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GLOBAL MASS MEDIA AS A KEY ELEMENT OF CHINA'S "SOFT POWER"

The article is devoted to the use of global mass media in China's foreign policy strategy of "soft power". The specifics of Beijing's "soft power" strategy and its implementation in the global information space are considered. The object of the study is the strategic implementation of "soft power" within the framework of the foreign policy discourse of the People's Republic of China. The subject of the study is the Chinese global media as a critical element in the implementation of the PRC's "soft power" strategy.

The research is interdisciplinary – at the junction of journalism and political science with a combination of tools from the arsenal of journalism and methods of political science. Thus, the literature review revealed existing publications on the research topic, the main achievements, and gaps in the study of the subject, which contributed to determining the place of this research in the context of existing knowledge and formulating the goals and objectives of the research. The method of historical analysis contributed to the identification of a historiographical context that revealed changes in approaches and strategies for using media in Chinese foreign policy. The bibliometric method made it possible to perform a temporal analysis of the distribution of publications by counting the number of scientific papers related by keywords for an objective assessment of the relevance of the selected research topic.

The findings of the study elucidate the distinctive characteristics of the "soft power" strategy as implemented within the Chinese political framework, its differences from American and European constructs, the basic principles, goals and objectives underlying this strategy are indicated, and the tools for Beijing's use of "soft power" in the international media space are identified. The study showed that China's "soft power" influence on international life is dualistic – as a combination of positive and negative effects.

Concluding the research, a comprehensive evaluation of the PRC's "soft power" strategy was presented, particularly its impact on the global geopolitical landscape and the Central Asian region. Possible changes in the tools and methods of Beijing's implementation of "soft power" are indicated.

Key words: China, soft power, mass media, diplomacy, geopolitics.

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Қытайдың «жұмсақ қүш» стратегиясын іске асырудағы ғаламдық БАҚ-тың рөлі

Бұл мақалада Қытайдың сыртқы саясатындағы «жұмсақ қүш» стратегиясын жүзеге асыруда ғаламдық бұқаралық, ақпарат құралдарын пайдалану мәселеі талданады. Аталған стратегияның ғаламдық ақпараттық кеңістікте жүзеге асырылу ерекшеліктері қарастырылады. Зерттеу нысаны ретінде Қытай Халық Республикасының сыртқы саяси дискурсында «жұмсақ қүш» тұжырымдамасын қолдану қарастырылса, зерттеу пәні – оны жүзеге асырудағы қытайлық ғаламдық БАҚ-тың негізгі құралы ретіндеңігі рөлі болып табылады.

Зерттеу журналистика мен әлеуметтік ғылымдардың тоғысында жатқан пәнаралық сипатқа ие және осы екі саланың зерттеу құралдарын біріктіреді. Ғылыми әдебиеттерді талдау зерттеу тақырыбы бойынша бар жарияланымдарды анықтауға, оның негізгі жетістіктері мен олқылықтарын айқындауға, сондай-ақ осы зерттеудің жинақталған білімдер жүйесіндегі орнын белгілеуге мүмкіндік берді, бұл оның мақсаттары мен міндеттерін айқындауға ықпал етті. Тарихи талдау әдісі тарихи контекстті қалпына келтіруге мүмкіндік беріп, Қытайдың сыртқы саясатында БАҚ-ты қолдану тәсілдері мен стратегияларының өзгерістерін анықтады. Библиометриялық

дану арқылы зерттеу тақырыбының өзектілігін объективті түрде бағалауға мүмкіндік беретін, негізгі кілт сөздермен байланысты ғылыми еңбектердің санын есептеу негізінде жарияланылымдардың динамикасын үақыт бойынша талдау жүзеге асырылды.

Зерттеу нәтижелері Қытайдың «жұмсақ қүш» стратегиясын ғаламдық контексте іске асыру ерекшеліктерін, сондай-ақ, бұл тұжырымдаманың АҚШ пен Еуропа елдерінде қалыптасқан баламалы модельдерден айырмашылығын айқындауға мүмкіндік берді. Аталған стратегияның негізгі қағидаттары, мақсаттары мен міндеттері анықталып, оны халықаралық медиа кеңістікте жүзеге асыру үшін Бейжін қолданатын құралдар талданды. Қытайдың «жұмсақ қүш» стратегиясының халықаралық процестерге ықпалы екішты сипатқа ие екендігі анықталды, ол оң және теріс аспектілердің үйлесімімен сипатталады.

Зерттеу қорытындысында Қытайдың «жұмсақ қүш» стратегиясына баға беріліп, оның ғаламдық, ақпараттық, кеңістікке, сондай-ақ, Орталық Азия елдерінің медиа ландшафтына әсері қарастырылды. Сонымен қатар, аталған стратегияны жүзеге асыруда қолданылатын құралдар мен механизмдердің ықтимал трансформациялары белгіленді.

Түйін сөздер: Қытай, жұмсақ қүш, бұқаралық, ақпарат құралдары, дипломатия, геосаясат.

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Глобальные СМИ как ключевой элемент «мягкой силы» Китая

Статья посвящена анализу использования Китаем глобальных средств массовой информации в рамках его внешнеполитической стратегии «мягкой силы». Рассматриваются особенности реализации данной стратегии в глобальном информационном пространстве. Объектом исследования является применение концепции «мягкой силы» во внешнеполитическом дискурсе Китайской Народной Республики, а предметом – роль китайских глобальных СМИ как ключевого инструмента её реализации.

Данное исследование носит междисциплинарный характер, находясь на пересечении журналистики и социальных наук, и сочетает исследовательский инструментарий из арсенала этих двух областей. Анализ научной литературы позволил выявить существующие публикации по теме исследования, определить ключевые достижения и пробелы в её изучении, а также обозначить место настоящего исследования в контексте накопленных знаний, что способствовало формулированию его целей и задач. Метод исторического анализа обеспечил реконструкцию историографического контекста, выявив изменения в подходах и стратегиях использования СМИ в китайской внешней политике. Применение библиометрического метода позволило провести временной анализ динамики публикаций, основанный на количественном учёте научных работ, связанных с ключевыми словами, что обеспечило объективную оценку актуальности исследуемой темы.

Результаты исследования позволили выявить специфику реализации КНР стратегии «мягкой силы» в глобальном контексте, а также её отличия от аналогичных концепций, сформированных в США и странах Европы. Определены ключевые принципы, цели и задачи данной стратегии, а также проанализированы инструменты, используемые Пекином для её реализации в международном медиапространстве. Выявлено, что влияние китайской «мягкой силы» на международные процессы носит амбивалентный характер, сочетая как позитивные, так и негативные аспекты.

В заключении исследования представлена оценка стратегии «мягкой силы» КНР, с акцентом на её воздействие как на глобальное информационное пространство, так и на медийный ландшафт стран Центральной Азии, обозначены возможные изменения в инструментах и механизмах реализации данной стратегии, применяемых Пекином.

Ключевые слова: Китай, мягкая сила, средства массовой информации, дипломатия, геополитика.

Introduction

In the contemporary global landscape, mass media serves as a pivotal mechanism in the formation of public opinion and exerts significant influence over the international community (Karaduman, M., & Duru, M.E., 2022; Le, Wang, 2022; Ievgeniia,

Kyianytsia, 2022). In the current system of interstate relations, where the geopolitical balance of power is changing and the influence of traditional “hard power” instruments is gradually declining, the concept of “soft power” is becoming increasingly important.

China has developed into one of the most powerful economies in the world in a comparatively

short time compared to standards. Experts predict the PRC will become the world's number-one economy by 2037 (Carlos Waters (2024). Modern China is on the way to becoming a world power. Hence, given the tremendous success of the national economy and aspirations for international leadership, it is natural for the Middle Kingdom to turn to "soft power" as the next step in achieving the status of a world power.

In the field of interstate relations, the crisis of 2022 between China and Taiwan (the so-called Fourth Crisis in the Taiwan Strait) showed that the means of "hard power" had exhausted themselves – the further radicalization of the conflict put the world on the brink of a military clash between world powers – the United States and the Western world on the one hand, and China on the other hand (Michael D. Swaine, 2024).

China's continued prosperity hinges on a peaceful, stable, and open national economy and the international system. China, realizing this, has been increasingly using a "soft power" strategy to achieve its foreign policy goals over the past three decades. One of the key tools for realizing this strategy has been Beijing's creation of global mass media in the world information space.

China's initiation of a "soft power" strategy in the late 1990s, coupled with the global dissemination of Chinese media from the mid-2000s, marks a significant shift in Beijing's international media presence. However, this crucial development has received relatively little attention in the research community (Tanzim Z., & Fatema-Tuj-Juhra, 2021; Ramzan M., 2020; Ljuslin L., 2021).

In addition to the main obstacles to research (Beijing's limited access to information on Chinese media initiatives, cultural and linguistic barriers) there is a fact that researchers prefer to focus on other more formal aspects of Chinese policy and on more "hot" topics (cybersecurity, trade, military strategy, etc.).

Furthermore, understanding is ambiguous when the very concept of "soft power" is subject to debate and is the object of various interpretations (Repnikova, M., 2022; Nye, J.S., 2013). This makes it harder to define and puts up obstacles to this kind of study.

Studying China's "soft power" is crucial despite the difficulties. Modern China occupies a pivotal position in global affairs, and its strategic utilization of "soft power" carries substantial ramifications for both diplomatic relations and the structure of the global media environment.

For this reason, the following study questions are formulated, and we hope to provide answers:

What are the strategic goals and specific objectives that define and guide the implementation of China's "soft power" policy?

How does China use "soft power" in the global media space?

What are the potential implications and consequences of China's "soft power" strategy for other states?

It is important to note that China's global influence is multifaceted and sometimes ambiguous. On the one hand, China uses soft power to promote peace and strengthen international cooperation. On the other hand, it applies soft power to spread its political values and expand its influence.

China's soft power plays an important geopolitical role. It increasingly shapes world politics, public opinion, and international media agendas. By using its economic strength, cultural influence, and institutional presence, China seeks to reshape the global order. A key focus is the transformation of the international media landscape in line with its ideological vision. Through its growing media presence, China has become a major actor on the global media stage.

Research Methods

Within the framework of a comprehensive approach to analyzing available information and expert opinions, taking into account the specifics of the research questions, the following research methods were used:

1. The method of analyzing documents. The languages of the materials are English and Russian.

The data used can be grouped into the following blocks. The first block of data includes the results of analyzing political documents of the Communist Party of China (CPC) on "soft power" (materials of party congresses and speeches of CPC leaders). The second block consists of reports from international organizations on the state of the global media space. The third block consists of academic publications on China's "soft power". The fourth data block consists of analytical articles from critical Chinese state media (mass media) broadcasting in English and Western media.

2. Content Analysis. The content of key Chinese state mass media broadcasting in English (CCTV, Xinhua, CGTN, etc.) and Western media (BBC, CNN, NYT) was analyzed and interpreted. The language of the materials is English.

3. Bibliometric method. Google Scholar, a search platform for scientific publications, was used as the primary tool to search for scientific articles,

reviews, and other academic sources in English. Google Scholar was searched using the search string ["China" AND "soft power" AND "mass media"]. This is shown in Table 1.

Studies were selected based on whether they met the following requirements: First, keyword search, that is, the research topic in terms of empirical content had to be related to concepts such as "China", "soft power", and "mass media". It should be noted that in order to optimize the benefits of accessing scientific databases, using a keyword search strategy instead of searching multiple key journals provides the researcher with a larger set of publications (Gülmez, D., Özteke, İ., Gümüş, S., 2020). Second, the search focused only on English-language scientific publications to avoid misunderstandings and translation problems from a language with which the researcher is not familiar. Third, the time frame of the search was set to be only academic articles published over a 30-year time period from 1993 to May 2024.

Table 1 – Search strings. Source: Google Scholar, 2024

Database	Search String
Google Scholar	"China" AND "soft power" AND "mass media"

Literature Review

The research selected an English-language segment of scholarly literature and media content that covered the role of global media as a component of Beijing's "soft power".

An extensive body of research literature (IFJ Report, 2020) is devoted to the comprehensive measures taken by the Party leadership of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to create new foreign broadcast media channels and global media corporations as a new element of Beijing's "soft power" policy.

Researchers note a steady trend in the influence of multilingual (broadcasting to external audiences in English and local languages) Chinese media in the global information space, such as CGTN, Xinhua and China Daily (Bell, D., 2008).

Studies have shown that Chinese media are expanding their presence globally through bilateral cooperation agreements with global journalism unions and media content sharing agreements of national media with Chinese state-owned mass media, Chi-

nese embassies and the government-affiliated All-China Journalists Association (IFJ report, 2020; Shiffman J., & Gui Qing K., 2015).

Researchers highlight the growing trend of multilingualization and localization of Chinese media content, which is increasing its audience abroad, particularly in host countries.

Several studies note the expanding trend of China turning to new media and analyze the Middle Kingdom's active use of social media such as Tik-Tok and WeChat to disseminate information and strengthen ties with overseas audiences (Parker, E.S., 2018; Rieländer, U. 2020).

An overwhelming number of researchers emphasize economic factors in explaining the reasons for the growth of China's segment of the global media environment, particularly Beijing's financial injections into national media, broadcasting to local audiences. For example, in Guinea-Bissau, China is regarded as the leading contributor to the media sector. Chinese support includes material aid, such as equipment donations to the National journalists' union. Additionally, China provides educational assistance through training programs for local journalists (Guinea-Bissau, 2017).

Studies have noted the growing international influence of China's media corporations, and questions have also been raised about censorship, propaganda, and Beijing's potential use of global Chinese media as a tool of geopolitical and ideological rivalry.

The trends of the Middle Kingdom's use of various media platforms and manipulative technologies to form a positive image of the country and expand its influence on global public opinion have been noted. There is a growing number of publications devoted to criticizing censorship, propaganda and disinformation practiced in Chinese media (Lim L., & Bergin J., 2018).

The main content of the article

Over the past decades, China has vigorously pursued the development of the "soft power" concept, initially introduced by American political scientist Joseph S. Nye. This idea implies the achievement of international goals not using force – military intervention, or economic coercion ("hard power"), but through cultural influence, ideology and diplomatic efforts.

China's "soft power" policy began to develop actively in the late twentieth century and has become one of the key components of China's strategy

of foreign policy influence since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

A pivotal moment occurred with the speech of Chinese leader Hu Jintao on October 15, 2007, at the 17th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). In this address, the concept of “soft power” was formally introduced as a tool for enhancing China’s global influence (Jintao Hu, 2007). This marked the incorporation of soft power into the CPC’s official discourse. In 2009, the CPC released a key policy document titled “Master Plan for Building the International Communication Capacity of Mainstream Media 2009–2020”. This document codified the principles of the “going beyond” strategy aimed at expanding China’s international media presence (Ye, P. & Albornoz, L., 2018).

China’s media presence abroad expanded with Xi Jinping’s rise to power. At the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of China, held in October 2017, President Xi Jinping described the cultural strategy as “soft power with Chinese characteristics” (Xi Jinping, 2017). Xi Jinping expressed confidence that China would become a world leader through its ability to “tell its stories” and strengthen cultural soft power.

A number of researchers have seen China’s global media expansion as both part of China’s policy of “going out” to the outside world in general, aimed at improving the country’s image abroad, and as an opportunity for Beijing to achieve more significant influence in global information flows (Marsh, V., Madrid-Morales, D., & Paterson, C., 2023; Thussu, D. et al., 2018).

According to researchers, Beijing did not merely adopt the concept of “soft power” in its original form. Instead, it reinterpreted and adapted the concept to align with China’s specific political and ideological goals. This adaptation reflects China’s broader strategy of integrating traditional cultural elements with modern political objectives. Scholars note that China’s approach to soft power emphasizes state-led initiatives, which differ from the more decentralized models seen in Western countries. As a result, China’s soft power strategy combines cultural diplomacy, media expansion, and economic engagement to enhance its international influence. The concept of “soft power” adopted by the CPC has undergone a certain transformation, which allows us to talk about the strategy of “soft power” with Chinese specifics (Zhigarkov, G., 2018), as “soft power of China” (Arif, 2017), “soft power with Chinese characteristics” (Glaser, B., & Murphy, M., 2009; Cardenal, J.P., 2017).

The researchers note that one of the key features of the sinicized concept of “soft power” is its cultural centrality and its use as a tool to ensure the country’s cultural sovereignty (Albro, R., 2015; Edney, K.J., 2015). This may mean that the Chinese leadership deliberately chose this strategy to reduce the conflict potential of its actions within the country and in the international arena.

China is actively expanding its presence in international media by establishing world news agencies, television channels and Internet platforms in various languages, helping to create an attractive image of China in the eyes of the world public. From 2012 to 2022, Chinese media’s global involvement not only increased but also diversified (Marsh, V., Madrid-Morales, D., & Paterson, C., 2023). Thus, the PRC’s overseas broadcasting system was reorganized to expand its international influence and competitiveness. In 2016, a new foreign-oriented structure, the China Global Television Network (CGTN – China Global TV Network), was formed and broadcast in the official languages of the United Nations. In 2018, the Central Broadcasting Corporation (Voice of China) was established through the merger of CGTN and the world leader in broadcasting languages, CRI.

Modern Chinese media is a powerful tool for cultivating and manipulating national image. China uses various media tools to build its country’s image worldwide. Four major state-owned media organizations – Xinhua News Agency, China Radio International (CRI), China Daily, and China Central Television (CCTV) – are considered by researchers to be the main tools for conveying the “China story” to the world (Thussu, D.K., De Burgh, H., & Shi, A., (Eds.) 2018).

Today, China’s global media companies – both state-owned and private – actively produce and distribute Chinese content across the world. They invest directly in foreign media enterprises and participate in developing media infrastructure abroad. Additionally, these companies provide training and capacity-building programs for local media professionals. A key aspect of their strategy involves influencing and managing public opinion in international markets, aiming to shape narratives favorable to China’s interests (Madrid-Morales D, Wasserman H., 2018; Anne-Marie Brady, 2017). China Watch, published by the leading English-language newspaper China Daily, is published as an insert in more than 20 major international newspapers in 18 countries with a total circulation of over 5 million (China Daily Website, 2024, May 25). According to a report by the Reuters Institute, in 2023, China overtook the

United States in the number of English-language media resources broadcasting to an international audience (Facts and details. (2024, June 15).

Beijing is investing considerable resources in China's global media development programs to convey ideological messages to foreign audiences, enhance the external appeal of the Middle Kingdom's culture and its political and economic models, improve its global reputation, and strengthen China's engagement with the world.

Due to limited transparency in the People's Republic of China, it is difficult to accurately assess the financial resources allocated to "soft power" initiatives. Estimates of these expenditures vary widely among researchers and institutions. The opacity of official data complicates efforts to quantify investments in cultural diplomacy, media expansion, and international educational programs. Despite these challenges, experts agree that China has significantly increased funding to strengthen its global image and extend its influence abroad. American sinologist David Shambaugh claims that China spends about \$10 billion annually (Shambaugh, D., 2015; The Economist, 2019, May).

According to Bloomberg News, between 2008 and 2018, China's investments in the media sector alone totaled approximately 2.8 billion US dollars (Tartar, A., Rojanasakul, A., & Diamond, J.S., 2018). In addition, since 2009, China has allocated around 6.6 billion US dollars to expand its global media presence, as reported by the Reuters Institute. These figures illustrate the scale of China's commitment to enhancing its influence through international media engagement and infrastructure development (Kumar, R. 2021).

The Global Soft Power Index-2024 (Brand Finance) places China third globally in soft power influence. This ranking positions China behind only the United States and the United Kingdom. Notably, China's score places it among the top three most influential nations worldwide. The evaluation covered all 193 United Nations member states (Global Soft Power Index, 2024).

The study of global Chinese media has undergone significant changes over the years. There have been trends towards changes in the academic research of China's media narratives aimed at an external audience.

Thus, scientists noted the transformation of the geography of academic research – the emphasis on interaction in the media sphere of China with the countries of the African continent shifted, expand-

ing to a global framework when Beijing's global media operations were put on the agenda (Jedlowski, A., & Röschenthaler, U., 2017; Wasserman, H., 2013; Batchelor, K., & Zhang, X., (Eds), 2017). Consequently, China's attempts to promote its narrative on COVID-19 have heightened scrutiny of Chinese media's influence in Europe and North America (Gill, 2020).

The following change is the increasing number of research articles on PRC soft power and global Chinese media. Thus, this study conducted a content analysis through the Google Scholar publications search platform (see Diagram 1). The purpose of the study was to identify patterns and correlations in the number of academic publications from 1993 to 2024. An advanced search of peer-reviewed publications worldwide in the time frame of "over the entire period" and through May 2024 identified approximately 1,220,000 articles that used the keywords "China," "soft power," and "mass media" in their titles and content.

The content analysis revealed a significant growth of interest in the global academic environment on this topic and a steady tendency to increase the number of publications over time. The increase in publications since 2003 is particularly noticeable. From 1993 to 2003, academic publications more than tripled (from 5,540 to 17,000). In subsequent years, growth rates remained consistently high. Between 2003 and 2023, publication output grew by over 150%, peaking at 44,000 annual publications in 2023 (the highest recorded volume during the study period). Overall, from 1993 to 2023, scientific publications increased nearly eightfold.

The results of the content analysis show a growing interest on the part of the academic community in studying the strategy of China's "soft power" and the interaction of Beijing with the global media. The annual increase in scientific publications may be associated with an increase in China's role in the international arena over the past three decades and with China's active efforts to use "soft power" in the global information space. There is also likely an increased focus on studying information strategies and media influence in the context of globalization and digitalization.

China's soft power strategy continues to adapt to global transformations. CPC analysts have modified their methodological frameworks for media agenda analysis. This shift reflects Beijing's strategic diversification in global audience engagement.

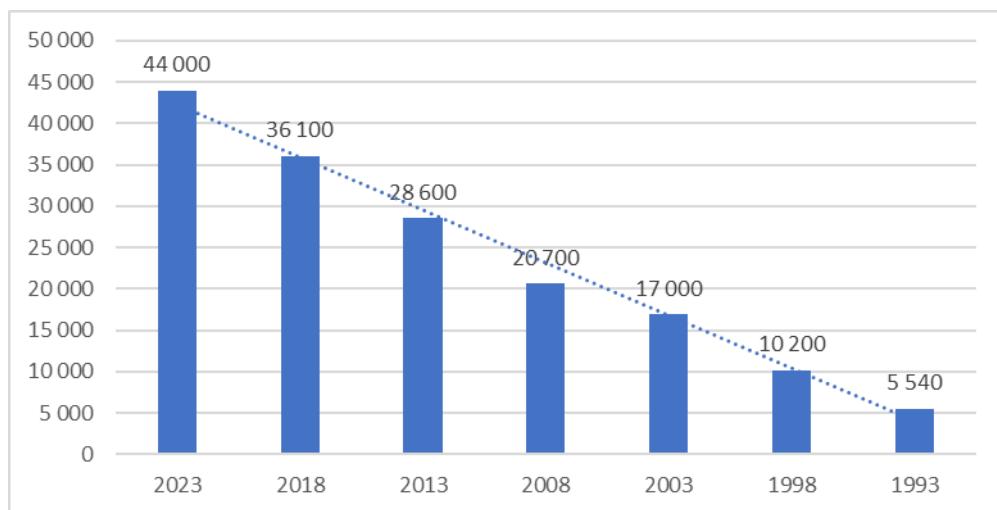


Diagram 1 – Number of scientific publications for the period 1993-2023

Source: Google Scholar, 2024

The CPC has effectively consolidated control over Chinese-language media abroad, particularly in television broadcasting. China Central Television (CCTV), a state-owned entity, distributes complimentary video content and scripts to 1,700 international media outlets. Notably, Chinese state media frequently disseminates repackaged content through local channels without foreign attribution (US Department of State, 2023).

The content of academic research has shifted from descriptive research that seeks to explain the nature of Beijing's media architecture to deep, dynamic and expressive work. A number of scholars find explanations for the impact of external factors, in particular, the change in the perception of the West of China earlier as a developing economy to a modern image of a potential candidate state for the role of world leader (O'Brien, R.C., 2016; Li, S., 2017).

Moreover, a group of researchers at the University of Edinburgh questioned the link and correlation between the soft power construct proposed by Joseph S. Nye and the Chinese official usage of "soft power" (Singh, J.P., & MacDonald, S., 2017). It can be argued that Xi Jinping's reformulation of China's soft power objective in terms of "cultural soft power" had more domestic goals than foreign policy goals. For its external audience, China was guided by two motives for integrating "soft power" into the foreign policy public sphere:

- the first goal: the continuation of "hard power" to manage the perceived risks of what Graham Allison has called the "Thucydides trap" – a situation

in which an emerging great power induces such fear in an existing power that the fear itself leads to war (Hanna, R., 2020). Beijing's narrative of "soft power" provides a rational reason for China to be viewed from a less threatening, peaceful perspective.

- the second goal is to support China's deeper integration into the global economy and attract more foreign investment.

While research on China's soft power continues to expand and diversify, significant knowledge gaps remain. Limited data exists regarding Beijing's communication strategies in Central and Southeast Asia. Most studies concentrate on English-language content, neglecting analysis of Chinese media broadcasts in Russian, French, Arabic, Hausa, Portuguese, and Tagalog.

Two additional research deficiencies merit attention: the private sector's involvement in China's external communications and the absence of comprehensive ethnographic studies.

Finally, the focus of research interest has shifted to the end result of Chinese media's impact – on the audience and media ecosphere, particularly on media content, journalistic ethics, the audience needs and desires, etc. (Chang T-K., & Lin, F., 2014; Douzet et al., 2021).

Contemporary geopolitical shifts present China's external media with expanded avenues. These platforms can now disseminate alternative definitions of human rights and democracy. These definitions diverge from established Western narratives.

The present global media landscape offers expanded avenues for China's external media. These

platforms can now disseminate distinct definitions of human rights and democracy. These definitions present alternatives to established Western narratives. Consequently, journalistic ethics has risen in prominence. It now constitutes a central subject within the ongoing tensions. These tensions characterize the relationship between Beijing and the West. Several researchers have argued that with digital globalization and the interaction of different cultures and perspectives, it is time for a broader and more diverse set of ethical perspectives that are not solely Western-centric (Thussu, D., 2022).

It is important to note that China's efforts to use "soft power" in the media are not without criticism, as concerns remain about censorship, propaganda and the suppression of dissent. Nevertheless, China's influence on the global media landscape continues to grow, reflecting the country's broader soft power strategy.

Contemporary Chinese media exhibit notable efficiency in information dissemination. They also demonstrate a degree of openness in their reporting practices. This has ostensibly contributed to an improved global perception of China. Nevertheless, scholarly analysis suggests persistent limitations. Experts posit that the operational autonomy of Chinese media remains constrained. Consequently, coverage of specific sensitive topics is often restricted. Examples of such restricted areas include human rights and corruption (Tkacheva, N.V., 2019).

Results and Discussion

An examination of publications concerning China's soft power within international media reveals significant scholarly attention. This analysis, conducted through a review of scientific literature and content analysis in Google Scholar, underscores this growing interest. Consequently, it can be inferred that the study of China's "soft power", particularly its media dimension, constitutes a relevant and expanding field of inquiry. This relevance is evidenced by an eightfold increase in academic publications on this subject over the last three decades.

However, it should be noted that despite the vastness of the topics in previous research, there are still some gaps in the research field. First of all, it is the incompleteness of the works that implement interdisciplinary approaches. Many works focus on the analysis of media diplomacy and globalization of Chinese media, but they are often limited to certain disciplines and do not cover a wide range of

Chinese media's influence on other aspects of international relations.

It is worth noting the limited focus of previous studies, most of which have focused on the global impact of Chinese media. There is a lack of data on China's media strategies in Asia, especially in Central and Southeast Asia, especially on the specifics of the transformation of the media landscape in the Central Asian region under the influence of Beijing's soft power strategy. Research often focuses on the intentions and narratives created by Chinese media, but not enough attention is paid to how local audiences interpret and resist Chinese narratives.

Predominant scholarly inquiry centers on the immediate effects of China's soft power strategy. However, the protracted influence of PRC soft power remains comparatively under-examined. Numerous studies delineate the operational activities of global Chinese media outlets. Nevertheless, these analyses often dedicate less attention to the efficacy of these strategies. Furthermore, the impact on public opinion and political processes at the regional level is frequently under-investigated.

Predominant scholarly inquiry centers on the immediate effects of China's soft power strategy. However, the protracted influence of PRC soft power remains comparatively under-examined. Numerous studies delineate the operational activities of global Chinese media outlets. Nevertheless, these analyses often dedicate less attention to the efficacy of these strategies. Furthermore, the impact on public opinion and political processes at the regional level is frequently under-investigated.

Most studies focus on the impact on audiences in the Western European and North American continents, while the effect on other regions and populations of the world, particularly Asia and Latin America, is understudied.

To fill the gaps identified, new research can offer:

- The use of interdisciplinary analysis, incorporating methods and theories from the political and sociological sciences, media studies and journalism methods, which can provide a deeper understanding of the extent of Chinese media's influence on the global media environment.

- Emphasis on regional specificity. Research focusing on the influence of Chinese media in specific regions of the world will reveal the unique characteristics of their impact on different parts of the global community.

- Implementing a comparative approach to identify the unique characteristics and competitive ad-

vantages of China's "soft power" strategy and those of other countries.

Such research will improve the understanding of the role of Chinese media in international relations and develop more effective strategies for analyzing the specifics of China's "soft power" strategy globally and regionally.

Conclusion

Currently, the "soft power" strategy has become an essential tool of PRC foreign policy. Using media, cultural diplomacy and other methods, Beijing seeks to boost its image, expand its influence and counter criticism. However, opinions on China's "soft power" are divided because its practices don't always adhere to international norms.

Beijing's media narratives not only shape public opinion about China and its policies but also have

an increasing influence on the political and media landscape in Eurasia and beyond. With its growing expansion in the global media, China has become not only an economic and political superpower but also an important player in the international information arena.

The "soft power" strategy employed by Beijing has attained a central role in contemporary political and media spheres. This strategy actively shapes the perceptions of the international community. Furthermore, it alters the established dynamics of China's interactions with other sovereign states.

Thus, China's interest in the realization of "soft power" in the global media space, which began in the late 20th century, continues to develop in the modern world of the 21st century. Currently, China's "soft power" is already significantly influencing the international media space. In the future, this influence is only likely to increase.

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