition to being a resource on standby, digital channels are also an effective means of leveraging soft power and an increasingly important aspect of strategic communications campaigns, as we detailed in our case study of the Iran Deal last year.¹³

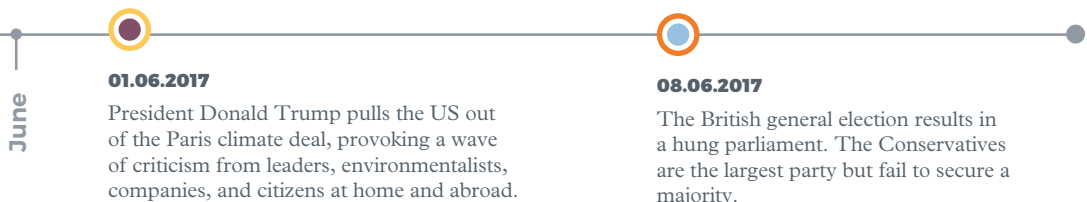
In our 2016 report we discussed the impact digital had in presenting new leaders to the world stage. In the cases of both Trudeau in Canada and Macri in Argentina, we saw noticeable spikes in national soft power based on global perceptions of these new leaders. Digital enables citizens to better engage in civics and international issues – not just with their local peers, but on a global stage for the world to see and take part in. This trend has continued, with citizens taking to Facebook, Twitter, and even Snapchat, as we saw in the UK and French elections in particular, to directly engage their governments and leaders on a wide range of global issues, all for the world’s public to see.

New digital tools, awareness of them, and increased penetration mean more and more individuals, groups, and governments have access to information, not merely as consumers but as providers. It is a multi-party conversation that prior to the development of digital was unable to effectively take place. Access to the field of diplomatic engagement has expanded, and with it, the actors involved.

As we have witnessed, what were once one-to-one or one-to-group conversations, now take place in networks, bespoke forums, chat apps, or on social media. The diffusion of power away from traditional states has been expedited due to digital transformation – the more information and access people, municipal actors, and their networked organisations have, the more soft power and influence they can also exert.

The 2017 Soft Power 30

For the third edition of The Soft Power 30, we shift our focus from the theoretical debates around soft power and digital diplomacy and spend more time exploring the practical issues associated with both. As with previous years,



this report provides a quick overview of the methodology of the index, covering a few improvements from 2016 to 2017. We then give our analysis of this year's results. This is followed by a look at a few states outside of the top 30, worth highlighting as "ones to watch" over the next year. As with last year, we have sourced contributions from experts and practitioners around the world to give a set of global perspectives on the current state of soft power and a look at trends in different regions. The report then moves onto practical issues with two new chapters: one featuring case studies based on non-state actors, and another focused on supporting practitioners working in public and digital diplomacy.

In order to deliver greater practical insights on soft power, public engagement, and digital diplomacy, this year's report draws on a new partnership with the University of Southern California's Center on Public Diplomacy – the world's first academic institution dedicated to the study of public diplomacy. USC's Center on Public Diplomacy has a longstanding track record for bringing academic rigour to the discipline of public diplomacy, and translating cutting-edge research into actionable insights for diplomats and policymakers. In addition to contributions from experts at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, this report also features thought-provoking pieces from current and former diplomats, senior government officials, and NGOs working in foreign affairs. The report then concludes with a final look at the key lessons and trends from the 2017 index, and a look to the year ahead and plans for the 2018 Soft Power 30.

From the outset of this now three-year-old research project, we have sought to establish a clear framework with which to measure the soft power resources of the world's most influential nations. In doing so, our index produces an annual snapshot of soft power – at the time of publication. This snapshot allows us to compare the set of 30 countries according to their soft power assets. As we have said before, the results do not provide a ranking of overall global influence, but rather captures the potential for influence. We are, of course, aware of the shortcomings of our index, but maintain that it is the best available comprehensive measure of global soft power.

As the very recent, very volatile geopolitical changes combine with the established trends of power devolution and the digital revolution, the accelerated global rebalancing underway means that governments and diplomats will need the full spectrum of foreign policy tools operating at peak performance. The following report and analysis of our 2017 Soft Power 30 index provides new insights into both the current global balance of soft power resources, and practical considerations for how to best develop and use those resources.

2.0

Methodology of the index

2.1

Objective data

2.2

Subjective data

2.3

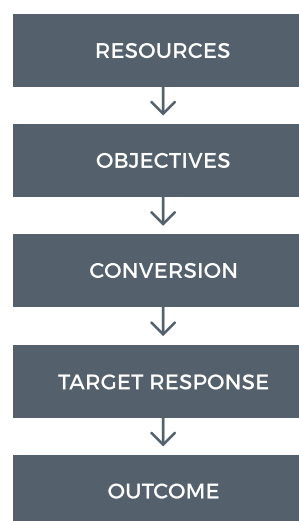
Changes, limitations,
and shortcomings

The global rebalancing outlined above must be read as an urgent call to action for leaders, diplomats, and foreign policymakers. Without question, those charged with shaping their nation's foreign policy need to be ready for the uncertain times ahead. As countries work to make sense of the rapidly changing context and adjust strategies accordingly, the soft power resources at the disposal of governments will be a critical part of the foreign policy tools needed going forward.

Those countries most adept in using soft power to facilitate positive collaboration will be better placed to weather the current uncertainty and geopolitical instability, and ultimately shape global events. This leads to the question: how can soft power be deployed effectively? As we have referenced in our previous reports, Joseph Nye's own model for the conversion of soft power into a desired outcome comprises five steps.¹⁴ As shown in Figure 2, 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.

As illustrated by Nye's model for converting soft power, the process must start with a clear account of available

**Figure 2 -
Soft Power
Conversion
Process**



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

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.¹⁵

Nye has previously pointed to three primary sources of soft power: culture, political values, and foreign policy.¹⁶ 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 Appendix A. Additionally, the 2015 Soft Power 30 report contains a longer discussion of the methodology of the index.¹⁷

2.1 Objective data

The objective data is drawn from a range of different sources and structured into six categories, with each category functioning as a sub-index with an individual score. The six sub-indices are: Government, Culture, Global Engagement, Education, Digital, and Enterprise. The framework of categories was built on a survey of existing academic literature on soft power. Figure 3 below illustrates the six sub-indices that constitute The Soft Power 30 index. A full list of the metrics and data sources is given in Appendix B.

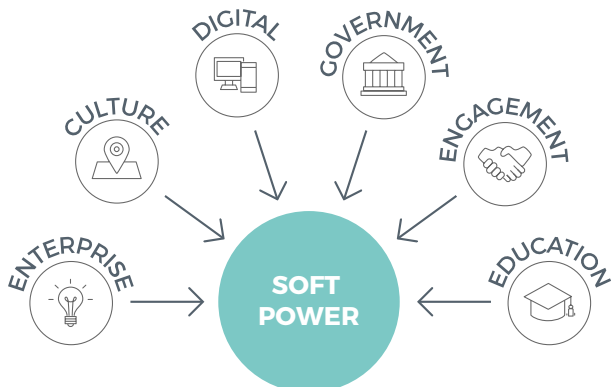
The Government sub-index is designed to assess a state's political values, public institutions, and major public policy

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 broadly positive outcomes for its citizens. Potential partners for international collaboration are more likely to be drawn to states with well-functioning systems of government.¹⁸

When a country's culture promotes universal values that other nations can readily identify with, it makes them naturally attractive to others.¹⁹ 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 visiting international tourists, 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 embassies/high commissions a country has abroad, membership in multilateral organisations, and overseas development aid.

**Figure 3 -
The Sub-
Indices**



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.²⁰ Prior research on educational exchanges gives empirical evidence for the reputational gains that accrue to a host country when foreign students return home.²¹ Foreign student exchanges have also been shown to have positive indirect 'ripple effects' when returning students

As countries work to make sense of the rapidly changing context and adjust strategies accordingly, the soft power resources at the disposal of governments will be a critical part of the foreign policy tools needed going forward.

advocate on behalf of their host country of study.²² 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 output 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 are 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 inclusion of a Digital sub-index aims 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.

2.2 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. As in 2016, we followed the same framework this year, 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

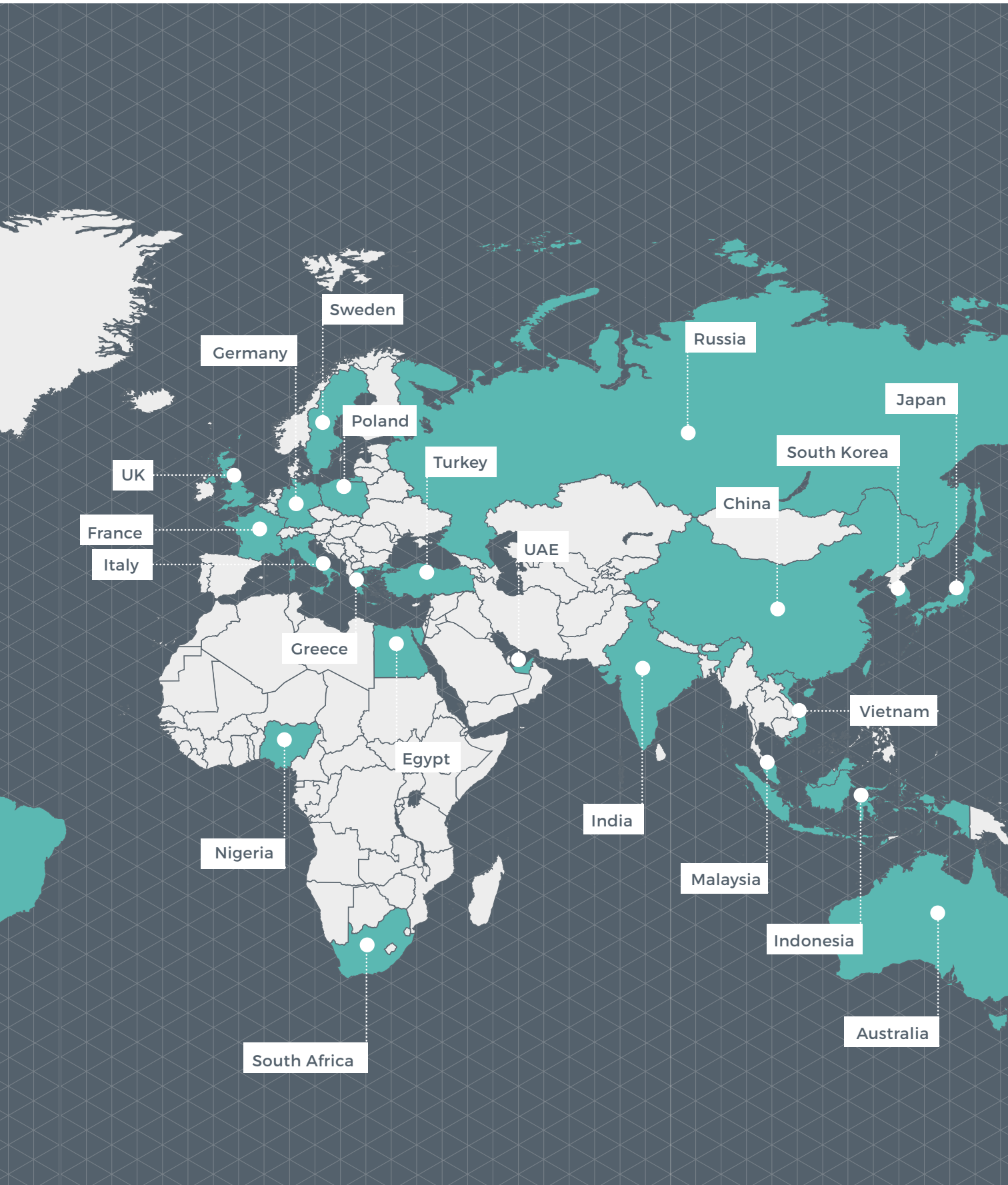
perceptions based on the most common 'touch points' through which people interface with foreign countries. The list of questions can be found in Appendix A. Figure 4 on the following page gives a summary overview of the subject of the polling questions asked and shows what they were designed to measure.

International polling for the index ran across a range of the world's major regions. In 2016 we expanded our polling to 25 countries, up from 20, and taking our sample size from 7,200 to 10,500. This year, we ran polling of the general public in the same 25 countries. However, the sample size was increased to 11,000. Countries polled for this year's study are given in the table below:

| 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 | Southeast Asia | 500 |
| Italy | Europe | 500 |
| Japan | East Asia | 500 |
| Malaysia | Southeast 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 | Southeast Asia | 250 |

Total Sample: 11,000





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, rather than to be precisely representative of global opinion.

The survey consisted of a series of questions translated into the main language(s) of each country by native speakers, using an 11-point numeric answering scale (0 to 10) to avoid the risks associated with translating verbal answering scales. Different cultures have been found to have different approaches to answering numeric scales (e.g. tending towards central or extreme scores), but the normalisation of the data mitigates against this.

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.

2.3 **Changes, limitations, and shortcomings**

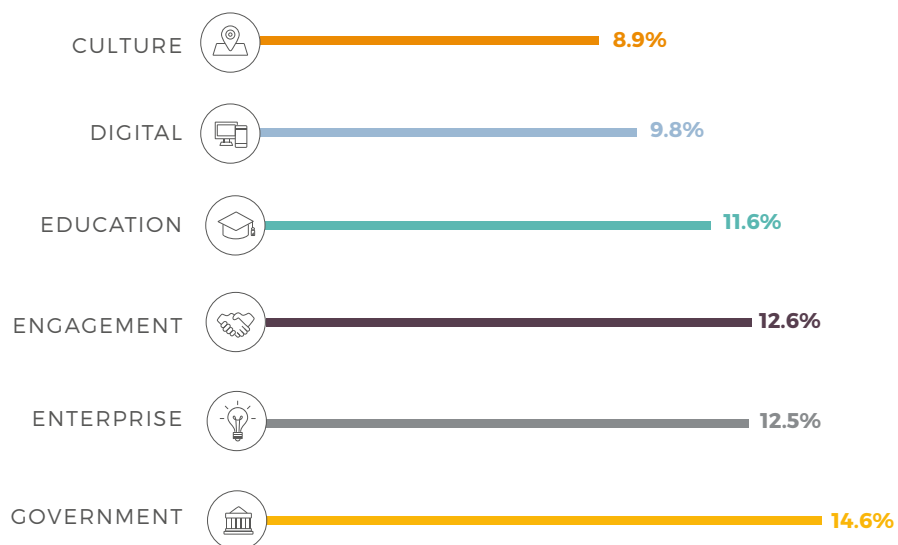
This third iteration of The Soft Power 30 was an opportunity to improve upon the 2016 study. While we broadly followed the same methodology and framework, we have made a few small improvements to the index in the hopes of providing a more accurate benchmark for global soft power. The first change was simply to update all of our data with the most recently available sources. The second change was the edition of a few new metrics. Starting with the objective data, the Engagement sub-index had one change to the metrics. To assess global leadership on environmental issues, we dropped the metric on environmental treaties in force and replaced it with a more holistic measure of environmental policy performance: The Environmental Performance Index.²³ The EPI was developed jointly between the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Columbia University Earth Science Information Network, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.

The Culture sub-index saw one new addition and one substitution. The addition is designed to give an objective metric for cuisine, which has only been previously captured in the subjective data. That metric is the number of Michelin-starred restaurants by country. The substitution was an updated version of a metric we had used in the two previous studies on the power and reach of language. We have replaced the previous metric derived from a language study in the late 1990s, with the Power Language Index study, produced in 2016.

The final two changes we made to the objective data represent technical improvements to the methodology. First, we tightened up the data normalisation process, to mitigate distortions from a small number of metrics with extremely large variances in value. Second, as we

have developed a system for weighting the subjective data using regression analysis based on the overall favourability question, we decided to run the same exercise on the objective data and developed a weighting for each sub-index of the objective. It is important to note, we did not weight individual metrics, but simply the total score of each sub-index. The variance in the weighting of the objective sub-indices is much smaller than that of the subjective polling categories. The top-weighted objective sub-index is Government at 14.6%, while the lowest is Culture at 9%. If the objective sub-indices were given equal weighting, they would be weighted at 11.7% of the total overall weighting – the remaining 30% is made up by the subjective polling data. The full weights for the objective sub-indices are given below:

Figure 4 - Weighting of the objective sub-indices



Turning to the subjective data, only one small change has been made, and that is an increase in the sample size of polling for Australia and Indonesia.

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 both our plan and 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 third iteration of The Soft Power 30 index was undertaken in the hopes of moving closer towards that goal.





3.0

Results and analysis

3.1
Changes to methodology

3.2
The top five

3.3
Opportunities - nations
and regions on the rise

3.4
Challenges

3.5
Promotion and relegation

3.6
Breaking down the results

3.7
SP30's ones to watch

Following the process of normalising all of the data and calculating each country's score, the results of the 2017 Soft Power 30 index produced some interesting conclusions.

The 2017 rankings do yield some changes from 2015 and 2016 including a reshuffle at the top; yet global soft power appears to be relatively stable, with only a few significant movements in the table and only one instance of promotion and relegation.

For the third year in a row, our top five soft power heavyweights remain the same. But we are again seeing some interesting movement within the group.

2017 RESULTS

↖ upward mover

↘ downward mover

— no mover

+ new entry

⊕ re-entry

↖

01

France
Score | 75.75

02

United Kingdom
Score | 75.72

↘

03

United States
Score | 75.02

↘

04

Germany
Score | 73.67

↘

05

Canada
Score | 72.90

↖

06

Japan
Score | 71.66

↖

07

Switzerland
Score | 70.45

↘

08

Australia
Score | 70.15

—

09

Sweden
Score | 69.32

—

10

Netherlands
Score | 67.89

↖

11

Denmark
Score | 65.48

↖

12

Norway
Score | 65.20

↘

13

Italy
Score | 64.70

↖

14

Austria
Score | 63.75

↘

15

Spain
Score | 63.57



16

Belgium

Score | 62.80



17

Finland

Score | 62.37



18

New Zealand

Score | 61.96



19

Ireland

Score | 60.62



20

Singapore

Score | 58.55



21

South Korea

Score | 58.40



22

Portugal

Score | 54.43



23

Greece

Score | 52.17



24

Poland

Score | 51.27



25

China

Score | 50.50



26

Russian Federation

Score | 49.60



27

Czech Republic

Score | 48.73



28

Hungary

Score | 48.16



29

Brazil

Score | 47.41



30

Turkey

Score | 45.35

France has secured the top spot for the 2017 Soft Power 30, only just ahead of the UK which has maintained its second position two years running. Rounding out the top five, the US fell to third, Germany slid down one place to fourth, and Canada finished at fifth. As this is now our third Soft Power 30, we can make comparisons across the three years and observe changes in the country rankings. The graphic on the adjacent page provides a comparison of the rankings for 2017 and movement since the original 2015 results.

3.1 **Changes to methodology**

As mentioned in the methodology section, we have once again made a few small improvements to the index methodology. Two new metrics have been added and we have increased the polling sample size to 11,000. As noted last year, these changes mean that from a methodological purist's perspective, we cannot claim that the 2015, 2016, and 2017 indices are exactly the same, as each iteration has evolved with incremental improvements. However, these minor changes do not prevent us from making substantive comparisons and drawing out interesting trends and lessons across three years of results.

3.2 **The top five**

FRANCE

Undoubtedly the most impressive year-on-year performance from 2016 to 2017 is France overtaking the UK, US, Germany, and Canada to secure the top spot. This result may come as a shock given the French landscape just a year ago: President Hollande's popularity rating was at a record low, the nation was reeling from the devastating effects of a series of

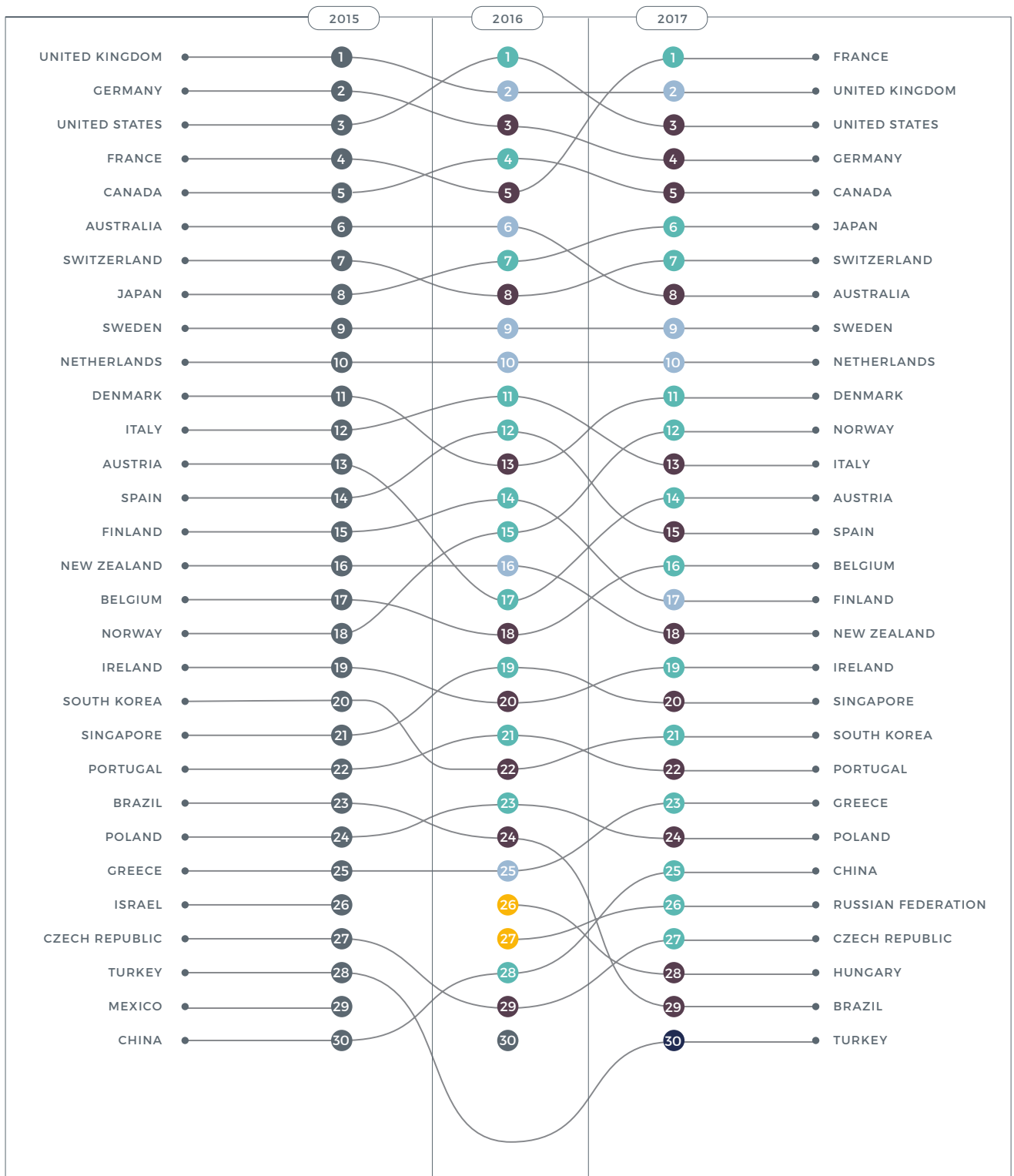
terror attacks, and the wave of far-right populism was gaining ground.

France's soft power has no doubt seen a boost with the defeat of the Front National and election of its youngest ever president, Emmanuel Macron. Elected on a pro-Europe platform of reform, the president is riding a wave of both domestic and international popularity (his La République En Marche Party and its allies secured 361 out of 577 seats in the June parliamentary elections). Macron has now been handed the mandate to help lead France through a period of pro-business and pro-EU reforms. What emerges from these reforms will likely be a more dynamic and energised France that plays a leading role in the EU and perhaps shows greater global leadership overall.

Once again, France's greatest strength lies in its vast diplomatic network. It is unrivalled in terms of membership to multilateral and international organisations, as well as in its diplomatic cultural missions. And with Macron having long campaigned for cooperation and integration, it is not unreasonable to expect France's global engagement and influence to grow. Culturally, France also puts in a strong performance. The threat of terrorism has not stopped tourists flocking to France and enjoying its rich cultural offering, cuisine, and lifestyle – France's restaurant scene is unrivalled, its film sector continues to flourish, and its museums and galleries are some of the most visited in the world.

Macron's digital savvy has been critical to France's success in this year's Soft Power 30. He follows in the footsteps of Trudeau and Macri, who each used social

YEAR ON YEAR COMPARISON



media to galvanise their domestic and international audiences while riding a wave of popularity to electoral victory. But like Trudeau and Macri, Macron faces the challenge of maintaining momentum. We've seen a well-documented effect of leaders unable to sustain their online success; Macron should be working hard to keep his audiences excited. Crucially, the president's impressive online following also helped France rise four places in the overall polling scores, from 9th to 5th. And looking specifically at perceptions of French foreign policy, France rose nine places in the polling data, from 15th to 6th.

As with the UK, France slid down in the Enterprise sub-index. Historically lagging behind major rival Germany since the Eurozone's sovereign debt crisis, Macron will be feeling the pressure to translate his pro-business agenda into a dynamic and global economy. If he can succeed, France will be well placed to extend its lead in 2018.

UNITED KINGDOM

The UK has maintained its 2016 ranking of second, albeit with a lower score than last year. While this is of course a decent result, it is important to note that the UK is one of only four countries in the index – the others being the US, Sweden, and Brazil – to experience a fall in overall score from 2016 to 2017.

Despite the looming Brexit negotiations, the UK's objective soft power assets – both state and privately owned – remain strong. As in 2016, the UK's strengths lie across the Engagement, Culture, Education, and Digital sub-indices. British soft power benefits from a wealth of publicly funded resources. The BBC

World Service maintains its position as the world's most trusted news provider, and the British Council is an exemplar in cultural and educational engagement. Government departments like the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of International Development have been hugely successful in making the UK's global presence felt.

Brand Britain was given a facelift with the launch of the GREAT Campaign in 2012. Since then, the country's cultural, tech, and education sectors have flourished, helped by major high-end consumer brands like Burberry, Rolls Royce, and Dyson. The nation's dynamic creative industries, from art, film, and music, to architecture, design, and fashion, are all critical to its soft power stores. The UK is also home to the top-ranking universities and attracts the most foreign students outside of the US.

Macron's digital savvy has been critical to France's success in this year's Soft Power 30.

The UK's desire to contribute to the global good is demonstrated through its strong charitable sector and rich civil society. Britain is home to a number of major global organisations that contribute to development, disaster relief, and human rights reforms, including Oxfam, Save the Children, and Amnesty International.

Yet there are reasons for concern about the future of British soft power. Last year we anticipated some movement in the polls in the event of a vote to leave the European Union. This has proved to be the case, as the UK has fallen three places in the international polling ranking. It is important to note, however, that the fall was driven by European respondents. Outside of the EU, perceptions of the UK have not really changed. Britain also saw a



weakened performance in the Enterprise sub-index, something the government and private sector should look to improve if it intends to leave the single market.

While maintaining its number two position should inject some confidence into the British government as it heads into Brexit negotiations with the EU, this year's performance is hardly one for crowing. Had the US not fallen to an even greater extent than the UK in the international polling, Britain would have likely fallen in the rankings. That Britain's overall score is lower than it was in 2016 should serve as a warning of what is likely to come for post-Brexit British influence. Moreover, there is usually some lag between changes in conditions on the ground and corresponding shifts in public opinion. It is hard to imagine the direction of travel for British soft power and wider

public opinion of the UK will be upwards in the future.

UNITED STATES

It is perhaps unsurprising to see the US fall back to third place given the volatility and divisiveness of its government and president over the last year. But the US decline is more in line with global sentiment than it is with fact. The country is still unrivalled in higher education, cultural production, and technological innovation.

American universities are among the best in the world, as assessed by several global university rankings, so it's no surprise the US attracts more international students than anywhere else. The US's contribution to academic research also exceeds that of any other country. American film, television, and music industries continue to set the



pace and trends for the rest of the world and it is unlikely that the dominance of Hollywood will decline anytime soon. And as home to Silicon Valley and some of the largest tech companies in the world – Apple, Google, Facebook, Microsoft to name a few – America leads the way in technology and innovation.

President Trump's often divisive rhetoric has led to a sharp decline in America's performance in the international polling, conducted for the study. The US's total score for polling fell nearly 10% from 2016 to 2017. On the global affairs question, the US ranked 21st, and it should be noted polling was completed before Trump's announcement to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. Another point worth considering is the stark contrast in digital engagement approaches between the Obama and Trump administrations. While

the US still sits atop the Digital sub-index, the current president has a much more confrontational style, which has, on multiple occasions, set stock prices tumbling and inflamed diplomatic tensions.

The rise of Trump could be viewed as a threat to American soft power, not least because his kind of populist rhetoric is known for devaluing international alliances. The president has indicated his preference for hard over soft power, perhaps without properly understanding the need for a combination of both. Only time will tell if Trump will withdraw further from the international community, thereby limiting America's obligations and contribution to international public goods, while diminishing the country's ability to set the global agenda.



GERMANY

Germany has, for the second time, fallen one place in the index despite an improved overall score. It has been a difficult year for the Germans as they dealt with the impact of terror, an influx of migrants, and like most of Europe, the emergence of a far right political party. But the country has displayed its typical stoicism by improving or maintaining its ranking across all sub-indices, with the exception of the polling. As Chancellor Merkel and the Christian Democrat party (CDU) enter the September elections as favourites, all eyes will be on Germany as it seeks to reassert its position as the primary driver of Europe's agenda.

CANADA

Canada's fall back to fifth place should not be viewed as a decline in soft power, not least because the country's overall score

has increased. While some might attribute the slip to fifth as a lull in the 'Trudeau effect', which we identified last year, the fall is more likely simply down to France's impressive performance. What is worth noting is Canada's fall from second to sixth in the Digital sub-index, overtaken by the UK and Germany. It is important that as he continues to build relationships outside of the US – as seen in joining forces with Mexico on NAFTA – the prime minister maintains a savvy online presence, that can further build on – and leverage – his international online following.

REMAINING TOP 10

Rounding out the top ten are Japan, Switzerland, Australia, Sweden, and the Netherlands – the same group of states as in 2016, but again there is movement within. With Japan and Switzerland both rising up the ranks, Australia has fallen to eighth position despite an improved score. This movement reflects the need for Australia (and indeed New Zealand, which has also fallen two places) to avoid complacency in its soft power assets. Australia saw its overall score in the international polling component of the index slip ever so slightly. Despite its overall score ticking up, the improved performances from Japan and Switzerland proved enough to displace Australia's two-year run in holding down the sixth spot.

3.3 Opportunities - nations and regions on the rise

EUROPE

A year ago instability and uncertainty hung over Europe, with the region struggling to meet the demands of security concerns and the worst migrant crisis since World War II. Our 2016 analysis talked of a fading

Europe in terms of soft power. What a difference a year makes. Conditions now look more positive for Europe, with the majority of European countries improving in their Soft Power 30 rank. The threat of right-wing nationalism has been staved off in several countries, including the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, and France, and while the migrant crisis continues to be an issue, its effects are being less acutely felt in Europe.

The main story for Europe this year is that stability is at a premium. Nations once overlooked for the more exciting option are now valued for their strength and reliability. We shouldn't underestimate the significance of Sweden and the Netherlands maintaining top ten positions for a third year. This kind of stability will be critical as European states look to strengthen collaboration and integration.

There are of course exceptions to the European revival. Portugal fell one place, Italy fell two, while Spain has fallen four. There isn't cause for a huge amount of concern here though. All three countries have shown soft power strength over the last year, including Portugal's Eurovision victory and the election of António Guterres as UN Secretary-General; Real Madrid's win in the Champion's League; and the successful G7 Summit in Italy. However, Italy, Spain, and Portugal could fare much better across our Government metrics. Doing so could prevent a further decline in 2018.

ASIA

The 'Asia on the rise' theme of 2016 continues with three out of our four Asian countries making gains in 2017.

Singapore, South Korea and Japan dominate the Enterprise sub-index, coming in first, third, and fifth respectively. Perhaps most known for its ease of doing business, Singapore tops the sub-index for the second year in a row. That being said, Singapore, South Korea, and Japan display strong performances in innovation – leading in R&D spending and high-tech exports, a testament to the dynamic tech scene in Asia. As Asia's innovation hubs continue to flourish, its products and expertise are likely to expand its global influence, and may be home to an increasing number of industry leaders.

Based on Japan's impressive year-on-year performance, it seems increasingly possible we could see a different top five

The main story for Europe this year is that stability is at a premium. Nations once overlooked for the more exciting option are now valued for their strength and reliability.

in 2018. Japan's increase in overall rank is largely down to a better performance in the polling, particularly on the global affairs question. Japan has taken a more pre-eminent position on the world stage this year, with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe the first state leader to meet with President Trump and the country adopting a more forthright approach in establishing the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Japan should be looking to the 2020 Olympic Games as an opportunity to leverage existing assets and propel itself even further on the world stage, just as Britain did in 2012.

South Korea may not have returned to its high of 20 in 2015, but climbing back up to 21 suggests the country is heading in the right direction. Politically, it has not been the best year for South Korea with the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye. But the newly elected left-leaning liberal Moon Jae-in has brought some stability to the country, and the world waits to see whether Moon's victory will herald an era of rapprochement with North Korea as well as a meeting of minds with President Trump over Pyongyang's nuclear programme.

In terms of its soft power strengths, South Korea has maintained an impressive rank of third in the Enterprise sub-index, earning its reputation as an attractive place to do business with a wealth of talent across its tech and innovation sectors. It made huge leaps in Digital and Education, jumping over ten places in the two sub-indices. As the world leader in internet connectivity, South Korea has also earned its spot in the top five of our Digital sub-index. But South Korea has some work to do in shifting international perceptions: the country ranked 27th in our polling data. This is perhaps due to a lack of global awareness around the North-South divide, or a default assumption that all of Korea is associated with ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons testing. Either way, South Korea should be investing even more in its public diplomacy efforts to make the world aware of its booming tech sector and unique cultural assets.

The most significant story in Asia is arguably the rise of China, which has climbed an impressive ten points and five places since 2015. As it

becomes increasingly clear the Trump administration could turn its back on the world, China has the opportunity to shoulder some of the global responsibility – something we have already seen as President Xi Jinping places greater emphasis on environmental sustainability.

China's strengths lie once again in its cultural pursuits. It is home to the second largest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and the population's Olympic sporting prowess is outperformed only by the US. China has also improved in the polling data, suggesting a more favourable view of China's role on the world stage. However, China has fallen in our Government sub-index, something the country should be working hard to change if it hopes to continue to develop its soft power resources. China has made significant investments in developing its soft power over recent years, with the opening of over 500 Confucius Institutes and extensive international branding efforts. However, its efforts are perhaps undermined by its hard-line approach to foreign policy and human rights, an indication that soft power efforts may require a certain level of congruency and consistency for it to be most effective.

Finally, while Singapore has fallen one place to 20th, this should not be seen as a drastic deterioration in the city-state's soft power. Indeed, Singapore's year-on-year score improved and it still tops the Enterprise sub-index. Singapore would do well to focus improvements in the Engagement and Culture sub-indices, where it could make significant gains with the right strategy in place.

3.4 Challenges

LATIN AMERICA

Brazil, the only Latin American representative in the index, has fallen five places. The success of the Rio Olympics (with the exception of some teething issues) was overshadowed by Dilma Rousseff's impeachment and the country's ensuing instability, economic turmoil, and ongoing corruption scandals. Brazil's decline in The Soft Power 30 is due to weaker performances in Engagement, Enterprise, Digital, and perhaps most tellingly, Government where it has fallen to the bottom. On a more positive note, Brazil has risen in the Culture sub-index, with the broad appeal of Brazilian Carnivale, its football culture, and an enviable laidback beach lifestyle.

Looking beyond the top 30, there's promise for Latin America with Chile, Argentina, and Mexico sitting at 32nd, 33rd, and 34th respectively. Both Argentina and Mexico have featured in the index before and this is certainly possible again. While there are clear opportunities for the region to increase its global soft power standing, success will depend on steady progress made in areas of relative weakness, like the Enterprise and Government sub-indices.

3.5 Promotion and relegation

Last year we saw three new entries into The Soft Power 30: Hungary, Russia, and Argentina. This year, Argentina has fallen out of the top 30, replaced by Turkey.

Turkey is not new to The Soft Power 30, having ranked 29th in 2015. The country's strengths lie in the Engagement sub-

index where it performs particularly well in development assistance, its willingness to resettle millions of refugees, and permanent missions to multilateral organisations. Moreover, Turkey commands a critical geopolitical position as the Europe-Asia bridge. It has also made intelligent use of some soft power assets, like the way Turkish Airlines serves as a strong brand ambassador. But Turkey would benefit from working on its international perceptions – it ranks at the bottom of our polling data this year. Negative perceptions have likely not been helped by the failed military coup; a referendum to secure greater powers for President Erdogan; and country-wide restrictions on media, civil society, and academia.

Argentina's fall back to 33rd comes off the back of what was a strong year for the country. In 2016 Argentina entered the top 30, buoyed by the election of President Mauricio Macri and a wave of positivity – in particular among young people. This was reflected in improvements in the international polling, and an analysis of Macri's digital engagement. During the campaign and as he entered into government, Macri set a new tone for government engagement in the region. This remains broadly true in 2017. The nation's slide in the table has more to do with complacency than general decline. Argentina's overall score remained basically the same. Macri remains, on net, a positive point for Argentina, and the nation continues to boast strong potential in the Engagement sub-index, and does moderately well in the polling. However, Argentina could improve its appeal economically and culturally, and across

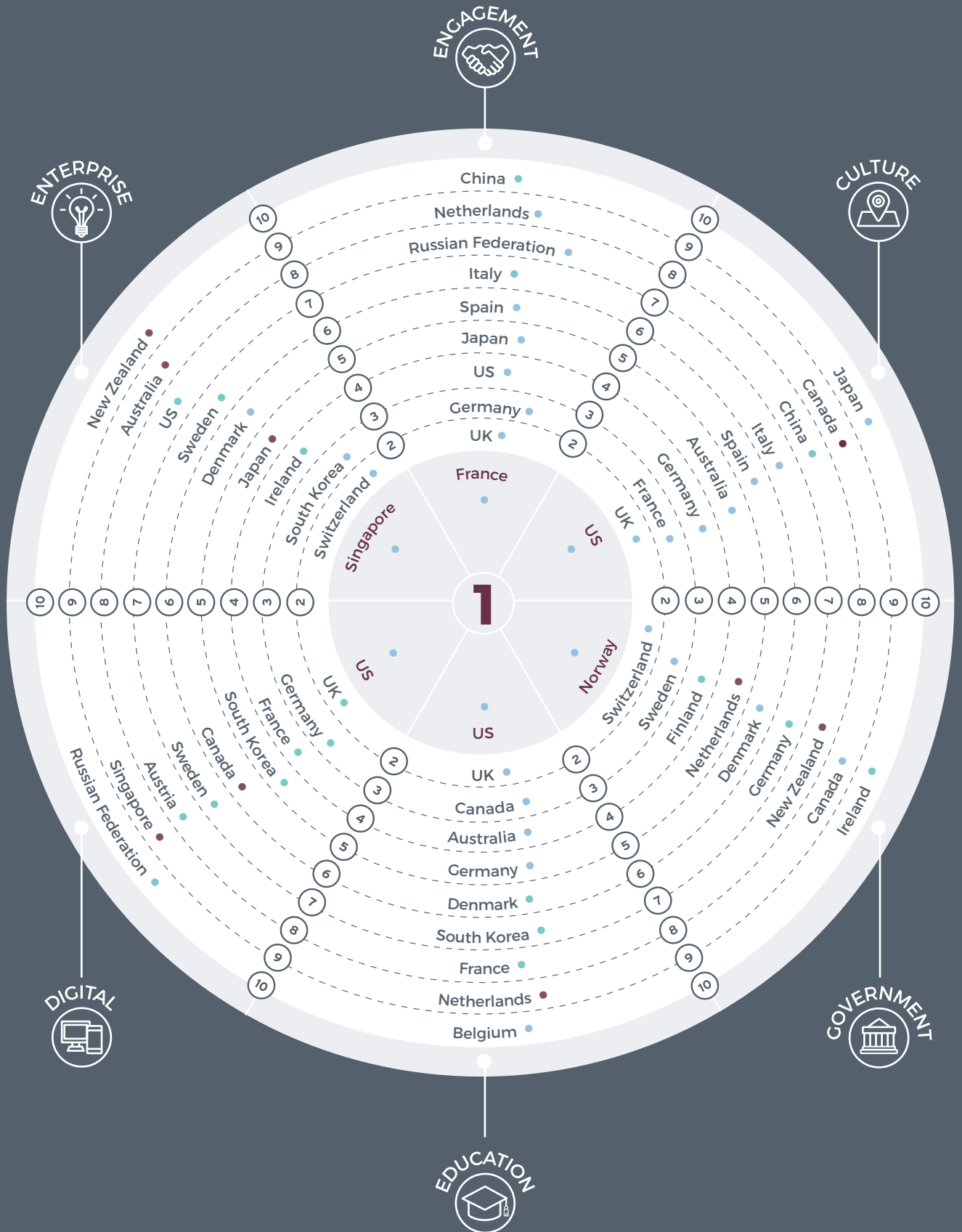
the Government sub-index. A more active approach to enterprise and government reform would help pull Argentina's score up, and potentially curtail the stagnant setting it currently finds itself in.



3.6

Breaking down the results

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.



● upward mover ● downward mover ● no mover



The Government sub-index includes 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, Norway, Switzerland, and Sweden have once again taken out the top three places in the Government sub-index.



The Digital sub-index has seen the most year-on-year movement but the US still maintains its dominance. Not only is America home to Silicon Valley and a large majority of the world's most influential tech companies, but the US administration is leading the way in digital diplomacy, albeit in a different style to that which we're used to. Once held up as an example of best practice, Trudeau's digital diplomacy seems to have run out of steam over the last year. Canada has fallen to sixth place in the digital metrics, overtaken by the UK, Germany, France, and South Korea.



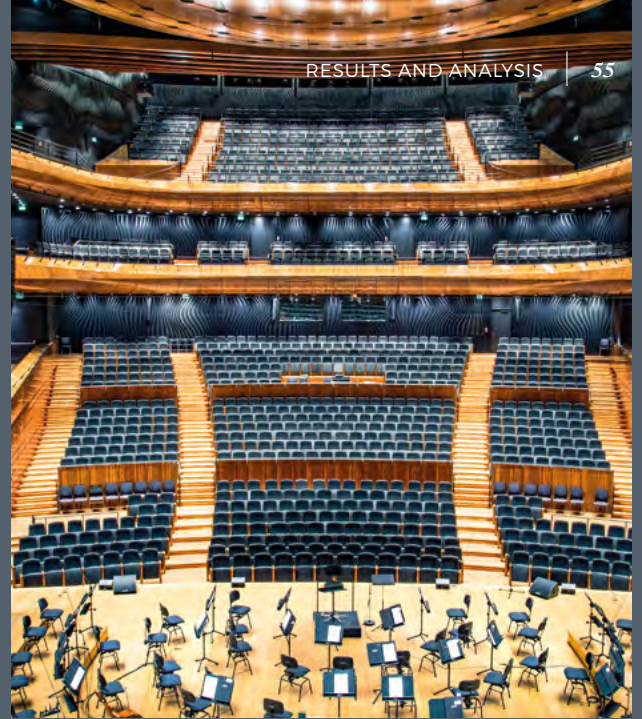
The Education sub-index is primarily focused on higher education. It measures the quality of universities, their ability to attract international students, and contribution to academic research publishing. The US is unrivalled in terms of education. America is home to significantly more top universities than any other country; it attracts more international students than anywhere else; and it contributes more to academic research than anyone else. 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.



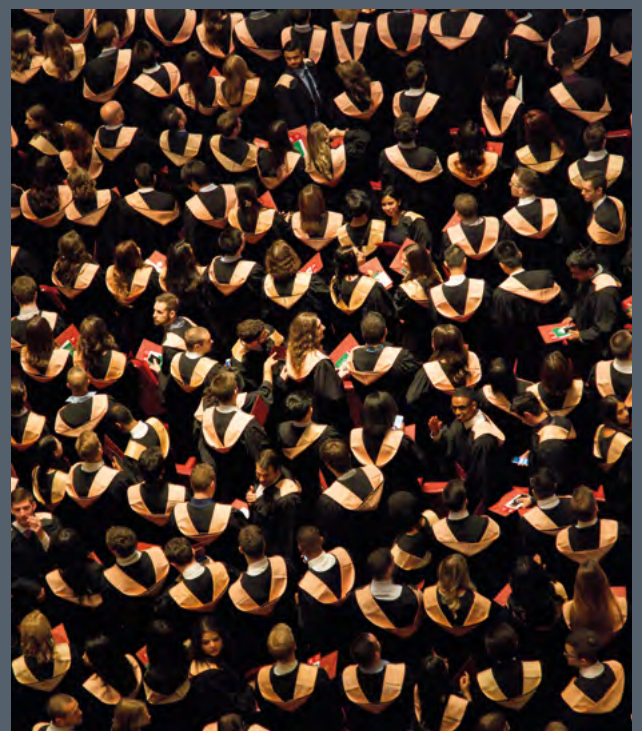
France once again dominates the Engagement sub-index, securing an almost fifteen point lead over its closest peer: Britain. In terms of influential reach, France is the best-networked state in the world and is a member of more multilateral organisations than any other country. When it comes to embassy networks, only the US has more diplomatic missions abroad than France. We can expect this trend to continue as President Macron works towards a more cooperative and integrated Europe and beyond.



Metrics for the Enterprise sub-index aim to capture the attractiveness of a country's business model, capacity for innovation, and regulatory framework. Singapore has for the second year in a row topped this sub-index, ahead of Switzerland and South Korea. Singapore is no stranger to leading similar rankings measuring economic competitiveness or business friendliness. It is not just low taxes and efficiency that account for the top score – Singapore also does very well on measures for innovation and posts high rates of investment in research and development.



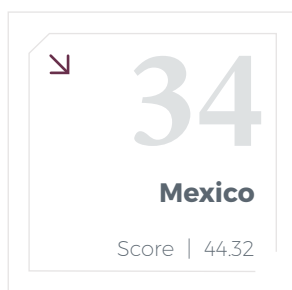
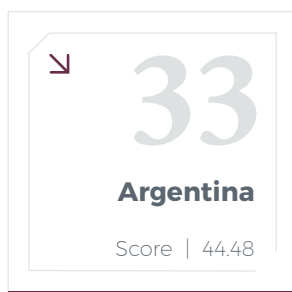
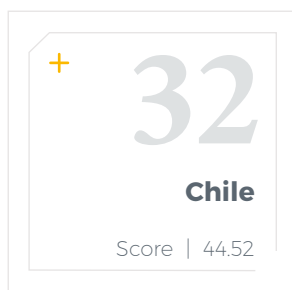
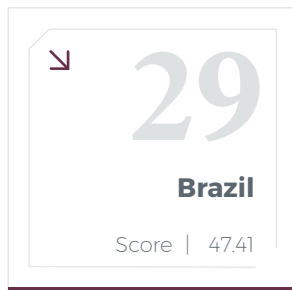
Culture is the most potent of America's soft power resources, and the nation's cultural and creative outputs have tremendous global reach. The US is boosted by its film industry and sporting talent. However, the UK is not far behind, particularly as a result of the global success of the British music industry and the popularity of its museums and galleries. France, Germany, and Australia round out the top five in the Culture sub-index for 2017.



SP30'S ONES TO WATCH

Latin America

OVERVIEW:



Brazil is currently the lone representative for Latin America in the top 30 – sitting in the 29th position – down from its 24th position just last year. Argentina, Mexico, and Chile sit just below the line.

The region quite literally sits on the cusp of the index with the potential to rise or fall. While Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and Mexico are a small selection of Latin American states, they do make up leading economies and often the public face of the region, a strong sample by which to explore soft power potential in the region.

There appears to be a trend, where Latin America as a whole moves together as a region, sharing in the success or struggles of its individual states – when one does well on the index, so do others, and vice versa. This helps to explain the up and down movement over the course of The Soft Power 30 project, and their clustered nature among the rankings.

Latin American states are still quite young when it comes to deploying soft power and deploying public diplomacy programmes. There are many assets to be leveraged, but concerted efforts to do so remain limited. Our own reports have noted this previously, including commentary from Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan in the 2016 iteration of this report.



Often referred to as a mixed-bag, Latin America is home to both political and perception-based challenges, but boasts economic, engagement, and cultural assets which are poised, if invested in properly, to serve as strengths in the region.

The election of President Macri in Argentina propelled the nation into the top 30 in 2016. Argentina, while down in the index, remains quite stable in its score. Mexico previously held a position in the index, as well. Brazil hangs on just barely, but instability and the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff has taken a toll.

Argentina has begun to invest in public diplomacy, appointing a head of public diplomacy inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship and developing global programmes focused on digital diplomacy and 21st century diplomacy. This is a positive trend.

Often referred to as a mixed-bag, Latin America is home to both political and perception-based challenges, but boasts economic, engagement, and cultural assets which are poised, if invested in properly, to serve as strengths in the region.

Complacency and regional instability impact the region as a whole, but this does not have to remain so.

It is clear there is great opportunity for Latin America to rise.

STRENGTHS:

Latin America brings diverse cultures to the world. Football, arts, food festivals, Carnival and beyond – it is evident the region boasts abundant culture. This is particularly apparent in Mexico and Brazil which perform moderately well in the Culture sub-index. Broadly speaking, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Chile also perform decently in the public polling, all outperforming public perceptions of India, for example, which has been increasingly touted in select media as a soft power juggernaut.

There is of course room for improvement by way of continued investment in rejuvenated public diplomacy programmes, which we are beginning to see, particularly in Argentina.

WEAKNESSES:

An increased focus on the Engagement and Enterprise sub-indices would help the region rise on the index, and increase their global influence. Further, investment in digital government and digital diplomacy, as well as broader digital infrastructure, would enable the region to have a greater impact in additional sub-indices. Our research over the years has shown nations that perform well in the Digital category tend to also perform well overall and in the remaining sub-indices, as digital investment enables more openness, competitiveness, and progressive mobility.



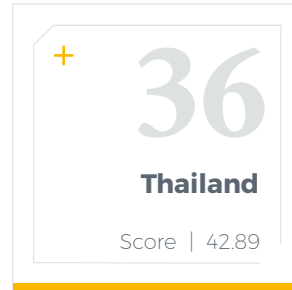


Investment in digital government and digital diplomacy, as well as broader digital infrastructure, would enable the region to have a greater impact in additional sub-indices.



Thailand

OVERVIEW:



As the only country in Southeast Asia to escape colonialism, Thailand has succeeded in preserving one of the region's most distinctive cultures. With a rich heritage influenced by Buddhism and a thriving tourism industry built on its pristine beaches and gleaming temples, it is no surprise that Thailand is the second highest ranking Southeast Asian nation (behind only Singapore), and narrowly missing out on the top 30. The universal appeal of Thai cuisine and a culture famed for hospitality and warmth have also endeared the country to international audiences.

Despite this, Thailand's unstable political landscape, riven by a cycle of coups and civil unrest, remains the main obstacle for further improvement in the index. The country continues to struggle with the legacy of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who remains popular in the country's rural

Thailand's unique mix of pristine beaches, ancient temples, and bustling cities have made it one of the world's most popular tourist destinations, drawing tourist numbers and tourist spending that outperform larger regional neighbours. Despite political unrest, tourists have not been deterred, and perceptions of Thailand abroad remain strongly positive.

heartland, even as the ruling military elite cracks down on his supporters and allies. The recent death of King Bhumibol, long seen as a mediator and stabilising force between the two sides, bodes poorly for a swift resolution to this conflict.

That Thailand has managed to retain a strong position in the index amidst such political turmoil is testament to the country's untapped soft power potential. If the country's feuding factions can strike the right political balance between the rural poor and urban elite, Thailand would have a much better balanced set of soft power assets upon which to draw. This could spark a rise up into the top 30 – a vibrant tourism industry, a prime location between two of the region's fastest-growing economies, extensive international goodwill, and a cultural identity that (unlike many of its neighbours) already

enjoys broad global recognition. A smooth transition to civilian rule, if enacted in 2018, would only enhance the country's political standing and provide the space for reform it needs to inch closer to the top 30.

STRENGTHS:

Thailand's unique mix of pristine beaches, ancient temples, and bustling cities have made it one of the world's most popular tourist destinations, drawing tourist numbers and tourist spending that outperform larger regional neighbours. Despite political unrest, tourists have not been deterred, and perceptions of Thailand abroad remain strongly positive, an indicator of the positive role it has historically played in the region's political and economic architecture.

WEAKNESSES:

Lurching from one political crisis to another has hindered reforms aimed at tackling corruption and inequality, and with no clear resolution in sight, this is likely the main reason for Thailand's poor showing in the Government sub-index. Low scores in the Culture and Digital sub-indexes also suggest that the government is failing to showcase the full potential of Thailand's rich cultural offerings, beyond tourism. A greater emphasis on expanding and promoting its cultural production, as well as increasing investment in digital infrastructure and public diplomacy, will allow Thailand to make its presence more visible on the global stage.

4.0

Global perspectives

4.1

Ugly rhetoric first

4.2

China's soft power: A comparative failure or secret success?

4.3

Japanese strength in soft power foreign policy

4.4

Soft power and public diplomacy in Latin America: A view from Argentina

4.5

Brexit Britain: What future for the UK's soft power?

The Soft Power 30 is designed to give a comparative global snapshot of soft power on an annual basis. Of course, when contemplating the use of soft power, one must take into account the specifics that come with a target audience and the context of a given region. Recognising this, last year's report included a set of essays from global contributors, which provided different viewpoints on soft power, unique to each author's geographic location and experience.

This year we have again sourced a series of essays from leading thinkers and practitioners in the world of foreign affairs, asking them to provide insights on soft power specific to their region of the globe – whether it be their home country, or where they have spent most of their career.

4.1 Ugly rhetoric first

Moira Whelan

—

Partner, BlueDot Strategies

—

An American president's first trip is always designed to be symbolic, and Donald Trump's was no different. In fact, his first trip to the Middle East and to Europe was designed to be a soft power boon – light on substance and strong on powerful images of Trump. It did not go well.

The plan was an ambitious display of the American Presidency. It was the White House's stated objective to introduce "America First" to the world. Tactics ranged from images of the president at the Western Wall to visiting with the Pope, engaging America's strongest allies and deploying his daughter to focus on empowering women.

In Saudi Arabia, female journalists weren't allowed to cover Ivanka Trump's session on women entrepreneurs, let alone the all-male concert that happened to take place within hours of the event. They weren't even told about some of the press briefings.

The European leg of the trip did not look much like a meeting of firm and steadfast friends. At NATO's headquarters in Brussels, the alliance's newest member – the Prime Minister of Montenegro – appeared to be literally shoved out of the way by the president. There were more playground antics on show when several NATO leaders seemed to trade looks and laughs during Trump's speech. In total, the trip made for some strange symbolic imagery. The president lapped up the affections of authoritarian leaders, but refused to even walk with his democratically-elected peers, choosing the comfort of a golf cart instead.

What the world saw was a man who, despite having lost the vote among the majority of Americans, and suffering from the lowest opinion ratings in history, declared himself "America" and put himself first.

In so doing, he has given foreign policy practitioners a valuable lesson: public diplomacy works and soft power really does matter.

Like any country, the United States has historically focused on putting our best foot forward: our ceaseless commitment to civil rights, our unparalleled education system, and our embrace of the free press have all featured prominently in our public diplomacy for decades – regardless of who sat in the White House. However, public diplomacy as a discipline within foreign policy has always suffered from the Rodney Dangerfield

effect: no respect. Foreign exchanges, media interviews, social media, culture, education, and America's core values are always considered nice to have, but rarely given the same level of seriousness as an arms control summit or peace negotiation.

Donald Trump has done public diplomacy a favour. He's proven that rhetoric matters, and perceptions have a very real impact on hard security interests.

The President's rhetoric has resulted in dramatic and measurable impacts on the US economy and has potentially made the world less safe by undermining long-standing alliances. What's more is that thus far, it is only his rhetoric that is to blame. None of the "America First" policy commitments or campaign promises he made have yet borne fruit: his budget for foreign assistance and diplomacy has remained stable. His "travel ban" has repeatedly been stalled in the courts. His cuts to education and many social programmes have yet to take hold. It is reasonable to expect that this will change, but for now his rhetoric has done more damage than his policies have – and the data proves it.

ON DAY ONE, THE WORLD WAS LAUGHING AT AMERICA

The inauguration of a US president stands alone in terms of spectacle, as a matter of public diplomacy. The United States is the only country in the world that puts its former leader and incoming leader on a stage out in the open for millions to see on an appointed day and time every four years. The Peaceful Transfer of Power is the very symbol of American democracy and the pomp and circumstance of the occasion is watched around the world.

The inauguration also marked Trump's first real act of public diplomacy. In giving us his vision of "America First," Trump stated that "he alone" could fix the ills of America which existed because of "the ravages of other countries". Compare this with his famous predecessor Ronald Reagan who put hope in the American people with a "national renewal" based on values that "sustain our national life". The inaugural address normally serves as an important emblem of what an American president intends to project to the world. It is telling then that in lieu of promoting the full text of Trump's speech, the State Department social media platforms selected less incendiary comments to promote.

In addition, instead of welcoming the new president with optimism, the world united to welcome the new American president by trolling him. A Dutch comedy show released a video imploring Trump (using his own unique linguistic expressions) to consider that if America was going to be

Donald Trump has done public diplomacy a favour. He's proven that rhetoric matters, and perceptions have a very real impact on hard security interests.

first, perhaps he'd consider the Netherlands second. The video hailed the Dutch tax avoidance system among other things that Trump may like. It inspired many copycats: the Swiss hailing their poor treatment of women while the Iranian version attempts a real security message: clarifying the difference between Iran and Iraq in case the new president has a happy trigger finger.

Instead of generating goodwill toward America, Inauguration Day showed us that Trump's bombastic rhetoric would indeed bleed into his governance and that worldwide, the damage was yet to come.

YOUNG PEOPLE NO LONGER WANT TO STUDY IN AMERICA

Every year, exchange students bring new ideas and experiences to American college campuses. They also brought more than \$35 billion to local economies in 2015 alone. Often referred to as America's greatest export, Trump's rhetoric has put educational exchanges at risk.

In 2016, for the first time, the number of exchange students in the US topped one million, with more than 50% coming from China, India, and Saudi Arabia alone. But since Trump was elected, applications from around the world to American colleges and universities have plummeted nearly 40%. A national survey of college enrolment managers cites Trump's rhetoric and anti-immigration policies as reasons for the sudden slump.

This shift will come at a real cost to American university students who benefit deeply from having foreign exchange students on campus. Not only do exchange students enrich the university experience through the introduction of different perspectives, they also pay full tuition, and often offset the cost of tuition for American students.

By contrast, Canadian universities are seeing a 25% increase in applications from foreign students, and observers site Donald Trump as the reason.

FEWER PEOPLE CONSIDER AMERICA A VACATION DESTINATION

Travel has also been hit hard by Trump's rhetoric. In 2016, foreign tourism generated \$2.3 trillion in the US economy, creating 15 million American jobs. Already, estimates show a drop in tourism to the tune of \$7 billion, the biggest drop the industry has seen since the terror attacks of September 11 2001.

Surely, some drop-off could be expected given the strength of the American dollar. That, combined with Trump's travel ban from Middle East countries he alleges contribute to terrorism, would alone have a

significant impact on the US economy. But the damage goes much further: Cheapflights conducted a survey and found that 29% of Britons — the largest bloc of foreign visitors to the United States after Canadians and Mexicans — said in mid-February that they were less likely to visit the country now that Trump is in power.

As summer began, the cities of Los Angeles and San Diego were reporting double-digit drop-off in tourism. This is critical given how many jobs are dependent on the economy. Hourly workers in hotels and restaurants and at amusement parks and airports will be the most impacted, and the American middle class will suffer.

WHEN AMERICA SNEEZES, THE WORLD STILL CATCHES A COLD

Trump seems to know and relish the impact his statements can have on the world. Of all the national security assets, public diplomacy is perhaps the tool with which he is most familiar and comfortable—to a certain extent. He personally built anticipation about his decision to stay in or withdraw from the Paris Agreement as if it were a sitcom cliffhanger, despite the fact that from a policy standpoint, he had already gutted the system that would enable the United States to meet its commitments.

Though he staged the announcement with flair in the White House Rose Garden, the reverberations of his message seemed to catch him by surprise. Citing the decision to exit the Paris Agreement, CEOs spoke out, and Elon Musk of Tesla made moves to distance himself — and his brand — from the White House. The airline industry announced its intention to maintain its emissions targets. Mayors and governors moved forward with ambitious agendas to let the world know they intended to keep their commitments.

Paris, sadly, was not an isolated incident. The fallout from what Trump has said in person (“I never said Israel”, with regard to his conversation with Russian leadership about US intelligence) and what he didn’t say (reasserting US commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty) has created an uneasy and even hostile reaction among foreign publics.

Probably the most important metric of the power of Trump’s rhetoric is the response of government entities trying to limit the damage. The National Park Service fought to protect their Twitter handle in the infamous crowd size fight on the day of Trump’s inauguration. The US Embassy praised the Mayor of London’s response to terrorist attacks shortly after Trump attacked him. The US Ambassador to Qatar retweeted her own praise of the strong US-Qatari relationship just moments after Trump attacked the country on the platform.

REAL WORDS. REAL IMPACT

Joseph Nye defined soft power as the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. So far, Trump's rhetoric has demonstrably harmed these preferences.

And it's more than mere perception. The president's rhetoric is curbing money coming into the American economy – tourism is down and foreign investment in our world-class education system is plummeting. Allies are beginning to openly reassess their relationships with the United States, and American security may now be at greater risk. While policies have yet to be realised, the impact and potential cascade are very real.

"America First" initially became the rallying cry of isolationists and the anti-Semitic in the years between World War I and World War II. These were dark forces which eventually met their demise in the days that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor. American patriotism was redefined in that moment, but the rhetoric harmed the American psyche and our standing in the world.

It is still a mystery as to why Trump chose to revive such adversarial and jingoistic rhetoric, but in so doing, he has shown us its power. Perhaps if nothing else, we will learn that words matter.

We can only hope Trump will take some advice from another famous US president and master of words, Abraham Lincoln, who reminded us: "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt".



4.2

China's soft power: A comparative failure or secret success?

Martin Davidson

Chairman, Adam Smith
International

As Confucius said in around 500BC: "When it is obvious that the goal cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps".

This is just what China began to do a decade ago, in embracing the concept of soft power. At the 17th Party Congress in 2007, President Hu Jintao spoke of the need to "enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country."

The goals China wishes to reach were, he said: "to better guarantee the people's basic cultural rights and interests, enrich the cultural life in Chinese society and inspire the enthusiasm of the people for progress."

China's investment in its soft power institutions has since been both significant and rapid.

Indeed, China's spending on soft power over the last decade has hit \$10 billion a year, according to David Shambaugh of George Washington University. This is more than the combined government spend of the US, UK, France, Germany, and Japan on soft power.

The top-down endorsement of this approach has continued with President Xi Jinping vowing "to promote China's cultural soft power by disseminating modern Chinese values and showing the charm of Chinese culture to the world."

The last ten years of investment has provided China with an impressive portfolio covering the range of instruments of attraction usually associated with soft power.

In education, China now has over 400,000 international students studying at its universities. It has set up a global network of 500 Confucius Institutes teaching Chinese language and culture.

In international broadcasting, CCTV broadcasts globally on television, radio, and online in English, Russian, Spanish, and Arabic, as well as Chinese.

In terms of culture, the growth of standalone institutions has been less rapid with a network of sixteen cultural centres globally, but Chinese embassies have successfully pursued cultural programmes and events around the Chinese New Year to considerable advantage.



If you take into account China's use of major international events - in sport, the Olympic Games in 2008, hosting the Winter Games in 2022, or pressure from the leadership to develop football and mega-events such as Shanghai Expo, China's overall effort to establish itself as a soft power super-power has outstripped any of its rivals.

Despite this massive investment, China's soft power still languishes far behind that of its western rivals in most comparative studies: 28th out of 30 in Portland's 2016 report on soft power or 20th out of 25 according to *Monocle*.

Many reasons for China's relative weakness despite its spending have been put forward. The foremost of these is the gap between how China wants to be seen, and its ambitious growth in hard power and often repressive stance at home.

There are however three other significant reasons for the gap between spending and impact. Firstly China remains resolutely unwelcoming to the soft power of others.

This is articulated most forcefully by Hu Jintao in his article in "Seeking Truth" in January 2012 where he wrote: "We must clearly see that international hostile forces are intensifying the strategic plot of Westernizing and dividing China, and ideological and cultural fields are the focal areas of their long-term infiltration".

If you take into account China's use of major international events - in sport, the Olympic Games in 2008, hosting the Winter Games in 2022, or pressure from the leadership to develop football and mega-events such as Shanghai Expo, China's overall effort to establish itself as a soft power super-power has outstripped any of its rivals.

Xi Jinping has recently urged Chinese universities to limit the impact of Western scholarship on their teaching, including preventing the use of imported textbooks or blocking Facebook, Twitter, Google, and Instagram. This is part of the same picture. China wants to be welcome overseas but is much less welcoming at home.

Secondly, the party is far more concerned about its soft power within China than it is with its influence outside. Ultimately its public diplomacy effort is about retaining and justifying its position internally.

Whether it is in the development of its cultural infrastructure, extraordinary in its scale and scope or in the constant reiteration of Chinese cultural values and harmony, or Xi Jinping's exhortations to artists to "consolidate the confidence in Chinese culture and use art to inspire people", the party's concern is with what people believe in China. The narrative China tells itself about itself is the story it also tells the outside world.

Thirdly and perhaps most intriguingly, we also tell ourselves that China shares our own evaluation of the effectiveness of soft power. But in most international arenas China has shown itself prepared to question many of the assumptions we have formed since 1945 about how the world works.

At a time when Europe appears ever more self-absorbed and the US questions many of the foundations of post war prosperity which it created, China appears ever more self-assured in offering an alternative narrative.

Through the creation of the Asian International Investment Bank, Xi Jinping's championing at Davos of free trade within a globalising world, and its alternative development assistance programmes or the sheer scale of ambition in the One Belt One Road trade route initiative, China is offering to fill the vacuum with a China-centric view of how the world's countries will relate to each other. In its use of soft power, China also challenges the core concept of universal human rights and values, and seeks to replace them with "socialist values including equality, economic development and harmony".

Over the past 30 years, China has proved itself a master of taking from the best from the West in terms of economic, social, and cultural development - but only those parts which fit into its vision of China in the 21st century. It has now done so with the tools of soft power and may yet fashion something entirely more challenging with them.



4.3

Japanese strength in soft power foreign policy

Yoichi Funabashi

–

Co-founder and Chairman,
Asia Pacific Initiative

–

Since the end of World War II, Japan has been a democratic, pacifist nation, whose main tool for exerting influence across the globe has been soft power. Constrained by a US-imposed war-renouncing constitution, one of those integral tools has been Official Development Assistance (ODA). Japan turned into a full-fledged ODA donor in the mid-1970s after its phoenix-like post-war economic boom, which has seen Japan's economy become the most complex in the world according to Harvard's Atlas of Economic Complexity. Many of the foundations for Asia's economic take-off were laid by Japan's economic infrastructure building efforts and technical assistance in this era, becoming the world's top nation for ODA spending in 1989.

However, Japan's post-war non-military international identity reached a turning point in 1991 when only money, not troops, were sent to Kuwait in assistance of the US, Japan's ally and security guarantor. Tokyo was criticised for its "chequebook diplomacy". At this juncture – under pressure to be more involved in global affairs – Tokyo faced a complex and divisive question: how can Japan expand its international influence?

There were two broad responses to this question, which continue to split opinion in Japanese foreign policy circles to this day. On one side, there is an argument that Japan should shoulder more of the burden of international security, contributing to peacekeeping missions and using its Self-Defence Forces productively. Doing so would require Japan to become a "normal" nation, which means having a proper military capable of foreign deployment. The counterargument to this is that Japan should remain pacifist and rely solely on its non-military strengths – economic, technological, and cultural – to increase its influence.

There are two forces driving the case for a "normalised" Japan, which entails changing Article 9 of the constitution, in which war is renounced as a sovereign right. The first is that full participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) requires militaries that can operate in conflict zones where violent force may have to be used. The success of the 1993 Cambodian PKO in realising peace and nation-building goals built domestic support for a more active Japanese role in international security. Despite reinterpretation of Article 9 to allow for collective self-defence, meaning that Japanese troops can use force to protect UN.

and NGO staff in danger, the Self-Defence Forces are still prevented from participating in PKOs unless there is a ceasefire. Japanese troops pulled out of the South Sudan UN PKO in April and May 2017, after a scandal involving a cover-up of the Ground Self-Defence Force's activity logs, which revealed an operational situation not resembling ceasefire. There are echoes of the 1991 winter of chequebook diplomacy discontent over Japan's withdrawal.

The second force is the deterioration of the East Asian security environment. North Korea's nuclear missile development program and China's aggressiveness in the East China Sea and South China Sea give Japan reason to bolster its hard power at the potential expense of its soft power.

Despite these pressures, there is significant risk that militarisation will create unnecessary friction and tension with neighbours. An alternative is the soft power-centric "global civilian power" concept. It envisions Japan as simultaneously committing to security, through strengthening defence ties and passing security legislation to move towards self-sufficiency, whilst promoting the global system of free trade and cooperating internationally through ODA. There are three pillars to modernise and "proactivise" global civilian power for modern day challenges: human security, capability building for maritime peace, and the rule of law.

In 1998, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi attempted to make a people-centred approach the central principle of Japanese diplomacy. Human security, as opposed to national security, broadens its concept to include threats to health, education, and livelihood. Consequently, Tokyo attempted to promote economic cooperation, instead of projecting military power, to improve the regional security environment.

Japan's concept of human security differs significantly from the European Union and Canada as it is rooted in a strictly non-military approach. It is not embedded in a broader vision of humanitarian intervention that includes military force as a means to obtain security and rights.

This people-centric Japanese approach is implemented in practice in Japanese ODA initiatives. Tomohiko Sugishita of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was posted in Malawi as a doctor. He realised that the root of the medical crisis in Malawi was due to the ways in which locals viewed sickness and disease, not merely the lack of surgeons. Therefore, when asked to become the chief advisor for a health project in Tanzania, he set about convincing local government officials of the value of modern medicine. Dr Sugishita set up a leadership-

The three pillar non-military approach to international relations centred upon soft power offers Japan its best route forward to enhance its influence.

training programme, which aimed to put local officials in charge of their health services. His technique came to be known as the Catalyst Approach. Technical assistance and training are the catalysts for local empowerment and eventual self-sufficiency. This is one example of a lesson learnt from Japan's own post-war reconstruction.

Another important aspect of this capability-building approach central to Japanese aid is the focus on hard infrastructure assistance. Japan's focus differs slightly from Western aid's focus on social infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals. Japan instead builds bridges (literally and metaphorically) through the construction of vital infrastructure. Infrastructure projects contribute to long-term economic growth by facilitating supply-chain participation and providing connectivity to larger markets, so that local industries can thrive. In addition, Japan uses its projects as an opportunity to transfer engineering technology and provide design, construction, and maintenance training.

As countries cross the recipient-donor plateau, like China and Thailand, Japan's approach can find fresh relevance. For example, local training schemes and empowerment could be vital for stemming backlash to infrastructure projects in China's pan-Eurasian One Belt and One Road Initiative.

The second pillar of global civilian power is capability building for maritime peace. China's assertiveness has pushed Tokyo to build ties with other Asian countries facing similar maritime and territorial pressures. Japan has made strategic use of ODA to strengthen these nations' non-military capabilities, such as their coast guards. Japan formalised this strategic deployment of ODA in its 2013 official National Security Strategy. This was followed by a revision of the ODA charter in 2014, which allows for the use of Japan's overseas aid to export defence equipment to countries that meet specific conditions, such as limiting its use to their own borders.

The final piece of the puzzle to update global civilian power is the rule of law. Japan places a growing emphasis on seeking peaceful settlements through the rule of law. This approach is a continuation of Japan's identity as a non-military nation. It applies universally for the purpose of peace and stability in the Asia Pacific, and is not an engineered attempt to undermine Beijing's interests.

The three pillar non-military approach to international relations centred upon soft power offers Japan its best route forward to enhance its influence. However, there are growing grey-zone areas between the

military and non-military spheres. For example, China has attempted to seize islands using non-military forces like its Coast Guard and Maritime Militia. Moreover, the world's attention was drawn to the blurred lines of possible state collusion with rogue criminal hacking groups when the WannaCry ransomware attack crippled the British National Health Service (NHS). Cyberspace and outer space are emerging, ill-defined battlegrounds in which Japan can take leadership to establish rules and norms. Because of these new, potentially crisis-inducing challenges, a strategy that emphasises soft power tools, befitting Japanese citizens' pacifist sense of identity, should be coupled with the strengthening of hard power capabilities as a last resort.



4.4

Soft power and public diplomacy in Latin America: A view from Argentina

Tomás Kroyer

–

Public Diplomacy
Coordinator,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and Worship

–

As Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan pointed out in his essay for the 2016 Soft Power 30 report, the concept of soft power is still relatively foreign to many diplomatic services in Latin America, but this is beginning to change. Several countries in the region have started developing their capabilities to tap into, systematise, and project soft power internationally. In conducting foreign policy, public diplomacy is a key instrument for countries to assert their views and leverage soft power assets.

An important transformation is taking place today in Argentina, which was captured in the 2016 Soft Power 30 ranking. The arrival of President Mauricio Macri in December 2015 immediately bolstered the country's image and credibility abroad. His administration is explicitly and unreservedly based on three clear goals: first, working towards "zero poverty"; second, uniting the Argentine people around strong democratic institutions; and third, defeating drug trafficking. Through these goals, his administration has generated keen interest and support globally during its first eighteen months in office.

TALKING CHANGE IN ARGENTINA

President Macri's foreign policy is defined by an opening up to the world, looking to cooperate with all regions across the globe, opening markets for Argentine businesses, and attracting investments in and tourism to Argentina.

The development and projection of soft power goes hand in hand with these objectives. A strong international reputation for being a responsible, constructive, and open country is key to a nation's soft power. Credibility and support among key social stakeholders – both at home and abroad – require transparent communication and regular dialogue. Public diplomacy works precisely along these lines: image, reputation, and credibility.

Under the new Macri administration, the government created a department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship responsible for developing and implementing public diplomacy, with a strong emphasis on digital diplomacy. Its purpose is to communicate and explain Argentina's foreign policy to international audiences, emphasising its open and inclusive approach, presenting new economic opportunities, and showcasing Argentine culture and sports. Importantly, there is a key

domestic element to this work as well. The department's objective is to open a two-way dialogue with civil society to communicate the work of the Ministry and facilitate feedback.

In today's interconnected and digital world, it is essential that we listen to and construct meaningful dialogues with civil society. Therefore, in Argentina, we are looking to build on the knowledge and experience of traditional state-to-state diplomacy, complementing it by strengthening our relationships with local and international opinion leaders, universities, think tanks, NGOs, the press, etc. Much of this interaction happens through digital networks and social media.

ADAPTING TO A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The explosion of new information and communication technologies has changed the way we interact, relate, work, and receive information. Spanish academic Juan Manfredi points out some of the main advantages of using social media: it allows direct communication with a wider public than traditional audiences; it facilitates audience segmentation and enables you to create specific messages for each group; and it allows you to listen to voices and receive information or points of view that were not so readily available to diplomats before.

The transformation that diplomacy is undergoing as a result of the digital environment is clearly detailed in Tom Fletcher's book *Naked Diplomacy: Power and Statecraft in the Digital Age*. Fletcher's book presents the challenges and opportunities faced by diplomacy in the 21st century and suggests ways to move towards digital diplomacy.

Both Fletcher and Manfredi focus on the sweeping changes that diplomacy is undergoing as a result of the technology and communications revolution. Likewise, this has transformed the way in which countries' soft power is used and projected in diplomacy. Those who are better able to incorporate and enhance these new tools will have a clear advantage.

At the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, we kicked off the new administration with a focus on social media. This has meant ensuring current and future diplomats are well-versed in all forms of social media engagement, with courses at the Diplomatic Academy, the inclusion of social media in the diplomatic career curricula, and protocols, practice manuals, and instructions for best practices in understanding and communicating through social networks. We also exchange knowledge and training with the Brazilian diplomatic service through formal structures.

President Macri's foreign policy is defined by an opening up to the world, looking to cooperate with all regions across the globe, opening markets for Argentine businesses, and attracting investments in and tourism to Argentina.



Our goal is to equip Argentine diplomats with the latest tools and knowledge for the digital environment, thereby helping them to better interact with individuals, opinion formers, businesses, and civil society across the world.

LATIN AMERICA

From a soft power perspective, Latin America has many elements that make it particularly attractive, from the diversity of its landscapes and environment, to its vibrant and passionate culture, its varied gastronomy, and the talent of its sporting professionals, artists, and entrepreneurs, not to mention the huge growth potential of its economies.

As for political and institutional factors – other factors that influence soft power – Latin America is a bit of a mixed bag. While it is one of the few regions of the world at peace and free from armed conflict, there is substantial room for improvement when it comes to the functioning of its political and institutional systems. Latin American soft power would certainly benefit from broader cooperation between countries in improving public institutions and overall government effectiveness. It is in everyone's interests to work to strengthen public institutions and ensure that they reflect the values and aspirations of the region's citizens.

Knowing how to use the region's advantages to project itself as an attractive destination – for investors, ideas, entrepreneurs, tourists, etc – rests on two key tasks. First, Latin American countries need to address



existing areas of weakness of their soft power, such as strengthening public institutions. Second, to ensure that foreign ministries have the capability and capacity to deliver effective public diplomacy campaigns.

21ST CENTURY DIPLOMACY FOR A 21ST CENTURY POWER

Soft power – as a central component of a country’s international projection in the 21st century’s interconnected and digital world – needs to be complemented by 21st century diplomacy. Integral to this is public diplomacy, which recognises the importance of working with civil society, using digital diplomacy as a channel for engaging with stakeholders across the globe.

Modernising diplomacy to make better use of soft power requires important changes that take time to implement. These involve fundamentally modifying the ways in which foreign services work, conceiving the exercise of diplomacy as something that is as closely linked to relationships between states as the interaction with non-state actors. Communication, transparency, and dialogue are now essential aspects of the diplomatic vocation, and integrating new technologies is a key piece of the diplomat’s toolbox.

The good news is that Argentina, like other countries in the region, is now on its way to effecting this change and setting itself up as a modern, digitally-savvy diplomatic nation of the 21st century.

4.5

Brexit Britain: What future for the UK's soft power?

Victoria Dean

–

Partner, Portland

–

Last year our analysis of the UK's soft power prospects concluded that if the British public voted for Brexit "there would likely be a negative impact on global perceptions of Britain thereafter. Forfeiting membership of a major multilateral organisation would also have a negative impact on objective measures of the UK's soft power."

One year on from the historic referendum and while other countries have moved up and down in our rankings, the UK remains in a close second place, though with an overall lower score than last year.

While we stand by our original assessment in the long-term, the immediate impact beyond European perceptions appears to be limited. Of course at present, the UK remains a member of the European Union. However, the calamities predicted by some following a vote to leave have not yet fully come to pass. As of April 2017, a study showed that just 10% of the Treasury's negative economic predictions had come true.

Looking back over the arguments in favour of Brexit, the UK's world-leading soft power was a niche but identifiable feature of the debate. For some, like the then Justice Secretary Michael Gove, this was a defensive point: The UK's soft power was yet another reason the Remain campaign was overstating the risks of Brexit. While for others, such as campaigning organisation "Better Off Out", protecting British soft power was a reason in itself to leave the stifling monoculture of the EU. Portland's 2015 edition of this report, which had shown the UK at the top of the global rankings, inadvertently became a proof point in many of these arguments.

As of June 19th Brexit negotiations are formally underway. Regardless of how the next two years develop, maintaining a considerable reserve of soft power will become be an important driver of the UK's reputation around the world. When Brexit takes effect in 2019 and following a widely expected transitional period of between two and four years, the UK's laws and our relationships around the world could look significantly different. There will be a new immigration system that may limit or encourage visitors to the UK, new customs arrangements that will affect the price of British products in other markets, maybe even restrictions on the data from abroad that our technology companies are able to access.

443

3.60

VALENTINO
CAMOUFLAGE
AND RAW SEAMS
PAGE 10 | MEN'S FASHION PARIS



LOST IN THE DIN
POLITICAL BARBS
FOR FED CHIEF
PAGE 18 | BUSINESS

PRINCE'S STAR
PROTÉGÉE TELLS
OF HIS FINAL DAYS
PAGE 14 | CULTURE

International New York

Britain's historic decision

FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 2016



Texas policy
of race-based
admissions
is upheld
pre-defeat
immig

No 50,102 telegraph.co.uk

150
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
The Telegraph



So while the vote to leave has not immediately impacted our position, change is coming. It seems that soft power, as measured by our index, is more comparable to a slow moving economic fundamental than a volatile market. Events will over time enhance or erode a country's standing but it's clear from the results of our 2017 study, that the act of voting to leave has not sent the UK's soft power stocks tumbling, though overall they have ticked down slightly. That said, while the UK remains in second place globally there have been small changes in the underlying data which gives clues as to the movement we may see in the years ahead. This is particularly noticeable in three of the sub-indices.

First, within the Government sub-index, the UK's relative position remains the same but its absolute score has fallen by roughly five points. This takes into account metrics including political stability and government accountability, both of which are big questions for the Government as it administers Brexit. With a hefty legislative programme needed to repeal and replace much of the laws inherited from the EU, a process that was started by a referendum will become considerably removed

from public consultation. The hung parliament that has followed the UK's recent general election means the Government will no longer be able to rely on amending laws through secondary legislation. But while this means accountability may in fact increase, stability may suffer. The tension between these two metrics will be a crucial factor how the UK's system of Government is seen in the coming years. Beyond that, it will be important for British politicians to ensure a smooth exit and transition out of the EU to protect the reputation of the Westminster model.

Second, in the Enterprise category, the UK's ranking has risen relative to its peers but its score has slipped a small but significant amount. The UK has historically performed relatively poorly on this metric with a global ranking of just 13th this year, our lowest of any sub-category. While falling unemployment and low business taxes no doubt make the UK a good place to do business, in other areas such as Research & Development spending we have struggled to compete with countries like Singapore and South Korea. Brexit may leave the UK outside key research programmes like Horizon 2020 and unable to apply for the European Commission funding that finances many British scientific studies. The Government's decision whether or not to meet this funding shortfall is therefore likely to have a material impact on our soft power as it relates to businesses.

The last area of change involves looking at the subjective data – comprised of international polling from 25 countries – which operates most like a market of any of the soft power metrics. Despite volatility across the board, this year the UK's performance has dipped only slightly, by three points. However, the upward movement of others has cost us three places in the global rankings. Opinion of the UK has remained largely stable in non-EU countries, but public perception of the UK within Europe has taken a hit in the wake of the referendum result. The Government has perhaps least control over this category going into Brexit but that should not stop politicians from paying close attention to how the country is regarded as a place to visit, work, and study.

These variables are an early indication of how the UK's position could change in the coming years. Brexit poses some risk to the UK's soft power, as it does to every other sector and metric we can identify. If the Government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can truly deliver on the concept of "Global Britain" and ensure the UK is a champion of openness, tolerance, and international collaboration, then British soft power – and global influence – can be safeguarded. If they cannot, then it is likely that there will be some downward movement in the UK's performance on The Soft Power 30 in the future.

5.0

The democratisation of influence:

The soft power of non-state actors

5.1

Digital diplomacy and the power of citizen networks and advocacy organisations

5.2

The new network effect: A model for influence

5.3

Virtual exchange, an evolution in citizen diplomacy

5.4

The soft power of museums

5.5

Beyond the rot: Cities and the future of public diplomacy

5.6

City diplomacy: San Diego's local leadership in a global age

For governments to make real progress on major global challenges – shifting political landscapes, threats to the environment, pressure on scarce resources, and economic inequality – they must adapt and respond to the broader levels of engagement required in an increasingly digital world.

In this section, our contributors explore the growing role of non-state actors in both developing and even leveraging soft power.

As the power continues to shift away from national level governments to non-state actors, it is important to better understand how civil society, cultural institutions, cities, and individuals are driving change in international affairs.

FROM STATES TO CITIZENS

5.1 **Digital diplomacy and the power of citizen networks and advocacy organisations**

To attract new funders or to persuade governments of the merits of policy change, there will of course always be a role for private conversations. But while a decade ago our best chance of winning the argument for refugees was through direct relationships with our target audiences – and a strong, evidence-based case for why supporting refugees matters – we now have a third and powerful tool at our disposal: engaging and mobilising mass support through digital communications.

The first and most obvious benefit of digital communications is the potential to reach more people, quicker and more directly, than before. When Donald Trump issued his Executive Order to suspend the highly successful and established US refugee resettlement programme, we got our point of view across to hundreds of thousands of people, throwing out a challenge to the new administration in a matter of hours. The competition for our audiences' attention is stiff, but with the right timing, and smart use of different digital channels, be it Twitter, Facebook, direct email, or Snapchat, getting our arguments heard widely has become the norm.

Second, digital communications give us the potential not just to reach but to mobilise people, whether it is to donate, volunteer, sign petitions, or take other actions. With President Trump's attempt to suspend the US refugee resettlement programme, digital platforms enabled a coalition of refugee and human rights organisations to mobilise hundreds of thousands of people to turn out in protest of the policy. It is not always easy to get people to move beyond passively supporting a cause and act on that cause. But when it works, it enables us to challenge, visibly and powerfully, the decisions made by other actors in the international system, with some success.

While sometimes the only option for NGOs is to challenge other actors in a direct and adversarial way, our preference at International Rescue Committee (IRC) is to engage them positively and constructively. And this is the third benefit of digital communications: it gives us the ability to demonstrate that more and better support for refugees is not just right but popular with the public, and in doing so to make a more persuasive case. When little Alan Kurdi was found dead on the shores of Greece, more than 450,000 people signed an online petition asking David Cameron to welcome more refugees to the UK, triggering a debate in Parliament and contributing to the then Prime Minister's announcement to open a specific resettlement scheme for Syrian refugees.



As this example shows, digital media strengthens our ability to effect change by allowing us to reach more people, to mobilise them, to demonstrate popular support for a given cause, and to ultimately bring about political action or policy change. But three challenges mean its full potential remains untapped.

First, the use of digital platforms necessitates a change in our approach to communications. To reach and engage audiences with short attention spans and multiple distractions, we need to frame our arguments differently and make them more accessible. Take for example the current debate over continued public spending on foreign aid, in the face of attacks by the hard right across Europe and in the US.

NGOs, accustomed to talking to those whom pollsters term the “cosmopolitan elite”, present the facts and the evidence of the impact of aid, and hope this appeals to our audiences’ rational side. The aid critics play to people’s emotional sense of patriotism, and their fears, real and imaginary, of the threat to their home posed by supposedly frivolous spending abroad. Last year, almost 250,000 people were sufficiently persuaded by these arguments to sign the Daily Mail’s online petition to stop spending 0.7% of the UK’s GNI on aid. NGOs are still playing catch-up, struggling to frame the case for foreign aid in a way that speaks clearly and convincingly to the general public.

The second challenge is legitimacy. While our supporter numbers are greater than ever before, it is still too easy for governments and politicians in particular to dismiss our supporters as a special interest group. Unless we can prove that we act with the support of the wider public, we risk seeming irrelevant to actors who depend on the public for their own power and legitimacy.

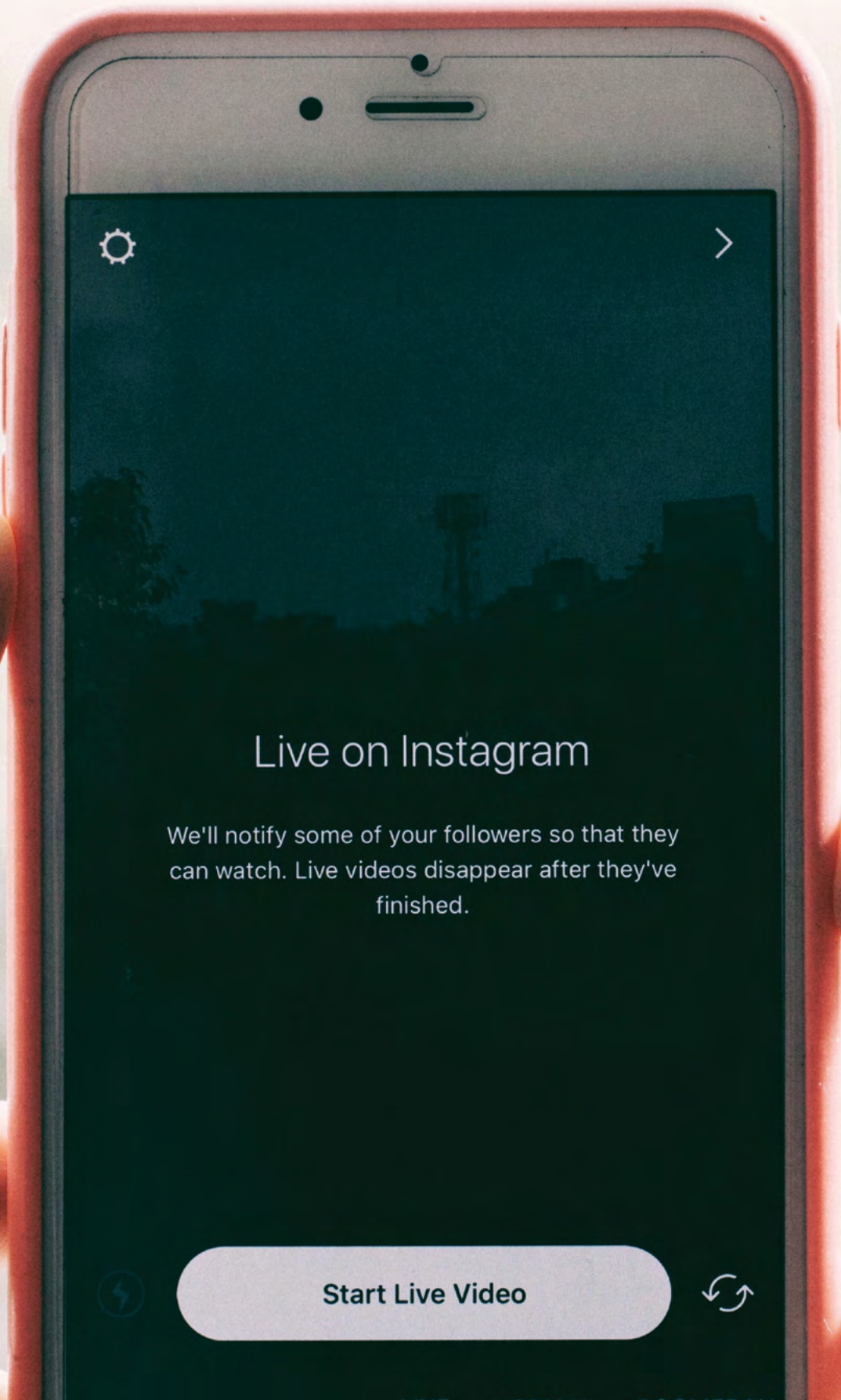
Particularly effective in countering this challenge – but a challenge in its own right – is building coalitions with other organisations to grow the supporter numbers and therefore the legitimacy of our cause. Much of the IRC’s work to bring attention to the war in Syria and to encourage engagement from other international actors is done in coalition with other NGOs. Perhaps even more powerful are our corporate partnerships, such as our current campaign on EU refugee resettlement with Ben & Jerry’s. The support of their mass consumer base (a wider group than the usual collection of NGO supporters) demonstrated – through online petition signatures – the campaign’s enhanced legitimacy.

Third and finally, is a practical challenge to our ability to engage and influence debates through digital communications. The IRC is rightly proud that 92% of funding goes directly into our programmes. But competing for attention and credibility in digital media doesn’t come cheap, whether it is building a better user experience on our digital platforms, promoting our content on external platforms, or building internal capacity to monitor, post, and engage. IRC digital partners such as Facebook and YouTube provide invaluable support. But identifying sustainable funding models for digital communications remains difficult for many NGOs and will only improve with more evidence of impact.

NGOs working to address major global challenges are at a tipping point. We know that debates between actors in the international system – about values, priorities, and policies – play out online. We know that digital media gives NGOs and the people they serve more influence in this system. Yet, we are still grappling with how to build the capacity, the credibility, and the narratives to fully capitalise on this opportunity. Figuring out how to fund this important work is also a challenge. But, without question, we are making progress.

Laura Kyrke Smith

Head of Communications, International Rescue Committee



Live on Instagram

We'll notify some of your followers so that they can watch. Live videos disappear after they've finished.

Start Live Video

5.2

The new network effect: A model for influence

If the political surprises of the last 18 months have taught us anything, it is that supposedly influential journalists and publications have less influence than ever. Hillary Clinton had more newspaper endorsements than any presidential candidate in history – and lost. Jeremy Corbyn, the UK Labour party leader, was pilloried by the tabloid press – and now has more power than ever.

The truth is that the influence of most high-profile journalists and outlets has been radically constrained by changes in how people consume information.

Previously, the public sought out – and, by and large, accepted – the opinions and reporting from elite news outlets. Because these outlets had a monopoly on connecting with the population at large, their only rivals for influence were each other.

This changed with the arrival of smartphones and social media. Suddenly everyone, more-or-less everywhere, could connect with whoever they liked. And it turned out people mostly liked connecting with other people who thought like they did.

Media was left reeling – but not knocked out. This has been the story of the last five or so years: Elite influencers invested time and energy in open platforms like Twitter and Medium, multi-channel strategies, and free-to-read, ad-supported business models.

It did not work. Traditional media is now clearly on the mat. It will survive, but the shape and extent of its influence has fundamentally changed.

A huge part of this change is due to the rise of closed networks.

Closed networks are self-contained systems that are only influenced from the inside. For the first time, they are proving large and powerful enough to resist external forces and create self-reinforcing narratives. They have flourished on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp.

People now predominantly consume their information in these systems. Four of the five most popular social platforms worldwide are insular messaging apps. This means that the media's model for maintaining influence is not just disrupted. It is so outdated as to be irrelevant.

The new, network-based model – which allows people to shelter themselves in silos – creates clusters that can be wholly distinct from one another. This has drastically diminished, and in cases eliminated, information flow across groups. It is a setting

based primarily on personal preference, with little-to-no guidance or moderation from media elite.

Influencing narratives now requires “getting inside the loop” by going where people are, rather than relying on them coming to you. This is bad news for the traditional media.

News outlets like The New York Times have realised that the only way to survive is to create closed networks of their own. The papers expressing confidence in the future are committing to a subscription model. Just compare the Times, which has more than 2.5 million paying subscribers, to the Guardian, which recently reported an operating loss of £69 million.

But it is unlikely this will be enough, whether in the US or globally. With trust in media institutions so low, journalists will only be pushed further out of the information chain. In the US, for example, just 4% of Trump voters have strong confidence in national news media. The figures for Clinton voters were not much more reassuring.



This trend is even stronger in emerging markets. In focus groups we have run in the Middle East, for example, participants were directly asked who they trusted most to give them the accurate version of current events. The answer was uniformly their friends and family – who they primarily connected with over Facebook.

Traditional media outlets will always exist, but the likelihood is that they will only speak to an ever-smaller and more elite segment of societies.

But the new model still provides avenues for influence for those willing to work within it.

To look at two starkly different examples, the Trump campaign's highly targeted and large-scale Facebook campaign (supported by niche media outlets) and ISIS' decentralised communications infrastructure provide very different, but successful, blueprints for forming networks and shaping narratives.

There are other ways to develop approaches for penetrating closed networks.

Success will revolve around developing compelling content, then identifying entry points into existing networks (or building those loops organically) and pushing it through them.

Portland has put this approach – Total Communications – to use in everything from complex national campaigns to the communications around class action lawsuits. Total Communications is the new model for influence, and the most effective way to exert soft power.

Philip Hall

Partner, Portland

Jordan Bach-Lombardo

Senior Account Manager, Portland



← 4호선입구
용강동 Yonggang - dong
마포세무서 Mapo Tax Ofc
공덕오거리 Gongdeok Jct
↑ 300m
신촌로터리 Shinchon Rotary

5.3

Virtual exchange, an evolution in citizen diplomacy

Digitisation has caused mass-scale transformation in the way we stay connected to our social and professional networks, how we do business, and how we consume news and entertainment – so why would it not also impress upon citizen diplomacy?

For traditionalists, the concept of virtual exchange is blasphemous – nothing can replace the person-to-person impact of public diplomacy. Of course not, but there is no denying the power everyday global citizens hold in the palm of their hand to influence their own network, greater communities, and ultimately, even nations. The rise of technology has paved the way for a new type of diplomacy through virtual exchange. Through these means, we are able to create avenues of engagement for those who cannot access physical exchange, as they too can benefit from the mind-opening opportunities offered through an exchange experience, and have much to contribute to the experience of others as well.

Virtual exchange is changing the how and who of exchange, and may well prove itself to be a viable extension of public diplomacy, and a new means of building and exerting soft power in foreign affairs.

In this context, virtual exchange is perhaps best defined by what it is not. It is much more intimate than a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), in which a lecturer delivers content to a broad participant base with limited opportunity for dynamic group engagement. It is also different from a simple classroom-to-classroom Skype call, or a social media discussion where individuals, companies or governments push out carefully branded messages and await replies. Virtual exchanges, instead, promote a new kind of intercultural learning that encourages technology-enabled, oft-facilitated, interactive people-to-people dialogue in a digital space.

Youth For Understanding (YFU) is responsible for exchanging more than 260,000 students in the last 65 years through its physical exchange programs. Integrating virtual exchange enables us to further enhance our mission to advance intercultural understanding, mutual respect, and social responsibility through educational exchanges for youth, families, and communities.

Diversity of exchange participants is greatly increased through virtual exchanges, giving voice to those who may traditionally not have access to physical exchange, and creating access and an opportunity for the deeper understudying of marginalised, disparate, or underserved people and cultures.

With virtual platforms, there are fewer political, socio-economic, religious, or demographic factors that limit participation. Each student is provided equal opportunity and support from facilitators to engage with and learn from each other. Conversation, whether through words, images, or video, is the primary activity, and thematic prompts encourage playful, positive, and meaningful dialogue.

Virtual exchange offers something different – the opportunity for students to discover their “Third Space”, where participants, no matter their background, family role, stereotypes, or location, can introduce themselves in a more authentic context, in a safe digital space that acts more like a home away from home. This is neutral ground, a leveling place, where conversation (as the primary activity), accessibility and accommodation, a low profile, and a playful mood are made possible through digital communications. This space creates the opportunity for an educational and cultural experience.

As technology becomes more widely available, people from developed countries, remote areas, and crisis zones alike have the ability to engage in opportunities for increased intercultural understanding. For some, like those who have experienced hardship or been impacted by conflict, the virtual sphere provides a peaceful place to express individuality, demonstrate curiosity, and develop empathy.

Nearly 1,000 individuals have participated in our Virtual Exchange Initiative, including youth from the United States, Tunisia, Indonesia,

REASONS TO JOIN A VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

Cultural Exposure: share interests and fun cultural traditions, gain awareness of your own values and learn about others; build tolerance for other ways of thinking; consider embarking on a physical exchange experience.

Relationships: build connections with new friends from foreign locations in a safe and open forum.

Communications: expand written, listening and speaking skills; practice effectively communicating with speakers of other languages and backgrounds.

Leadership: enhance future prospects for education; grow as thought leaders and cultural ambassadors; become inspired to take action within your community.

“People-to-People exchange is at the centre of Public Diplomacy work because direct connection between citizens of other countries and the United States has extraordinary power to create partnership on issues of mutual priority and produce positive long-term bilateral relationships. Digital technology has brought us all closer and made people-to-people exchange possible in new ways, expanding our capacity to utilize this important Public Diplomacy tool.”

Holly Zardus,

Assistant Cultural Affairs Office, Public Affairs, U.S. Embassy

Denmark, and the Czech Republic. Through facilitated dialogues, with a structured curriculum framework, students were encouraged to share about culture, conflict, and current events. Participants saw parallels emerge based on their chosen topics of interest; several students in Iowa, for example, shared about the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, and had no idea the extent to which their peers in Tunisia – where the Arab Spring revolutions began – were able to relate to them, albeit in different ways, but with similar sentiments and reactions.

Student surveys following the programme captured data that demonstrated attitudinal shifts and confirmed movement toward openness and curiosity about other cultures. A majority of those who completed the post-programme survey said they were more confident at the end of the programme about sharing potentially controversial opinions with people who may not agree, that they have more sympathy for those in other cultures, and that they are more inclined to seek out additional information while forming opinions about international matters than they would have prior to the programme. Ultimately, the results convey, across the board, a high value for the virtual exchange experience and an increase in participants’ global awareness and competencies.

Virtual exchange has the capacity and power to reach significantly greater audiences, much more approachably and affordably, than traditional exchanges.

In instances where countries cannot attract exchange students, for individuals who cannot afford to study abroad, for nations or cultures with a history of animosity between them, the prospects for travel or immersive exchange is limited. Through digital, these obstacles stand less in the way, allowing trust – a key critical element of building positive transnational relationships – to build.

This is particularly notable in regions where traditional hard power standing has limited or prohibited engagement, or where physical safety or the presumption of a lack of safety is of concern. It is in locations like these where the likelihood of misunderstanding or mistrust is likely to be the greatest and virtual exchanges could have the most impact.

Working with the US Embassy in Jakarta, YFU brought our virtual program to Indonesia. Indonesia is notably a tech-savvy, mobile-enabled nation; however schools vary in their access to technology. Our program worked with students coming from radically diverse backgrounds and schools with high-end technology access, as well as those without.

Many Indonesian students know little beyond what they read online or see in pop culture about American youth. Similarly, young Americans know very little about Indonesia. There is a great deal of misinformation or merely a lack of connection, which could be addressed through virtual exchange opportunities.

Our programme in Indonesia linked youth across four continents to one another to help establish in-depth dialogue and conversational exchange. The aim was to create a connection - building relationships between youth classroom to classroom, across national borders.

In our initial programmes, participant self-assessments showed 95% of respondents agreeing that they have developed a better ability to understand another person's perspective.

Cultural exchange is as vital as ever; it forms the ultimate reality check to a worldview based on stereotypes or misinformation. As barriers to access will always exist, virtual exchanges provide a means of overcoming the challenges associated with traditional in-person exchanges.

YFU is not doing this in a vacuum. The rise in opportunity means a great deal of partners have come together to create new virtual avenues for connecting people. Companies like Google and foundations such as the Steven's Initiative and the Asia Society, alongside YFU, are collaborating to bring more people together, and further connect hearts and minds.

The YFU Virtual Exchange Initiative promotes our sense of common humanity and reinvents the intercultural exchange movement for the new age, providing students the opportunity to grow as individuals and become active members

of our greater global society. By removing barriers to participation, we are helping to close a very real gap and building cross-cultural bridges of understanding amongst individuals who might typically never travel past the borders of their home communities.

By harnessing technology to increase global connections among youth, virtual exchanges provide a new means of addressing disparities in educational opportunities, offer personal growth and empowerment opportunities, and help to counter extremism by influencing attitudes and combatting radical views. Through their everyday interactions, students break down the stereotype of “the other”, while learning to embrace similarities and appreciate differences. The opportunity for interpersonal diplomacy that young people hold in their hands can change the perception of classmates and countries.

People-to-people diplomacy is real, and digital technology is making it stronger and more accessible.

Erin Helland

Director of Virtual Exchange, Youth For Understanding

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS LEAVE THEIR MARK

5.4 The soft power of museums

In the not-too-distant past, museums and the arts were agents of hard power. Wards initially of royal courts and then nation states, museums were repositories of hard power - safeguarding the spoils of war and human conquest of nature. They reflected the state's hegemony, which was very useful for cultural diplomacy: cultural diplomacy boasts whereas soft power persuades.

Research led by Joseph Nye demonstrates that soft power is more effective when the source is independent of government and large corporations whose communication is often perceived as “propaganda”. The transfer of museums from agencies of government to civil society institutions over the past 40 years has led to their increasing soft power. Civil society is the network of organisations that have roots in the voluntary and non-profit sectors. More and more, museums are evolving away from governmental and corporate sectors to the non-profit world. In the United States, about 80% of museums are non-profits with independent boards. This is much less so in other countries, but there is a growing trend to public/private partnerships in the museum sector worldwide. This shift to civil society means plural funding leading to new governance structures that reflect a diversity of voices and influences. As a consequence of their place in civil society, museums have acquired new roles, responsibilities, and opportunities such as: stimulating the knowledge economy, attracting talent to cities, generating jobs, positioning cities and regions as tourism destinations, raising nearby property values, and elevating civic pride.

Museums become more prominent as soft power platforms when they amplify civic discourse, accelerate cultural change, and contribute to cultural intelligence among the great diversity of city dwellers, visitors, policymakers, and leaders.

Canada’s newest national museum in Winnipeg is a public/private venture: the Canadian Museum for Human Rights engages visitors to learn about genocides inflicted on people around the world so they are better able to understand patterns that emerge and spot the danger signs around them. The Museum has become known as a forum for “Fragile Freedoms” - the name of their popular lectures series. In just two years the museum has won scores of awards so that, after many decades in decline, Winnipeg has transformed itself into a regional centre for the knowledge economy — with universities, insurance firms, medical research, and a thriving arts and theatre scene. As home to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg has decided to rebrand itself as “The City of Human Rights Education”. This is a challenging goal because Winnipeg is also home to a large population of marginalised indigenous people. Winnipeg, previously known internationally for its namesake bear “Winnie the Pooh,” is well on its way to being an international soft power reference for human rights.

In this era of power diffusion, museum buildings are more than landmarks. They are also cornerstones in successful place-making. Place-making refers to the interactions between people and place in the creation of social capital (the capacity of people working together to solve problems). Museums present beautiful, accessible, and meaningful spaces in which communities and individuals can meet, exchange ideas, and solve problems – platforms for soft power.

Cities have long understood that place-making and a strong cultural brand is essential to their soft power. Many museums have been planned at the epicentre of ambitious urban development projects with the goal of repositioning their cities on the global scene and improving quality of life. This has happened successfully in post-industrial places such as King’s Cross (London), Bilbao (Spain), and in new cities like Dubai (UAE).

The “Bilbao Effect” — with the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao as the flagship — is a paradigm of place-making, of the transformation from a post-industrial centre to a cultural tourism destination and a burgeoning creative hub. Before the Guggenheim Museum was built, Bilbao received fewer than 100,000 overnight stays per year. That number has risen to over 800,000, stimulating hotels, restaurants, shops, a new congress centre, a city cultural centre and expansion of its fine art museum — as well as related creative service sectors, such as translation services, libraries, graphic arts, publishing and marketing, and a lively visual arts scene. Bilbao is the soft power platform for modern and contemporary art, and for new ways of thinking in a once culturally conservative community.

London has transformed the once derelict and dangerous King’s Cross national transport hub into the Knowledge Quarter featuring 55 museums, universities, research institutes, the British Library and the Guardian newspaper in a dynamic mix with offices, restaurants, parks, and living spaces with rapid international train links to Paris and Brussels, Europe. On some days you hear more French than English spoken in King’s Cross — a powerful space for opinion formers in most fields of human endeavor.

Museums preserve the past while also helping people adapt to the present and future. We see this in the developing south where countries are undergoing massive change and simultaneously building new museums at an incredible rate. In highly competitive, fast-changing cities, museums have emerged as a vital resource for developing contextual intelligence and cross-cultural skills.

Medellin, Colombia, once one of the most dangerous cities, has re-invented itself as a city of parks and culture. Its House of Memory is a museum developed by the city and victims of the armed conflict in 2013 and has now developed as a place of reconciliation since the armed conflict ended. Botero's voluptuous female sculptures grace parks and squares welcoming citizens and the world.

Museums are new to soft power, but their influence is likely to be profound because they present more than conferences and media moments — museums attract and engage with people in real time and space. Twice as many people visit museums in the US each year (almost a billion) as attend all major sporting events and theme parks combined. Between three and five times as many people who visit the physical museum participate in the museum on the web. Whether browsing the physical galleries, viewing exhibitions online, attending a lecture, watching films, or seeing the world go by with friends, museums are setting agendas and persuading people to think about many ideas and issues. Lonnie Bunch III, the Founding Director of the Smithsonian's National African American Museum of History and Culture, says, "The goal of this museum is to make America better." If that isn't soft power, what is?

Gail Lord

President and Co-Founder, Lord Cultural Resources.

Cities have long understood that place-making and a strong cultural brand is essential to their soft power. Many museums have been planned at the epicentre of ambitious urban development projects with the goal of repositioning their cities on the global scene and improving quality of life.



5.5 Beyond the rot: Cities and the future of public diplomacy

At an early point in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as the melancholy prince leaves the stage with the ghost of his dead father, a guard remarks: "Something's rotten in the state of Denmark". Today, as the princes of our time embrace the ghosts of their respective nations' past and play to the basest tastes of their home crowds with pledges to exit alliances, build walls, and make countries great again, it seems that something is rotten in many states. Arguably the very idea of the nation state as a building block of an international system is rotten too. The world no longer faces state-sized problems but rather what Kofi Annan memorably termed "problems without passports": extremist terrorism, mass migrations, epidemic disease, climate change, widening inequality, and more. This is no time for the world to look inwards, but the phenomena of global problems and an abundance of limited national solutions are plainly related. As global problems mount, it is only to be expected that familiar ways of thinking and organising would increase in their appeal, even if those ways of thinking are wholly inadequate to the tasks at hand. It is also predictable that the rhetoric of the era would revert to the lowest common denominators of the past, as leaders seek to maintain the coherence of politics designed for the age of steam trains and newsprint in an era of global digital networks. Yet even as the nation states flounder in division and a scramble to political extremes, it is possible to see the emergence of a hopeful politics based on coherent building blocks: the politics of the global city.

It is notable how some of the worst cases of division and counterproductive, stalled national politics – Trump's "America First", Brexit Britain – are also home to some of the most encouraging examples of coherence in city politics. Just weeks before the Brexit vote, citizens of London elected Sadiq Khan to the office of Mayor. Khan was not only the first Muslim to become mayor of a major Western European capital, but he also ran with a message which emphasised global interconnection and won a resounding mandate with more than 50% of the second round votes. Similarly, in Los Angeles in March 2017, Democratic Mayor Eric Garcetti, another committed globalist, was reelected as mayor with over 80% of the votes cast. Such mandates are unheard of in free elections at a national level but are not uncommon for mayors. Consider Bill de Blasio's 72% share of the vote in New York in 2013 or the close-to-55% second round tally for the Socialist Anne Hidalgo in Paris in 2014. These are not the skin-of-the-teeth margins between polar opposites that have crippled so many nation states. This is a confident politics in which the people and their government are in step and their leader has a mandate to act. Even in a troubled polity like Ukraine, where trust in politicians, jurists, or any other leader is often in single-digit figures, civic leaders are able to



rally a unique level of respect. Something is growing, or perhaps as the redundant elements of twentieth century life crumble away, something endures: an underlying civic sensibility.

Cities are the primary building block of organised human existence. The concept of civilization – as its etymology suggests – rests on the phenomenon of the city and its distinctiveness from life lived beyond its walls. There has always been a powerful identification between a city and an individual inhabitant. It is the oldest bond in organised politics, and hence it is appropriate that the term “citizen” should have been shared with the larger scale polities as they have emerged. It is noticeable how city-level identities are much more accessible to newcomers than the national identities which emerged in the 19th century. I saw it in person as a young lecturer in Birmingham in the 1990s where my British-born students of colour felt wholly at home with the identity of a “Brummie” but generally alienated from the more ethnically specific English or British identity. My own experience as a migrant in Los Angeles since 2005 has played out similarly. The Angeleno identity was available within a matter of weeks, while other levels of identification are more complicated: harder-won and much more laden with baggage and requirements to renounce former attachments and be just one thing. Even as the human imagination reaches out to new worlds, the power of the city is clear. As Homer and Virgil imagined their travellers encountering difference expressed in the form of cities, so

their successors in our own time: George Lucas or the writers who contribute to the likes of Doctor Who or Star Trek seem always to gravitate towards the single city on each planet as a point of contact and as the expression of an alien culture, as if a vision of a cosmos which scaled up the kind of planetary-level diversity found on earth would be too indigestible. Humans seem hardwired to think in terms of cities, and given a chance, their imaginations settle back to the civic level.

What does this mean for the world of international relations, public diplomacy, and soft power? First, it opens an opportunity for a new kind of city-to-city politics. As the late political theorist Benjamin Barber argued in his path-breaking book *If Mayors Ruled the World*, the emergence of cities with a political will and a popular mandate to accomplish what their divided national governments could not opened new pathways to addressing some of the toughest issues of our age. Cities have agreed on emissions caps when national governments have balked. To build on this, Barber founded a Global Parliament of Mayors to provide an annual opportunity for mayors who understood their interdependence to connect and discuss shared problems. Its next “annual convening” will take place in Stavanger, Norway in September 2017.

Second, it suggests that there is scope for government-to-city work. The national government, which is able to work at the city level, will likely find credible and willing partners. An excellent example of this is the Strong Cities Network sponsored by the US Department of State, which connects cities around the world to better respond to the challenge of violent extremism, and to share experience, information, and best practices.

Third, cities have the potential to address the world. As nations look to engage international opinion, it makes sense to empower their own cities to speak for them. Most of the negative stories and stereotypes in international affairs operate at the national level. One can hate French imperialism and love Paris. No one tells their children how Manchester hanged their great grandfather at the cross-roads in Killarney or how Chicago dropped napalm on their cousin’s village, even if in some way they did. While cities clearly have power as the nodal points of our financial and informational networks, it is not the kind of power that intimidates. Hence, Shanghai is more attractive than the undifferentiated mass of China, Istanbul is more attractive than Turkey, and Israel can speak of Tel Aviv in all its artistic, start-up, diverse, LGBT-friendly glory and defy the expectations of those who only expect to hear about tradition, complaint, and conflict.

Finally, where strong and globally engaged cities do not yet exist, it makes sense for international actors to seek to develop them. By taking a hand in developing civic-level politics, international actors can counterbalance the one-size-fits-all agendas being peddled by the new nationalists with a politics and a media that meets the needs of the country. Consider for example the city of Narva in Estonia, identified by some pundits as a potential flash-point for another Ukraine-style separatist conflict with Russia. Its citizens – disproportionately of Russian language and origin – are alienated from a post-Communist/post-colonial national politics which asserts an ethnically focused Estonian identity as the benchmark for citizenship. Meanwhile, the Kremlin media to which Narva's citizens turn for their news and entertainment offers them a centrally brewed draft of Russian exceptionalism fortified with a shot of a victim narrative and twist of disinformation. The most valuable thing western public diplomacy could do for Narva is not play into the Manichaeic conceits of the Kremlin by trashing Putin, demonising Russian-ness, or attempting to convey an idealised picture of our way of life, but rather to build up local media to tell stories relevant to the locality. This reinforces, instead, an identity which is already present and gives the people of Narva the platform they need to be simultaneously Russian, Estonian, European, and part of the 21st century.

In a world where progress on the most important issues seems to be grinding to a halt or even slipping backwards, cities and connections between cities offer a way forward not only for their own populations, but for the wider world. Below the level of nation state dysfunction and rot, cities are alive and well, standing as the green shoots of a better, stronger future.

Nicholas J. Cull

Public Diplomacy and the founding director, Master of Public Diplomacy programme at USC

5.6 **City diplomacy: San Diego's local leadership in a global age**

Cities are increasingly charting their own path on global issues, working together to find pragmatic, common sense solutions to shared challenges. For evidence, we look no further than recent headlines: The day that the Trump Administration announced it would pull out of the Paris Agreement, voices from all across the world rose up in shock and condemnation. The loudest and most significant voices in that chorus were mayors like Eric Garcetti (LA) and Bill DeBlasio (NYC), who committed their cities to the climate accords despite the Federal Government's abdication. In San Diego, Mayor Kevin Faulconer reiterated the City's commitment to its Climate Action Plan, with goals far more aggressive than that set by the Paris Agreement. US cities joined hundreds of other municipal governments around the world committing to partnership on climate issues despite stagnation and paralysis by national governments.

City-to-city diplomatic interactions are increasingly on the rise around the world. Cities are working with one another on just about every topic imaginable, from access to water, to security, cuisine, and human rights. In the last few years alone, over 200 international organisations have emerged which bypass national foreign ministries and instead put mayors in the driver's seat.ⁱ But city leadership on global issues requires more than just attending meetings, it requires concerted strategies at the local level to communicate to global audiences paired with an ability to implement global best practices back at City Hall.

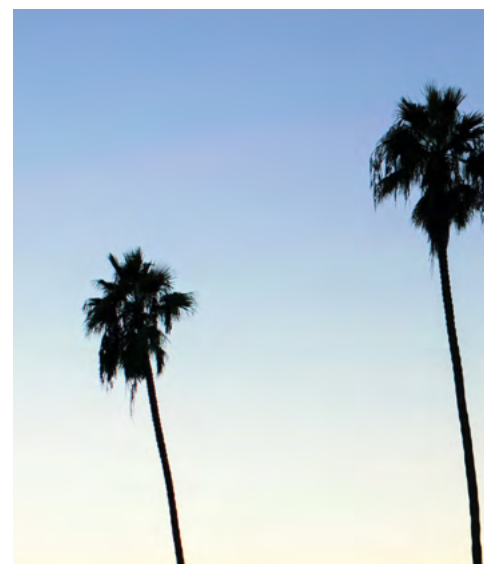
From its strategic position on the Pacific Rim and gateway to Latin America, San Diego stands out as a globally engaged city. San Diego is home to more than 80 research institutes, produces more patents than anywhere, and is consistently ranked as one of the best places to live and work. The City of San Diego achieves this through 1) civic engagement and collaboration; and 2) global partnerships to implement and teach best practices.

The heart of San Diego's diplomatic strategy begins with a coordinated effort around the region's identity. As a border city that is home to the largest concentration of military assets in the world, an international airport, international ports, and one of the largest refugee populations in America, San Diego leadership naturally governs with a global outlook. The current Mayor of San Diego has placed a special emphasis on promoting San Diego's global identity, making it an official part of the City's Strategic Plan.ⁱⁱ This strategic vision is about coordinating local assets and organisations working in the international space to better

communicate to the globe about the city's priorities and personality. We're a city of beaches,ⁱⁱⁱ beer,^{iv} border,^v and brains^{vi}: the constant challenge is communicating this amazing identity to the world. To this end, the city's Economic Development Corporation brings together tech businesses, tourism, government, and dozens of other stakeholders work together as a team to cohesively tell the San Diego Story.^{vii}

The work has produced unifying campaigns like #GoGlobalSD, a global export, trade, and investment strategy for the entire region.^{viii} Furthermore, with community-led groups like the City's International Affairs Board, the World Trade Center, the San Diego World Affairs Council, the Diplomacy Council, and the Port and Airport, the region is able to cultivate multilateral relationships with governments, cultural groups, businesses, and schools. The task is to coordinate a central hub for all international groups to coordinate delegations, trips, and priorities to streamline communication and avoid duplications. For instance, the appointed International Affairs Board recently created a bilateral "Friendship City" program that allows the City to partner with other cities around core points of commonality (i.e. beaches, beer, border, brains, etc.). In doing so, the Board continues to meet with the Tourism Authority, Airport, World Trade Center, and others to coordinate how "Friendship City" activity can complement other global engagement strategies.

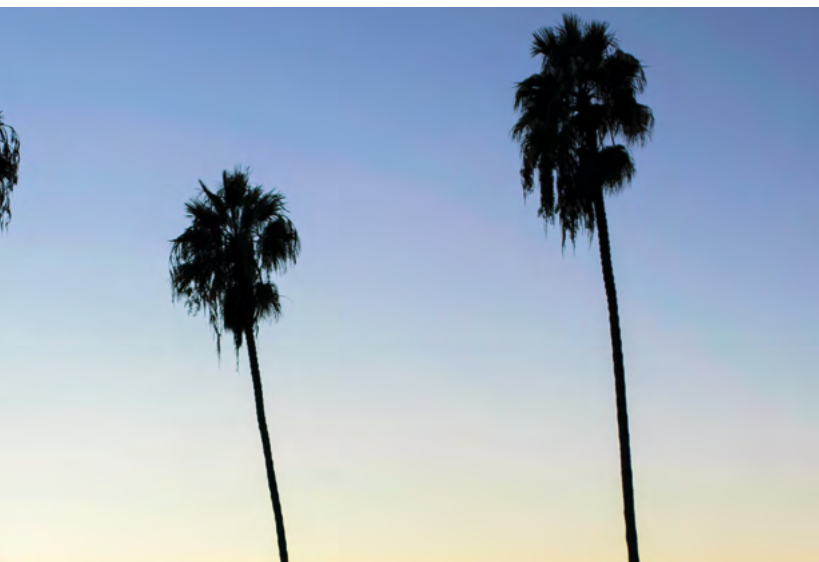
If the core foundation of soft power is being able to exert influence without using force, the place to begin is by knowing who you are and what you want. In cities, this conversation begins at a disaggregated level, with multiple stakeholders needing to coordinate and strategise around efforts that advance the entire region.



San Diego also has ability to implement global best practices back at City Hall and take what we are doing right abroad. Through the work of the San Diego Diplomacy Council, for example, the City welcomes dozens of international delegations each year to discuss topics like business development, rule of law, violent extremism, and homelessness. City officials get to hear about what works in other municipalities and share successes with visitors.

The City has also ventured into bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts aimed at producing real results. In 2017, the Mayors of San Diego and Tijuana signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding, which has resulted in department-to-department working relationships between city counterparts. Both mayors embarked on diplomatic trips to Mexico City and Washington D.C., where they advocated for open trade, border resources, and binational cooperation.^{ix} Similarly, the City of San Diego is the newest member of the Strong Cities Network, a multilateral group of over 100 cities working to prevent violent extremism. Membership in the network will allow city officials to work directly with other cities experiencing challenges like hate crimes, influxes of refugees, or high levels of radicalisation, and bring best practices back to law enforcement and the community.

Cities like San Diego have learned that exerting power in the 21st century means engaging in public diplomacy efforts that fall under two strategies. First, cities must coordinate the disparate globally connected groups under a common purpose. Coordination of the city's "global brand" is critically important for promotion abroad and welcoming international business and government locally. Second,



cities must pursue relationships and forums to receive and share best practices. In San Diego this takes the form of robust delegation reception, a strong bilateral relationship with Tijuana, as well as membership in international networks and forums.

One of the core elements of being a global city is leadership having a global vision. This vision, in San Diego, begins at the top with a city-wide strategic plan that explicitly aims to enhance the city's global identity. But at a much deeper level, it also is incumbent on citizens, organisations, and businesses to get involved in helping their city lead on global issues ranging from trade to climate change. City diplomacy is a critical new development in global politics quite simply because mayors and city employees are so much more accountable and responsive to their citizens than national governments. This means that the work being done at the local level on human rights, scientific discovery, and business development is actually not removed from the international public policies being discussed in Brussels, New York, or Dubai: the local is increasingly global. Through city diplomacy, local activism has global impact.

Joel Day^x

Executive Director, City of San Diego

ⁱ MICHELE ACUTO, STEVE RAYNER: City networks: breaking gridlocks or forging (new) lock-ins?. *International Affairs* 2016; 92 (5): 1147-1166. doi: 10.1111/1468-2346.12700 <https://www.sandiego.org/explore/things-to-do/beaches-bays.aspx>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.sandiegobrewersguild.org/maps?b=y&p=y>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/02/san-diego-bridge-border-wall-airport-tijuana-214788>

^{iv} http://www.ucop.edu/innovation-alliances-services/_files/Econ%20Impact%20Rpts/San%20Diego%20Research%20Institutes%20Econ%20Impact%202015.pdf

^v <http://www.sandiegobusiness.org/category/tags/brand-alliance>

^{vi} <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/go-global-san-diegos-global-trade-and-investment-initiative.pdf>

^{vii} <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/pad/pdf/citystrategicplan.pdf>

^{viii} <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/go-global-san-diegos-global-trade-and-investment-initiative.pdf>

^{ix} <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/border-baja-california/sd-me-mayors-washington-20170614-story.html>

^x Dr. Day is an Executive Director at the City of San Diego, where he oversees the International Affairs Board. He has a Ph.D. in international relations and has taught at the University of Massachusetts, the University of Denver, and is currently an Visiting Research Scholar at the University of San Diego's Kroc Institute of Peace and Justice.



6.0

Supporting the practitioner

6.1

How to become a soft power superpower

6.2

Challenges in measuring public diplomacy

6.3

Making the foreign familiar through cultural relations

6.4

Trends and counter-trends in digital diplomacy

6.5

Practical advice from the USC Center on Public Diplomacy

**“Diplomacy is the art of letting
other people have your way”**

Daniele Vare,

20th century Italian author

6.1 **How to become a soft power superpower**

Tom Fletcher

British diplomat and former HM Ambassador to Lebanon

It should be a rule of modern diplomacy that a British embassy can never have too many pictures of David Beckham on the wall. Ditto Argentina and Messi, Portugal and Ronaldo.

When I was a UK Ambassador, we never missed the chance to fly the largest flag we could find over a Bond car, super yacht, Royal Wedding, iconic brand, Premiership footballer, or visiting celeb. This was not because we were star struck, though perhaps we were a bit. It gave us the best possible platform for our message about Britain’s global role. This was not treaties, Ferrero Rocher, or protocol. But it was diplomacy.

As the Second World War raged across Europe, a diplomatic adviser approached Josef Stalin – tentatively, as most people did. Stalin despised diplomats, and saw diplomacy as an effeminate business of compromise and capitulation. He wanted to understand power, but only so that he could have more of it.

Nevertheless, his nervous advisor wanted to make the case that the Soviet leader should stop repressing Catholics in order to reduce hostility to Russia in Europe and curry favour with the Vatican. Stalin was underwhelmed. “The pope? How many divisions does he have?”

Throughout history, many leaders have seen power as pure military might. The strength to conquer, intimidate, and subdue, the art of survival. When you have power, you use it. When you’re strong and winning, why compromise? When you are weak and losing, why compromise?

Of course, the Vatican had no tanks. But, unlike Stalin's system and Stalin's statues, it is still standing. Nations that succeed in the future will measure themselves by something more than the number of people they have the power to kill. And – though no one has yet told Donald Trump – diplomacy is more than a competition to secure the biggest arms deal.

Of course, wars are not going away anytime soon. Soft power without the threat of hard power quickly becomes "speak loudly and carry a small stick". "We will not stand idly by" quickly becomes "watch us standing idly by". As the 2014 Russia/Ukraine crisis demonstrated, "you must not invade your neighbour" becomes "you should not invade your neighbour", and then "let's discuss how we can ensure that you don't invade another neighbour".

But even the most brutal empires recognised the need to balance military and non-military force. Genghis Khan would have been unlikely to describe anything he did as soft, nor appoint a soft power guru. But he realised that it was easier to maximise his own influence if people felt that they were better off with him than without him. He even invented diplomatic immunity. The Romans were also weak when they forgot the importance of bread and circuses, relying on subjugation alone. Instead, Rome was at its strongest when it offered a sense of magnetism, the early version of US President Reagan's "Shining City on a Hill".

Soft power alone is also insufficient. Like hard power, it has its limits, as photos of jihadists drinking Pepsi in Levi's jeans remind us. On visits to universities in the Middle East, I am often harangued about Western cultural imperialism by students wearing Premiership football jerseys.

So any government now needs to think far more strategically about how to become a smart power superpower. Portland's league table is a competition that should matter, and not just to diplomats.

In my experience, it comes down to three ideas: having a national story; knowing how to tell it; and knowing how and when to mix the tools at your disposal.

Firstly, know thyself. A nation needs to understand its own story and tell it well. That story is most effective when it is aspirational, inclusive, and does not rely only on killing people from other nations. It makes it easier for us to persuade others to support our agenda, on the basis that it is theirs too. It makes it easier for us to persuade others to share our values, because those values work for them too. And it makes it more likely

that they buy our goods, because they want them too. Danny Boyle's brilliant telling of Britain's island story during the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony moved many of us to tears, and a small number of bigots to rage. History is rightly contested, and any attempt to define a nation even more so.

Becoming a soft power superpower also means understanding how to tell that story. In the internet age, marketers can no longer simply pump out their messages. Instead, they must engage with those they want to influence, building trust. The same applies to nations, especially in a time of distrust in traditional institutions. The BBC is the world's most trusted broadcaster because it is committed to debate and inclusivity, not propaganda and exclusivity. It sets out to be a global institution rather than a British one. The British Museum calls itself "a museum of the world, for the world". The English Premier League is the most international in the world.

A nation's brand is most credible when carried not by Ministers or diplomats but by sportsmen, artists, or businesses, and most importantly by people. It is often easier to promote modern British music rather than traditional British values, or the power of Premiership football rather than our position on human rights. Governments have to draw on the power of those that can best promote the national brand, while avoiding looking like an awkward uncle dancing at a wedding.

So Conchita Wurst, Austria's transvestite winner of the Eurovision song contest in 2014, a glorious cross between Shirley Bassey and Russell Brand, did more for its reputation as an open and liberal country than years of government speeches and press releases. The Nobel Peace Prize will keep Norway near the top of the soft power league table as long as leaders aspire to win it. The 2014 World Cup in Brazil had a huge impact on Brazil's reputation, for better or worse.

However, governments can and should do more to refine the instruments directly under their control. This starts with greater coherence between development, defence, and foreign affairs ministries. Overseas aid should not be tied to foreign policy outcomes, but should amplify a country's smart power. The fact that Britain funded all the schoolbooks in Lebanon gave me much more political credibility and access. When navies help deliver humanitarian aid following natural disasters, it increases the attraction of their government. Likewise, when diplomats secure and use influence, it is easier to deliver policy changes that help deliver development. There will naturally be tensions between these three arms of overseas work, but they must be creative tensions.

The Obama Presidency was a struggle between competing visions of how you project power. By seeking to draw back many of the harder power instruments, which were overused by George W. Bush, the US faced charges of weakness and neglect. By "leading from behind", Obama created the sense of a driverless world. But he was right that "just because we have the biggest hammer does not mean every problem is a nail". The nations climbing the soft power table fastest get this. And they will be the superpowers of the Digital Age.



6.2 **Challenges in measuring public diplomacy**

Dr Katherine Brown

International Affairs Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations

To be an effective public diplomat, you need a well of sufficient soft power resources on which to draw. There is no canonical definition of public diplomacy (PD), but the official practice of it involves using informational, educational, and cultural tools to engage with international audiences to advance foreign policy goals. For the United States, PD officials often design strategies and employ tools that leverage what makes America popular and attractive. These tools include social media platforms that help build virtual networks with foreign citizens, and/or educational and cultural exchanges that ensure that those citizens have a direct and authentic experience with Americans and/or the United States that can help them build a more nuanced understanding of the country. PD activities also encourage American citizens to have a relationship with the world that is deep and enduring, so that we can better understand people who are unlike ourselves.

Relationships, however, are inherently complex. They can take many different forms over many years. The empathy one country has for the population of another can ebb and flow. In the international system, it can acutely depend on events and the people in power. While we now have a framework to understand how a country builds and sustains soft power, assessing the impact of public diplomacy activities that rely on that soft power over the very long term has been more elusive.

For the US government, there is no shortage of PD outputs to boast of. As of June 2017, there are more than 90 educational and cultural programs; 450 US embassy and consulate websites with millions of followers; 700



American Spaces, or hubs for foreign citizens to gain information about – and interact with some dimension of – the US; and more than 450 expert speakers dispatched abroad to engage foreign audiences on various topics about the United States. Of the more than one million US sponsored exchange program alumni worldwide, 485 of them are former or current heads of state. This costs just \$1 billion, less than 2% of the combined diplomatic and development budget for the US – a budget that is a fraction of what the US spends on defence spending.

BUT WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN? WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

This work is propelled by a sense of faith that for the American economy to grow, for our borders to stay secure, and our culture to become richer and deeper, we must build these global relationships and networks. The outcomes may not be immediately tangible, but they are nevertheless essential for good statecraft and our national security. For some though, including Members of Congress, this conviction is not enough: this \$1 billion investment in American national security needs to create considerably high and clearly measurable returns. But whether you are an advocate for or sceptic of public diplomacy, there is incredible value in creating systems of research and evaluation to understand public diplomacy's impact.

One can measure the impact public diplomacy has on the US economically. For instance, one program alone, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), contributes \$52 million to the American economy. In addition, nearly one million foreign students attending American higher education institutions, a pillar of American soft power,

are often supported through roughly 400 EducationUSA advising centres worldwide. These international students contribute \$30.5 billion to the American economy. These programmes are undeniably essential not just for the tuition money it injects into the coffers of higher education institutions and the wider economy, but also for the inherent value foreign students' talent, perspectives, and capacity for innovation bring to the United States. There are many other benefits foreign students bring to US colleges and universities – deeper understanding of religions, civilisations, and cultures that enrich American students' education, making them sharper, expanding their own thinking, and ultimately ensuring they are better prepared to work in international markets.

But how does one measure the networks and influence that public diplomacy action can create?

In recent years, the US Department of State, the official home of official public diplomacy activities, has been building its capacity to find better, more systemic and rigorous methods to understand foreign audiences and the impact American PD work has on them. Yet the bureaucratic cultural challenge in building this capacity is tremendous. Bureaucracies are infamously risk-averse and are reluctant to embrace systems that would evaluate and scrutinise their work for fear that any admission of setbacks would not make programmes stronger in the long-run, but any lead to the eradication of programmes altogether. Leadership needs to communicate the importance of not just thorough audience research, aligning PD activities with foreign policy goals, and setting clear objectives from which to measure the outcome – they also need to encourage risk-taking and an open, non-defensive way of analysing its results.

Yet research and evaluation is a specialty, which requires real quantitative and qualitative research skills not common among official and unofficial practitioners of public diplomacy. Social and computer scientists need to be enthusiastically welcomed into PD communities to help determine frameworks to assess which strategies and tactics work in complex environments to build trust and understanding, and which ones do not. One positive pathway for such complicated research is from the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), the United States' international media agency.

The BBG's Impact Model uses a dozen fundamental – and two dozen optional – indicators to assess their broadcast programming's impact. The data that is collected for this includes metrics from their digital platforms, audience size, public polling and representative surveys, focus

groups, and anecdotes. They look for indicators unique to the context in which BBC's networks are operating, and can assess how programmes are performing. Yet creating and maintaining such a model requires rigour and a commitment to studying the impact of programmes over decades. This work is feasible, but to be consistent, public diplomacy professionals need time, resources, and training.

However, there are many steps practitioners can take to create new norms of research and evaluation. The best way to build a public diplomacy practice with measurable results is to think of it as a campaign. Before taking any action, you must first complete initial research on the target audience, and then determine the objectives for the outcomes of their desired behaviour, the content of the messages you want to convey, the PD tactics in which that message will be delivered, and the methods in which you will evaluate the outputs and outcomes. This is known as the ABCDE marketing model for audience, behaviour, content, delivery, and evaluation. The exact methods of evaluation can vary depending on the campaign and its context. But one should find inspiration in the BBC Impact Model in how it uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators. This includes polling, focus groups, in-depth interviews, but also statements from influencers and anecdotes from participants.

There should not be a one-size-fits-all method to understanding the impact of public diplomacy, as it will require a mix of them. And there must be a long-term commitment to collecting the various data points that reflect the complexity of public diplomacy work and the relationships they try to create and maintain. Simultaneously, leadership in any public diplomacy operation needs to communicate that impact evaluations are essential, while also encouraging risk-taking and an open, constructive way of analysing its results.

The success of any country's public diplomacy efforts ultimately rests on its reserve of soft power. Soft power is reflective of the mosaic of people and institutions that make up a country and its collective creativity, ideas, innovation, and progress. To develop the kind of empathy in international affairs we need to mitigate conflict, a country's official public diplomacy efforts to build these relationships must feel authentic to the receiver. But by creating better systems to strategise and measure public diplomacy's impact, we can better understand foreign audiences, how they relate to us, and calibrate and re-calibrate how to connect with them for the very long term.

6.3 **Making the foreign familiar through cultural relations**

Dr Jay Wang

Director, USC Center on Public Diplomacy

Theodore Roosevelt's admonition that we "speak softly and carry a big stick" still holds true today on the world stage. But it does raise the question of how to "speak softly" in an ever more fracturing world.

These are certainly no ordinary times. With massive movement of trade, ideas, and people, we live in a world that is stressed by the day - politically, economically, and environmentally.

Its tremendous benefits over the last two decades notwithstanding, globalisation has sharpened societal divides, heightening economic insecurity and cultural anxiety among many people. Of course, the mobility of goods, information, and people is nothing new; what is new is its speed, scope, and scale in our time. And it brings tension into our physical as well as our imagined spaces.

Understandably, some are feeling overwhelmed and exhausted by the dizzying changes, as we rapidly transition from a primarily mono-cultural existence to an increasingly culturally diverse environment. The rising populist fervour in the West is one such manifestation. Is economic dislocation or cultural disruption primarily driving the backlash against globalisation? As Tony Blair wrote in *The New York Times*, today's populism is a movement "partly economic, but mainly cultural".

There is accumulating evidence that Brexit and the growing European opposition to immigration were driven less by pocketbook concerns than by cultural anxiety. In the United States, the foreign-born population is

also reaching a historical high as compared with the 1920s, with the vast majority of the foreign-born residents now being from Latin America and South and East Asia.

The inescapable encounters of cultures and peoples in our everyday life - from schools and neighbourhoods, to workplaces and shopping malls - did not turn out to be mind-expanding opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences; rather they have provoked our basic impulses of prejudice, especially in light of the real or feared downward socio-economic mobility. The French political scientist Laurent Bouvet calls the phenomenon "cultural insecurity". Many lack the resources and capacity to address this transition brought forth by the fast pace of globalisation. To make matters worse, the cultural rifts are compounded by the existential threats of terrorism.

Overlaying these complex dynamics is a transparent and fragmented information environment, flooded with images and sound bites. Popular emotion and public opinion are now exerting greater constraints on policies and state actions. The information cacophony and silos in the digital space have exacerbated our incredulity and distrust. And the excess of political rhetoric through these channels of communication makes the public's existential fear ever more vivid and visceral.

Amidst the destabilising shifts in geo-politics, geo-economy, and information technology, we are reminded time and again of the inevitable limitations of human nature and imagination, which the influential American theologian and social critic Reinhold Niebuhr commented on perceptively decades ago. His thesis of "moral man and immoral society" states that, while individuals may be moral in the sense of considering interests other than their own and at times even sacrificing their own interest for the advantage of the other, such an outlook and conduct are far more difficult, if not impossible, for human societies such as nation states, because human groups have "less capacity for self-transcendence" and therefore are generally incapable of seeing and understanding the interests of other social groups as vividly as their own. He wrote, "For all the centuries of experience, men have not yet learned how to live together without compounding their vices and covering each other 'with mud and with blood'".

This is clearly a dark view of the human condition. But Niebuhr was not merely resigned to cynicism or despair. Recognising our limitations and that there is no escape from societal conflict, he asked, "what can be done to save societies from endless cycles of conflicts?" His answer was forthright - to reduce them to a minimum by expanding social

cooperation. The task is then to develop the incentive and capacity for cooperative behaviour. And the basis of such an enterprise is enlarging the spaces of collective empathy.

There is no question that we now have more opportunities than ever to see and experience the world as a foreigner and an outsider. At the same time, we also look for relief in the face of mounting cultural angst, as an insider and as someone who is being visited upon by others. Cultural contacts, accidental or premeditated, can be harmonious mixing and mingling, but can also be contentious and sometimes even violent. After all, our tastes and sensibilities are varied, distinct, and often clash.

Generally speaking, ordinary citizens do not have pertinent or coherent opinions about the complexities and nuances in international affairs. Their expressed views on other countries and cultures are in large measure shaped by feelings and habits rather than information and knowledge. Still, their perceptions and attitudes matter in global relations, as they form one of the "background conditions", that serves to either narrow or broaden policy options for politicians and policymakers. And this becomes all the more consequential in times of conflicts and crises.

As emotion is a powerful source of engagement, arts and culture may be the best weapon we have to nurture collective empathy through revealing and embodying emotional truth, based on understanding each other at a deeper level. This is not, of course, a novel idea. Spinoza's two propositions about the basic principle of countervailing passion remain poignant - "No affect can be restrained by the true knowledge of good and evil insofar as it is true, but only insofar as it is considered as an affect" and "[a]n affect cannot be restrained nor removed unless by an opposed and stronger affect".

As we navigate an increasingly volatile world of extreme tendencies, I see culture and the arts as a moderating force, as they help to release some of the tensions in an evolving international order under great stress. More importantly, they provide us with cultural generosity to make "the other" feel less distant but more connected. Cultural relations has played an enduring role in global affairs through cultivating mutual awareness and respect, and is needed now more than ever.

6.4 **Trends and counter-trends in digital diplomacy**

Dr Corneliu Bjola

Associate Professor of Diplomatic Studies, University of Oxford

The most fascinating aspect of technological disruption is its remarkable capacity for both destruction and creation. By marginalising or even abolishing ways in which people do things in a specific field of activity, new technologies create pervasive conditions for active and enduring resistance against them. On the other hand, by laying the groundwork for new opportunities for social engagement, they also stimulate new thinking and innovative practices that reinforce and sustain them in the long term. The ability of disruptive technologies to entrench themselves in the society much depends, therefore, on how the balance between the trends and counter-trends that they abruptly unleash is ultimately decided. This observation may prove particularly valuable for understanding the evolution of digital diplomacy and the extent to which the recent adoption of digital technologies by Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) will be able to substantially change the way in which diplomacy is practiced or whether it will have only a marginal effect on its mode of operation.

Two opposing mega-trends are particularly important to consider when examining the transformative potential of digital technologies on diplomatic relations. The first one actively encourages digital adoption and is driven by the process of rapid acceleration of technological disruption. For example, while it took the telephone 75 years to reach 100 million users worldwide, the mobile phone and its most popular app, Facebook, needed only 16 years and 4 ½ years respectively to pass this milestone. Technological acceleration puts significant pressure on MFAs to develop strong capacities for understanding the potential of digital technologies in their activity and devise strategies to mainstream

and tailor them to short and long-term foreign policy objectives. Failure to do so will expose MFAs to the risk of not being able to maintain their ability to meaningfully influence policy outcomes in the international arena. Three areas are more likely to invite closer scrutiny by MFAs as the rate of technological disruption accelerates:

- ▶ **From institutional-based to ecosystem approaches:** As the success or failure of technological innovations is largely dependent on the quality of the broader ecosystem that supports them, MFAs would need to better understand the technological context in which they operate in order to figure out which digital trends to follow (and which not to). The 3G mobile technology made possible, for instance, the development and spread of social media networks. The 5G technology, which is due to arrive in just a few years, will likely usher in a whole new level of technological disruption, which could lead to the mass adoption of an entire range of tech tools of high relevance for diplomatic activity, such as augmented reality in public diplomacy or artificial intelligence in consular services.
- ▶ **From re-action to pro-action:** Staying ahead of the technological curve will likely require a cognitive shift from following to anticipating and possibly pushing new trends. By swiftly reacting to the rise of social media, MFAs have managed, for instance, to leverage the power of these tools to maximise their role in public diplomacy, crisis communication, or diaspora engagement. However, by anticipating new tech trends, they could better operate in an increasingly competitive digital environment by setting rules and standards of digital practice before the others have the chance to do it. Pushing new trends could also prove highly beneficial, as the “first mover” advantage could help digital pioneers secure extra recognition and influence, thus boosting their soft power “credentials” as diplomatic leaders and innovators.
- ▶ **From centralisation to networks:** A dense digital environment with a high rate of technological innovation favours and rewards creativity and experimentation over hierarchy and procedures. This means that in order to adapt more effectively to technological challenges, MFAs would need to relax the constraints underpinning institutional centralisation and encourage instead forms and modes of digital interaction tailored to the specific profile of its constitutive diplomatic networks. Diplomatic missions and international organisations would benefit, for instance, from close collaborative efforts aimed at exploring and testing the potential of digital technologies in multilateral contexts. Similarly, embassies and consulates based in conflict-risk regions could share experiences and best practices regarding the use of digital technologies in crisis situations.

The second mega-trend works in a different direction by building resistance against the use of digital technologies. Unlike the case above, where MFAs are concerned about the risk of missing out on potential opportunities created by technological breakthroughs, this counter-driver raises questions about whether the costs of "going digital" may not actually exceed its benefits. Paradoxically, it is the success of digitisation that may plant the seeds for the rise of a powerful counter-trend to MFAs' efforts to further integrate and institutionalise digital technologies in their work. Emotional contagion, algorithmic determinism, and policy fragmentation are three ways in which this counter-trend is more likely to manifest itself:

► **From fact-based reasoning to emotional commodification:**

Diplomatic engagement requires a minimum level of shared understanding and mutual openness in order to work. Such possibility arguably dissipates when emotions overwhelmingly frame and dominate the discourse by which opinions are formed online, and when facts are pushed into a secondary or marginal position. When this happens, MFAs end up "preaching to the choir" of sympathetic online followers, failing to reach constituencies outside the self-reinforcing "bubble" of like-minded followers.

► **From relationship-building to algorithmic broadcast:** A significant part of MFAs' interest in digital technologies lies with their capacity to reach out to online influencers and develop flexible networks of engagement with and across a variety of constituencies. This ability could be severely tested and even compromised by the growing use of algorithms as instruments of conversation monitoring, agenda setting, and message dissemination. Recent studies have shown that up to 15% of Twitter accounts are in fact bots rather than people, and this number is bound to increase in the future. The moment that AI entities overtake humans in the population of digital users, the possibility of MFAs to develop meaningful relationships with online publics drastically decreases.

► **From digital integration to policy fragmentation:** It is also important to remind ourselves that digital diplomacy is not supposed to be an end in itself, but rather to serve clearly defined foreign policy objectives. The disruptive character of technological breakthroughs may lead, however, at least in the initial stage, to a decoupling of digital diplomacy from foreign policy. Quick adoption of digital tools without an overarching strategy of how they should be used in support of certain foreign policy objectives is likely to create problems of policy coordination and implementation. The risk for MFAs in this case is to find themselves consuming valuable resources on multiple mini-digital campaigns with no clear direction or strategic compass to follow.

The future of digital diplomacy lies with the ability of MFAs to exploit the opportunities generated by technological disruption, while guarding against the potential pitfalls its early success might create. If technological acceleration is seen as an opportunity for ecosystem-based, pro-active, and network-oriented adaptation, then digital diplomacy is likely to penetrate the deep core of the diplomatic DNA. If, on the other hand, digitisation fails to restrain emotional contagion, algorithmic determinism, and policy fragmentation, then MFAs will likely slow down their efforts to integrate digital technologies in their work. To be successful, MFAs need to work towards the former and combine capability building with the required organisational culture change.



6.5 Practical advice from the USC Center on Public Diplomacy

How governments, NGOs, embassies, and nonprofits can better manage their digital presence

USC Center on Public Diplomacy

At the USC Center on Public Diplomacy we research and analyse the ways organisations use social media and digital tools. In our efforts and collaborations, we've identified some top tactics that can benefit any organisation.

Most organisations have social media accounts, if not a hefty presence, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, which are diligently kept active. Perhaps an event you stage is wildly successful, or a luminary in your field contributes a piece to your website that goes viral. Suddenly, the organisation's social media following dramatically increases or changes. So now what? How can you sustain your expanded network and leverage social media to maximum benefit in building a stronger and more engaged community?

- ▶ **Analyse.** Use free and paid tools (if budget permits) to analyse the new follower base to determine who they are and to understand their social media habits (e.g., who is most influential, when they're most active online, which accounts they engage with, which hashtags they're using, etc.). Doing so will enable your organisation to better prepare content that will reach these audiences at the right time in the right places. Twitter and Facebook provide free in-platform analytics tools, and examples of paid tools include Sprinklr, Brandwatch and Nuvi.
- ▶ **Listen.** Once the audiences are better identified, you must work to listen to what they are saying and the topics they are talking about. This will enable your organisation to better engage - crafting content around topics which can deliver the right messages and enable them to resonate with key audiences. Use tools such as Sprout Social, HootSuite, and Meltwater.



- ▶ **Engage.** Ensure a steady flow of engaging social media content to maintain current followership levels. The key to creating engaging content is prioritising posts with visuals such as photos and videos and humanising topics as much as possible. The organisation can create a content calendar (if one does not already exist) to identify and manage key moments in time to create live social media events such as through tweet chats and Facebook Live and to push out content around awareness dates.
- ▶ **Inspire.** Launch a “call to action” campaign that enables followers to get involved in the organisation in a more personal way. For example, the organisation can ask its followers to help spread the message about the brand or key issues to their networks. Sample campaigns include an Instagram or Twitter photo contest or a letter-writing effort targeting influential decision makers on a key issue. These mini-campaigns are also an opportunity to drive followers onto other digital properties such as an organisation’s website to help drive new traffic to the site.
- ▶ **Promote.** Consider paid promotion of social media content to ensure the new follower base is seeing the content. Even with a new follower base, only a fraction of them will see the content organically because of social media platforms’ current algorithms. Amplifying the content through paid posts will garner a larger reach and potentially help grow the follower base.
- ▶ **Adjust.** Measure engagement on key social media efforts on a regular basis using the tools outlined above to gauge whether content is resonating with the audience. Shape the strategy and adjust activities as needed to ensure content is having the intended effect of sustaining the audience and delivering the right message.

7.0

Conclusion and look ahead

7.1

Trends and lessons

7.2

Putting soft power to use

7.3

Going forward

From the outset, the purpose of The Soft Power 30 research project has been to develop a practical analytical framework to measure and compare the soft power resources of the world's leading nations. With that objective in mind, we further refined this third iteration of The Soft Power 30 with a few incremental improvements. We increased the international polling sample size, made three changes to the objective metrics, tightened up the data normalisation process, and derived weights for the objective sub-indices. Bringing together a range of carefully considered objective metrics with international polling data, we believe this 2017 index provides the clearest picture to date of global soft power.

As has been argued in our previous reports, the ability to leverage soft power effectively is more important than ever in achieving foreign policy objectives. The fundamental global rebalancing currently underway – driven by geopolitical shifts, the digital revolution, and the devolution of power – is leading to levels of uncertainty not seen since the 20th century. The immediate impact of this rebalancing means that collaboration between not just states, but non-state

actors as well, is critical to forging stability, developing fruitful partnerships for security and prosperity, and making progress on major global challenges.

As soft power becomes more important, there is a greater need to understand how it is derived and what soft power resources a country can leverage. While the real value of The Soft Power 30 lies in the insights to be gained from breaking down the performance of individual countries, the overall results of the index point to some interesting trends and lessons that may help foreign policymakers better grasp the rapidly shifting geopolitical context.

7.1 Trends and lessons

With a dataset covering three years, we can start to look at emerging trends in the global distribution of soft power. With each new year of data, our ability to analyse and predict trends will improve. Comparing changes between 2015, 2016, and 2017, we can draw out three emerging trends and three key lessons. However, with only three years of data, we need to be careful about asserting definitive conclusions at this stage.

With that caveat, the first trend points to a resurgent Europe, powered by a new, dynamic and globally minded French



president. This year's data shows a sharp reversal from last year's narrative of a Europe in soft power decline. In fact, the majority of the continent's countries improved their ranking from 2016 to 2017. The challenges currently facing Europe have not completely dissipated, but the EU-27 have rebounded from a difficult 2016, seen off the threat of right-wing populism, halted a supposed Brexit domino effect, and rallied with a renewed sense of purpose. The resurgence of "Old Europe" feels a fitting theme to this year's Soft Power 30 results.

While Europe has been galvanised by a sense of unity and cooperation, the same cannot be said of the US and UK, both of which now cut rather lonely figures on the world stage. This leads us to the second trend: the deterioration of the Anglo-American dominance of soft power. Yes, the UK has managed to hold its second place ranking this year, but

with a lower score than in 2016. Moreover, all indications point to a continued downward trend as the UK prepares to exit the European Union.

Likewise, the Trump administration's "America First" rhetoric is likely to lead to "America Alone". As mentioned above, polling for The Soft Power 30 was conducted before the announcement to pull the US out of the Paris Agreement. Judging by the global reaction to Trump's announcement, it is not inconceivable that international perceptions of the US have deteriorated further since our polling was in the field. The US, of course, dropped two places from 2016 to 2017, falling from first to third. Fortunately for both countries, the US and UK sit on vast reserves of soft power that exist outside of the spheres of domestic politics and foreign policy. At present, British and American soft power is being dragged down by the politics playing out in each

country. This is familiar territory for the US (Vietnam, Guantanamo, Iraq), but less so for the UK.

Looking across the Pacific, a third theme emerges: the continued rise of Asia. The four Asian countries included in The Soft Power 30 have, for the most part, continued their march up the league table. China, Japan, and South Korea all moved up in the rankings, though Singapore slid one spot, from 19th to 20th. However, the 2017 results still put Singapore in better place than it was in the inaugural 2015 rankings. The upward trend for the majority of the Asian countries in The Soft Power 30 – for the second year in a row – seems an accurate reflection of Asia’s growing economic and geopolitical clout. While South Korea and Singapore have both moved up and down across the three years, they have moved within a stable range and hover around 20th in the rankings. As Singapore and South Korea have moved up and down, China and Japan have both followed clear, upward trends. China and Japan saw their rankings and scores move up between 2015 and 2016, and again between 2016 and 2017. If the trend continues, Japan will be looking to break into the top five next year, while China can target the top 20 by 2019.

In addition to these trends arising from the data, three wider lessons are worth considering from this year’s Soft Power 30 results. The first lesson is that global public perceptions of a given country are influenced most by whether that country is seen as a force for good or ill in the world. This means the most comprehensive set of soft power assets can be undermined by bad foreign

policy, poor messaging, and cack-handed diplomacy. This is borne out in the analysis conducted on our polling data, which shows survey respondents’ overall favourability of a country is driven mostly by whether they believe that country will “do the right thing in global affairs”. The movements in the rankings of both France and the United States – travelling in opposite directions – illustrate this very clearly. An adversarial, zero-sum American foreign policy has proved less popular with the world. In contrast, France’s rejection of populist nationalism for outward-looking global cooperation has played much better with global audiences.

As we argued in last year’s report, the second lesson to draw from the results of this study is that soft power must be understood – and measured – in a global context. While the concept of soft power originated in the West, and does have some inherent 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 Turkey’s re-entry into the top 30 for 2017 counter-intuitive. Likewise, those same observers might find China’s jump up the rankings to 25th a curious development. However, the West does not have a monopoly on soft power or international public opinion. With a larger sample across more countries, the 2017 index provides a more globally representative picture of global public opinion, and thus soft power.

The third lesson is that looking across both 2016 and 2017, there seems to be an initial soft power dividend following the election of a new, energetic, (often) young, challenger candidate for the head of government (or head of state),



who commands broad support among younger voters. We previously saw this electoral boost make an impact in 2016 with improved rankings for Canada and Argentina. This effect seems to have been in play for Emmanuel Macron and France for 2017. However, the effect appears to fade over time, as a potential loss of momentum has seen Argentina and Canada slip back in the rankings, with Argentina just falling out of the top 30.

7.2

Putting soft power to use

As the global rebalancing continues at pace, the currency of soft power will only appreciate going forward. Having soft power resources is, of course, essential but they are of little use without an effective strategy to put them in the field and engage target audiences. Mobilising soft power resources is predominantly done through effective communications. 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 ultimately advocate a given policy position or inspire action. When soft power resources are effectively leveraged through communications strategies, the result is greater international influence. Without the ability to shape soft power resources into a compelling narrative, or deploy them in pursuit of a specific objective, they sit dormant, accruing good will that is never spent.

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 below:

**Figure 5 -
Converting
Soft Power
into influence**



As with Joseph Nye's own model for conversion, a clear account of a country's soft power resources is the essential first step. 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 build a strategy.

With a clear account of a country's soft power resources, the second step is developing a good strategy to 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 underpinning communications. This will

often mean new policies, initiatives, or programme funding. If the initial analysis of soft power resources carried out in Step 1 identifies significant areas of weakness, these will need to be tackled. As our own research shows, credibility and reputation ultimately stem from policy and actions, at home and abroad. Turning soft power into influence will often mean incorporating new actions into a strategy.

Actions – more than words – are critical for countries to build credibility and develop their soft power resources. But once those resources are in place, communications is where these assets are converted into influence. This is how 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.

It may come in the form of direct appeals through public diplomacy, a campaign around a specific issue, or demands for a new structure of global governance to overcome a transnational challenge – the Paris Agreement being a good example. 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, has become a critical tool for building and converting soft power.

The final two steps of the conversion process are inter-related: 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 should inform strategy, while a robust evaluation methodology needs to be in place to assess the impact of soft power strategies and communications campaigns. Katherine Brown's essay in Chapter 6 speaks to the need for this and how it might work. This impact evaluation should then be used to adjust strategy, action, and communications as necessary.

7.3 **Going forward**

The results of our third 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 first report in 2015, we see The Soft Power 30 as a living research project, and will continue to expand and improve both the objective metrics, as well as the international polling in the future. On the objective metrics 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.

In our 2016 report we stressed that we were determined to continue to work towards a better understanding of the variance in impact certain types of soft power resources have on the overall reputation and influence of a country. As we had reached a level of confidence in assigning different weighting to the seven categories of public polling in our index, this year we did the same to the objective data sub-indices. While we feel confident in the results, this is an area we will continue to research, working to refine our process for weighting objective data.

One major issue we have yet to deal with in the methodology underpinning The Soft Power 30 is the darker side of digital influence. There are many ways to look at the issue. The practice of online radicalisation and recruitment to terrorist groups, for example, is a long-known problem. More recent, however, is the emergence of deploying social media and digital "news" platforms to fabricate and spread fake stories to affect the outcome of a democratic election, or to simply erode public trust in politicians or institutions. The practice, which was evident during the UK's referendum on EU membership, the US presidential election, and the French presidential election, would appear to be the new norm. Democracies will need to develop solutions to mitigate the impact of these malicious digital tactics. In terms of measuring soft power, more research is needed on the effect of these practices, and determining any causal effects on public opinion. A wider debate is also needed on the extent to which such practices constitute soft power.

Returning to the dominant theme of 2017: the major global rebalancing and the uncertainty it has spawned, the results of this year's index certainly hint at the rebalancing underway. In a world of uncertainty, stability will be a prized

asset. As the European Union looks beyond Brexit and recommits to deeper integration and cooperation, perhaps the resurgence of “Old Europe” – in terms of soft power – rests on presently being the most stable, level-headed region of the world. As such, it is seen as a bloc the rest of the world feels it can trust and collaborate with. Asia’s economic and geopolitical rise continues apace, which is certainly reflected in the results of this year’s index. Indeed China’s now three-year march up the rankings seems to match its ever-expanding global presence. At the same time, America’s protectionist zeal and apparent withdrawal from the world has seen it slip down the rankings. If these trends continue, we can expect to see further movements along the same lines in the rankings next year.

Yet much more important than our Soft Power 30 rankings, real questions need to be asked about the future of the global post-war order that the United States worked so hard to create and maintain. As Richard Haass recently argued, that order is now in decline.²⁴ For decades, that order has been held together by a balance of American hard and soft power, as well as a broad collection of allies that have shown faith in the US to – broadly – do the right thing for the greater global good. The rhetoric of America First puts at risk the trust of allies around the world that sustains US soft power. Should US foreign policy and political messaging stay on the path of “America First”, instability – both in global geopolitics and The Soft Power 30 rankings – will continue for the foreseeable future.





8.0

Appendix

8.1

Appendix A – Metrics

8.2

Appendix B – Footnotes

8.1
Appendix A – Metrics

| Sub-Index | Metric | Data Source |
|----------------|--|---|
| Culture | | |
| | Total number of tourist arrivals | 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 / Foreign Correspondent Associations / Various |
| | Number of UNESCO World Heritage sites | UNESCO Statistics |
| | Annual museum attendance of global top 100 | The Art Newspaper Review Number 289, April 2017 |
| | Size of music market | IFPI Global Music Report 2017 |
| | Number of top 10 albums in foreign countries | IFPI Global Music Report 2017 |
| | Number of top 10 albums in foreign countries | IFPI Recording Industry in Numbers 2016 |
| | Olympic medals (Summer 2016 / Winter 2014) | International Olympic Committee |
| | FIFA Ranking (Men's) | FIFA/Coca Cola World Rankings |
| | Quality of national air carrier | Skytrax Arline Equality Review |
| | Michelin starred restaurants | Michelin guide |
| | Power Language Index (PLI) | Chan, K., Power Language Index, 2016 |
| 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 |
| | 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 Mbps | 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 | Times Higher Education (top 200) |
| 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 |
| Overseas development aid / GNI | OECD |
| Number of embassies abroad | Lowy Institute / Embassypages / Various |
| Number of embassies in the country | Embassypages |
| Number of consulates general abroad | Lowy Institute / Embassypages / 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 / Asylum Seeker Resource Centre |
| Number of diplomatic cultural missions | Various |
| Number of countries a citizen can visit visa-free | Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index 2016 |
| Size of Weekly Audience of State Broadcaster | Various |
| Environmental Performance Index (EPI) | Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy (YCELP) |

Enterprise

| | |
|--|--|
| Global patents filed (percentage of GDP) | World Intellectual Property Organization / World Bank |
| WEF Competitiveness Index | World Economic Forum |
| Foreign direct investment as percentage of GDP | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Statistics / World Bank / Various |
| Heritage Economic Freedom Index score | 2017 Index of Economic Freedom |
| Corruption Perceptions Index score | Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2016 |
| R&D spending as a percentage of GDP | World Bank |
| Global Innovation Index score | The Global Innovation Index 2016 |
| Number of SMEs as a percentage of labour force working in SMEs | International Finance Corporation |

| | |
|--|------------|
| World Bank Ease of Doing Business Report | 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 Repo |
| Freedom House Index score | Freedom House |
| Number of think tanks in the country | McGann, J. (2017), 2016 Global Go to Think Tank Index Report |
| Gender Equality Index score | UNDP Human Development Report |
| Economist Democracy Index score | Economist Intelligence Unit |
| Size of shadow economy as a percentage of GDP | Hassan, M & Schneider, F (2016), Size and Development of the Shadow Economies of 157 Countries Worldwide: Updated and New Measures from 1999 to 2013 |
| Homicides per capita | World Bank |
| World Bank Voice and Accountability Index score | World Bank |
| Capital punishment carried out in 2016 | Amnesty International |
| 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

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Cusine | International polling |
| Welcoming to tourists | 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 |

8.2 Appendix B – References

- 1 Barker, A. (2017) "FT Breakdown: the \$100bn Brexit bill", Financial Times, 3 May, <https://www.ft.com/content/29fc1abc-2fe0-11e7-9555-23ef563ecf9a>.
- 2 Shear, M. (2017) "Trump will withdraw US from Paris Climate Agreement", The New York Times, 1 June, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/climate/trump-paris-climate-agreement.html?_r=0.
- 3 Tillerson, R. (2017) "Remarks to US Department of State Employees", 3 May, Washington, DC, <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2017/05/270620.htm>.
- 4 Barkin, N. and Piper, E. (2017) "In Davos, Xi makes case for Chinese leadership role", Reuters, 18 January, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-davos-meeting-china-idUKKBN15118V>.
- 5 Rachman, G. (2017) "Merkel's blunder, Trump and the end of the west", Financial Times, 29 May, <https://www.ft.com/content/dc911cb8-4449-11e7-8519-9f94ee97d996>.
- 6 Capurro, D. (2017) "Donald Trump's trade policy is driving Latin America into China's arms", The Telegraph, 17 January, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/17/donald-trumps-trade-policy-driving-latin-america-chinas-arms/>.
- 7 Miller, G. and Rucker, P. (2017) "The worst call by far: Donald Trump badgers, brags in Malcolm Turnbull call", Sydney Morning Herald, 2 February, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-02/donald-trump-phone-call-that-rocked-the-special-relationship/8235388>.
- 8 Oliver, A. (2017) "The Lowy Institute Poll", Sydney, Lowy Institute, <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/publications/2017-lowy-institute-poll>.
- 9 Lamar, B. (2017) "Is China the World's New Colonial Power?", The New York Times, 2 May, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/02/.../is-china-the-worlds-new-colonial-power.html>.
- 10 Pilling, D. (2017) "Ports and Roads Mean China is 'Winning Africa'", Financial Times, 3 May, <https://www.ft.com/content/65591ac0-2f49-11e7-9555-23ef563ecf9a?mhq5j=e1>.
- 11 Nye, J. (2011) *The Future of Power*, Public Affairs: New York.
- 12 McClory, J. (2016) *The Soft Power 30*, Portland: London, http://softpower30.portland-communications.com/wp-content/themes/softpower/pdfs/the_soft_power_30.pdf.
- 13 McClory, J. (2016) *The Soft Power 30*, Portland: London, http://softpower30.portland-communications.com/wp-content/themes/softpower/pdfs/the_soft_power_30.pdf.
- 14 Nye, J., (2011) *The Future of Power*, New York, Public Affairs, p. 100.
- 15 Tverton, G. and Jones, S. (2005) *Measuring National Power*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. Available from: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/conf_proceedings/2005/RAND_CF215.pdf

- 16 Nye, J., (2004) *Soft Power: The means to success in world politics*. New York, Public Affairs.f
- 17 McClory, J. (2015) *The Soft Power 30*. London: Portland.
- 18 Haass, R. (2013) *Foreign Policy Starts at Home*. New York: Basic Books
- 19 Nye, J., (2004), *Soft Power: The means to success in world politics*, New York: Public Affairs.
- 20 Miller, A., (2006), 'Promoting Democratic Values in Transitional Societies through Foreign Aid', presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago
- 21 Atkinson, C., (2010), 'Does Soft Power Matter?' A Comparative Analysis of Student Exchange Programs 1980-2006, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6, 1 pp. 1-22
- 22 Olberding, J., & Olberding, D., (2010) 'Ripple Effects in Youth Peace-building and Exchange Programs: Measuring Impacts Beyond Direct Participants,' *International Studies Perspectives*, 11, pp. 75-91.
- 23 Hsu, A. et al. (2016) *Environmental Performance Index*. New Haven: Yale University, http://epi.yale.edu/sites/default/files/2016EPI_Full_Report_opt.pdf
- 24 Haass, R. (2017) "Where to go from here: Rebooting American Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-06-11/where-go-here>

Portland

USC Center on Public Diplomacy

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

www.softpower30.com

WEBSITE

portland-communications.com

TWITTER

[@portlandcomms](https://twitter.com/portlandcomms)

LINKEDIN

[portland-communications](https://www.linkedin.com/company/portland-communications)

LONDON

85 Strand London
London
WC2R 0DW
T: +44 (0) 20 7554 1600

SINGAPORE

99 Duxton Road
Singapore
089543
T: +65 6233 6931

WASHINGTON, DC

1615 L Street NW
10th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
United States of America
T: +1 202 791 8611

