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#### S. Ordenov

## EXISTENTIAL CRISIS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL IN COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES OF THE POSTMODERN ERA

Introduction. The crisis is the most complex social phenomenon, associated with processes of social stagnation, anomie, increased tension, and conflict within society. The aim and tasks. This article aims to undertake a philosophical reflection on the existential crisis of the individual and social within communicative practices of the postmodern era. Research methods. The research methodology encompasses historical and comparative approaches combined with the phenomenological method, as well as philosophical principles of objectivity, systematicity, and the progression from the abstract to the concrete, among others. Research results. The crisis states of contemporary society are characterized by their fluidity, multiplicity, and non-linearity, leading to the uncertainty and instability of social structures. These, along with the specific features of postmodern culture, determine the specific forms of communicative practices in the social and political life of society. In particular, in the communicative practices of the postmodern era, such marginalized subcultural forms of life construction as minimalism, downshifting, and post-truth are affirmed. Discussion. Modern individuals despair in the gradual progress of reason in history, as a result of which the influence of the irrational in their lives is intensified. The reason for this lies in the fact that the economic development of the world economy has led to a disproportion of the moral and the rational in humanity's life. The utilitarian rationality of the capitalist consumer society, which is subject to its internal mechanisms and principles of expediency (yet can be irrational and destructive towards the society and the individual within it), creates contradictory types of behavior and communicative practices both in the life of society as a whole and in the life of the individual. Conclusions. All this leads to the third (extreme) form of human alienation (alienation of the individual from their human essence), the destruction of the social continuum, thereby causing an existential crisis of the individual and social in the postmodern era.

Keywords: postmodern era, political communication, communicative practices, existential crisis, individual and social, post-truth.

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T. Poda

## COMMUNICATIVE POTENTIAL OF SOFT POWER: SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

National Aviation University e-mail: tetiana.poda@npp.nau.edu.ua Research ID: R-8153-2018; ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9662-1204

**Abstract.** The article is dedicated to the analysis of soft power discourses in the context of international relations of the modern world. These discourses retain their leading significance in the symbolic space of politics, exerting a targeted influence on public consciousness. The basis of discursive influences is the modeling of attractive images of state institutions and political subjects as a prompt response to foreign policy and domestic political challenges and threats.

**Keywords:** soft power, discourse, temptation, symbolic politics, international relations.

## Introduction

In a challenging global political environment, new systems of international relations are motivated to develop. In this context, the concept of "soft power" and the broadening of its influential spheres gain new significance. Since the publication of Joseph S. Nye's Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power in 1990 (Nye 1990), extensive research on soft power has been conducted, including critical analyses. However, the majority of this research has concentrated on its application, such as in the realm of public diplomacy. The current international climate is centered on identifying optimal strategies for utilizing soft power, considering international experiences and national peculiarities. Comprehending the principles developing their own appeal on the global stage will assist political institutions in broadening their repertoire of soft power tools, encompassing information and communication technologies, to fortify their standing in the international sociocultural and political context.

The aim of the study is revealing the specifics of "soft power" as a key resource influencing the interpretation of contemporary issues in world politics and international relations. The tasks of the study are 1) to clarify the content of the concept of "soft power" through established approaches in its analysis; 2) to identify the communicative specifics of creating an attractive image of the state that utilizes soft power for domestic and international policy within the framework of international relations.

## Research methods

A systems approach is used to investigate the properties and interrelationships of "soft power" components, treating them as elements within a broader system.

The author proceeds from a constructivist approach, within the framework of which all events and phenomena of international life and the international environment itself are sociolinguistically constructed belief matrices. This approach facilitates an examination of how actors define their identities and positions in the global arena, and how they establish relationships with one another

The basic research tool is discourse analysis. Acting as an independent category of socio-philosophical analysis, the production and functioning of discourse is directly dependent on the interaction of its subject and object, as well as the circumstances (dependence on power, cultural, historical context, etc.) in which it functions and is subject to transformation. By exploring the connection between discourse and power, where discourse is the structure and content that determine an individual's ways of thinking, M. Foucault conceptualizes subjectivity as being governed by complex structures of power. The cratological approach to the study of discourse proposed by M. Foucault and R. Barthes, has been further elaborated by scholars like J. Butler, J. Baudrillard, S. Zizek, J. Lipovetsky and others.

## Research results

Coined in 1990 by Joseph S. Nye, the concept of "soft power" was further elaborated in his publications, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics (Nye 2004), and the "Soft Power and European-American Affairs" (Nye 2006). Nye defines "soft power" as the ability to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion. At the same time, he opposes simplifications that equate impact and influence: influence can also be based on hard power, consisting of threats and bribery. And he stipulates a fundamentally important point: "Soft power is not a zero-sum game in which one country's gain is necessarily another country's loss" (Nye 2011, 90).

Some researchers mistakenly believe that during the period of globalization and increased geopolitical competition, soft power began to be viewed as an important resource of foreign policy power only for countries claiming the status of a world center or pole of power. However, this contradicts an important thesis of Nve himself, who argues that countries can have political attractiveness beyond their military or economic capabilities because their national interests involve attractive goals, such as economic aid or peacekeeping efforts. He points to the examples of Finland, which has relied more on soft power, and Norway, which has been involved in peace negotiations worldwide over recent decades as examples. Nye also references Poland, whose government decided to send troops to deploy troops to post-war Iraq, aiming not just to curry favor with the United States but to enhance Poland's broader positive image (Nye 2004, 9-10).

And in his later book, returning to this topic, Nye again emphasizes: «It's conceivable that a sophisticated adversary (such as a small country with cyberwarfare resources) will decide that it can blackmail large states. There is also the prospect of state-sponsored "freelance" or "privateer" cyberattacks (Nye 2011, 164).

Within the "soft power" framework, "resources" or "sources" that determine its attractiveness and serve as integral elements within its overall structure. The transformation of these resources into assets is carried out through a "conversion mechanism," encompassing "technical means" such as finance, infrastructure, and communication channels, alongside "technologies" like public diplomacy, cultural relations, and nation branding. These coordinated operations and actions aim to achieve specific objectives. While public diplomacy targets specific political goals, cultural relations is more focused on establishing long-term relationships and building trust with foreign audiences. Nation branding is the process of forming and managing the image of a state in order to improve its reputation in the international community. Unlike the image, which is formed spontaneously on the basis of individual experience, the image (brand) of a country is the outcome of deliberate efforts to shape perceptions and distinguish it from others.

Rob Kroes considers massive commercial advertising of tangible symbols of America, with which ideas about new horizons of freedom were associated during the Cold War, as one of the elements of soft American hegemony: "Simple items like a pair of blue jeans, Coca-Cola, a cigarette brand, thus acquired an

added value that helped these younger generations to give expression to an identity all their own" (Kroes 1999, 516). Another proven instrument of the United States' soft hegemony is American popular culture. The adaptation of Europeans to it after the Second World War contributed to the easy and cheerful assimilation of the ideas and principles of liberalism and injected young energy into the "high" culture of post-war Europe. Rob Kroes writes, it was the influence of pop culture on the public consciousness of Europeans that helped the United States achieve two important goals — the democratic reconstruction of Europe and the creation of NATO. Popular culture has rendered the United States a great service in maintaining economic and military leadership (Kroes 1999, 500–520).

Joseph S. Nye contrasts the "soft power" of the United States with European "soft power" instruments, notably including humanitarian and financial aid to developing countries, migration policies, stances on climate change, and human rights advocacy.

The force of "soft power" operates in such a way that the subject freely and voluntarily obeys it and perceives its instructions as the result of their own independent choice. "Soft power" operates on sign-symbolic and ideological-value dimensions, engaging public perception stereotypes, archetypal images, and collective notions. It leverages influence tools that are psychologically appealing to the subjects, subtly reshaping their mental constructs towards a preferred orientation.

In post-non-classical political philosophy, the concept "soft power" is usually interpreted from the perspective of discourse analysis. Moreover, the discourse itself is seen as the main instrument and transmitter of "soft power." Power, through various kinds of discourses, is interpreted as a method of effective communicative influence, which instills in subjects a certain way of thinking and behavior. The main power of discourse lies in the production of methods of signification, the interpretation of objects of reality, and in enforcing certain patterns of thought and feeling. Hence, in our study, by "soft power" we understand discourses that compete with each other for dominance in the sphere of signification, for controlling and formatting public consciousness, and for approval in the cognitive sphere as the main, fundamental model interpretation.

R. Barthes, who was among the pioneers in introducing the concept of discourse into widespread scholarly debate-preceding M. Foucault-linked it intricately with power. He articulated that power embeds itself within any discourse, emerging even from realms of anarchy. In contemporary discourse, there exists a naïveté in discussions about power, conceptualized as a dichotomy between those who possess it and those who do not. This oversimplification overlooks power's multifaceted nature, historically regarded as solely a political phenomenon. Now, voices emerge, claiming to elucidate the discourse of power as inherently one of dominance. Barthes defines the discourse of power as any that gives rise to a feeling of committed wrongdoing and, consequently, a feeling of guilt in everyone to whom this discourse is directed. He asserts that power's primal vessel has always been Філософія 63

linguistic activity-specifically, its compulsory manifestation through language (Barthes 1978).

According to the theory of M. Foucault, all social processes occur in relation to discourse. Discourses, once established, are imposed on individuals and are performed by them. The emergence of new discourses occurs as a result of struggle and the exercise of power. Power is understood by M. Foucault as a multiplicity of power relations within the framework of competition, a game that finds institutional embodiment in laws, state apparatuses and forms of social domination (Sheridan 2003). At the same time, power is neither a specific institution, nor a manifestation of suppression, nor a system of clear rules. It is an integral part of everyday life and continuously manifests itself at all levels of social interaction. The relationship between dominance and submission is unstable and can change under the influence of various internal and external factors. Political power, in turn, is the result of the struggle of various social forces and can be achieved either peacefully or militarily.

Expanding on Michel Foucault's concept, Jean Baudrillard situates discourses within the sign-symbolic realm of non-existent objects, or simulacra. For Baudrillard, a crucial concept for analyzing power relations is the discourse of seduction, which, while not a material force, permeates all expressions of power (Baudrillard 1990, 47). This perspective shifts the focus from power's traditional physical manifestations to the symbolic and psychological dimensions, emphasizing how power entices and manipulates through the creation and management of signs and symbols rather than through direct coercion or material resources.

Building upon the theories of Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Lipovetsky explores the discourse of power intertwined with the strategy of seduction, a phenomenon pervasive across all facets of contemporary life, from politics to personal relationships, and esteemed the highest value. The scientist considers the strategy of seduction in the context of a consumer society, abundant in goods and services and constantly simulating new demands. Seduction operates subtly, aligning with the individual's well-being, freedom, and personal interests (Lipovetsky 1990, 19).

Modern political life is characterized by a discourse of seduction, attractive images of leaders and institutions, which serves as the basis of political technologies. In particular, J. Lipovetsky talks about the positive features of political seduction associated with a democratic regime (Lipovetsky 1990, 50). Since democratic seduction is characterized by the so-called humanization of the image of politicians, the desire to get closer to the people through deliberate transparency of one's personal life, an unofficial style of clothing, easy-to-understand speech language, etc.

In the modern world, where liberal ideas and the model of Western democracy cannot be universal for all countries, China has begun to put forward its own global concepts. Since the early 2000s, it has articulated several foreign policy strategies, such as the "peaceful rise" and "peaceful development" strategies, the "Chinese dream," the "Community of Common Destiny for Mankind" (also known as the "community with a shared future for mankind" or the "human community

with a shared future"), and the "One Belt, One Road" Initiative, among others. The Belt and Road Initiative, in particular, has emerged as the world's most comprehensive economic project, welcoming participation from all interested nations. It aims to enhance connectivity and deepen practical cooperation, as emphasized by Xi Jinping in his call for collaborative efforts towards a more prosperous Belt and Road cooperation (Xi 2020).

In this context, it is worth mentioning the strategy of seduction of the international discourse of the People's Republic of China (PRC), which is often built precisely on the opposition of the democratic model of government, Western liberal values and the modern Chinese approach to the formation of a system of international relations of a new type (Xi 2021a. In particular, while pursuing a discursive policy in the field of human rights, China not only insists on its own model of development in this area but also openly declares the advantages of the Chinese understanding of human rights over the Western one

The charismatic component of China's foreign policy discourse is both a reflection of the leadership of the PRC and an effort to craft an appealing national image for international partners. Xi Jinping's foreign policy discourse, often echoing Confucian principles, aims to convince global partners of the contemporary relevance and universal applicability of ancient Chinese values. These values, he suggests, are capable of bridging ideological gaps and serving as a "common language" and a guarantor for fulfilling commitments made by the PRC. Xi frequently critiques the "old world order" and advocates for a "new type of international relations" based on "peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit" (Xi 2021b). His speeches, marked by a consistent use of rhetoric and an appeal to the international community, underscore China's readiness to shoulder responsibilities commensurate with its stature as a major country, thereby diverging from Max Weber's notion of the "flame of pure conviction" by asserting that "Big countries must lead themselves in accordance with their status and a greater sense of responsibility" (Xi 2021b).

In the struggle for power, subjects use the discourse of seduction to create an illusory reality. In the modern world, where where symbolic capital is the key resource, power relations hinge on seduction and simulation, rooted in an unconscious quest for pleasure. The result is a confrontation in the discursive space of temptations, where powerful states use the resources available to them to attract other actors into their symbolic coalition. In response to these temptations, actors may succumb to them, despite the fact that motivation is not always associated with material benefits, but can also be symbolic and discursive.

Scientists are making attempts to apply cognitive and rational approaches to the study of foreign policy and the behavior of its actors. One of the important achievements of cognitive and social psychology was the statement that actors often become hostages and (or) victims of "rainbow illusions" (Renshon and Kahneman 2007, 56). Overestimating their own abilities and resources, they become captive of a distorted impression of their position and capabilities. As a result,

the so-called "illusion of control" is created when actors exaggerate the degree to which results depend on their actions, ignoring accompanying circumstances (the reaction of partners and opponents) and "unfounded optimism."

These approaches, based on a wide range of methodological tools, can also be used to analyze foreign policy and the corresponding discourse, in the context of which, as a social phenomenon, decisionmaking plays a central role. According to J. Renshon and D. Kahneman, the antagonistic behavior of rivals is most likely associated with long-term hostile intentions. even if this point of view is not confirmed by any facts. During negotiations, adversaries, entrenched in disparate value systems, are prone to undervaluing each other's principles, leading to "reactive devaluation." This phenomenon renders negotiations fruitless and precludes consensus (Renshon and Kahneman 2007, 72). Political actors, unable to maintain neutrality, trivialize and dismiss the propositions of counterparts, obstructing conflict resolution. dynamic is exemplified in the current Sino-American relations, where divergent value systems complicate the quest for compromise.

## **Discussion**

From both practical and political viewpoints, the question of the limits of "soft power" effectiveness is particularly important. Within the scientific and expert community, opinions on its capabilities in the era of information technology and cognitive warfare are deeply divided, ranging from assertions of its potentially boundless capacities to more cautious, skeptical, and critical evaluations. Therefore, it is essential to identify the factors that influence the effectiveness of "soft power," which, in turn, directly or indirectly determine its level of impact. Acknowledging that "soft power" is not a panacea for all strategic challenges, Nye (Nye 2011, 18) advocates for a synergistic approach that combines the coercive and retributive measures of "hard power" with the persuasive and attractive elements of "soft power."

It is necessary to note the search in the field of development of a new philosophy of power. Notably, Judith Butler attempts to synthesize Michel Foucault's theory of power with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, Louis Althusser's poststructuralist ideas, gender discourse analysis, and the concept of identity. In "The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection," Butler suggests viewing power as an intersubjective force that acts as a facet of the collective unconscious, inherent within the individual and pivotal in shaping identity. This perspective, Butler argues, echoes Foucault's assertion that power permeates the myriad desires of subjects (Butler 1997, 15-16). For Butler, power materializes in discourses that foster obedience, enforcing mechanisms of subordination and subject identification within the political realm. Humanity's inherent need for selfrecognition as subjects, according to Butler, is fulfilled through the mechanism of subordination that power enacts. Thus, an individual attains subjecthood only upon undergoing power's subordinative processes. The internalization of power and the consequent formation of subjectivity are, therefore, seen as intricately linked, ambivalent phenomena (Butler 1997, 22-23).

#### Conclusions

'Soft power," a concept introduced by Joseph S. Nye, refers to the capacity of actors to achieve their goals by changing the behavior of others in the desired direction, based on attractiveness and/or persuasion. This influence stems from non-coercive resources that political entities possess, which allow them to craft and disseminate a particular vision of reality. Essentially, the soft power of meaning-making and cognitive coercion to a certain vision of reality is a discursive practice. It competes for supremacy in the domain of meaning creation, seeks to influence and organize social consciousness, and aims for recognition in the cognitive sphere as the leading interpretive framework. State discursive policy, as a manifestation of soft power, operates at the mental level, shaping perceptions and creating varied representations of authority. Through the discourse of "seduction," political actors can secure the endorsement of their objectives and interests by other actors in the international arena.

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### Т.А. Пода

## КОМУНІКАТИВНИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ М'ЯКОЇ СИЛИ: СОЦІОФІЛОСОФСЬКИЙ АНАЛІЗ

Вступ. Міжнародна обстановка сучасного світу з геополітичними загрозами, що зростають, актуалізує завдання пошуку оптимальних форм застосування «м'якої сили», що з опорою на ефективні інформаційно-комунікаційні технології враховують міжнародний досвід і національну специфіку політичних суб'єктів. Метою дослідження є виявлення комунікативного характеру «м'якої влади» як здатності впливу на інтерпретацію поточних питань світової політики та міжнародних відносин. Завдання дослідження: уточнити эміст поняття «м'яка сила»; виявити комунікативну специфіку створення привабливого іміджу держави, яка використовує м'яку силу для внутрішньої та міжнародної політики, в рамках міжнародних відносин. Методологія дослідження включає системний підхід для вивчення елементів системи «м'якої сили». Автор виходить із конструктивістського підходу, в рамках якого події та явища міжнародного життя є соціолінгвістично сконструйованими матрицями переконань. Базовим інструментом дослідження став дискурс-аналіз. Результати дослідження. Розглянуто основні інтерпретації поняття «м'якої сили». Уточнено, що м'яка сила здійснює свій вплив на знаково-символічному та ідейно-ціннісному рівнях. Виявлено взаємозв'язок даного концепту з теоріями дискурсу як владними взаємовідносинами, частиною яких стає стратегія зваблення за допомогою конструювання образів політичних суб'єктів. Обговорення. В умовах геополітичних умов, що ускладнюються, нагальною стає потреба продовжити пошуки меж ефективності «м'якої сили». Висновки. «М'яка сила» (Дж. Най) може бути визначена як здатність акторів досягати своєї мети, змінюючи поведінку інших у бажаному напрямку, спираючись на привабливість та (або) переконання. Ця здатність є похідною від наявних у розпорядженні політичних суб'єктів нематеріальних ресурсів впливу. По суті, м'яка сила смислотворення та когнітивного примусу до певного бачення реальності є дискурсивною практикою. Дискурсивна політика держави як прояв «м'якої сили» на рівні ментального форматування та оперування змістами виступає силою, яка виробляє привабливі образи влади. За допомогою залучення дискурсу «спокуси» політичні суб'єкти можуть розраховувати на підтримку своїх цілей та інтересів іншими учасниками на міжнародній арені.

Ключові слова: м'яка сила, дискурс, спокуса, символічна політика, міжнародні відносини.

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О.М. Сідоркіна

# ОСОБИСТІСТЬ В УМОВАХ СУЧАСНИХ ВИКЛИКІВ (КОМУНІКАТИВНИЙ АСПЕКТ)

Національний авіаційний університет ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8624-2398

**Анотація.** У статті розглядаються суперечності між традиційними формами соціалізації індивіда та новітніми засобами здійснення комунікативних зв'язків у процесі соціальної комунікації. Показуються основні напрямки трансформації комунікативного простору у сучасному інформаційному суспільстві, місця у ньому особистості та необхідність їхнього соціально-філософського аналізу як фактору соціального розвитку в умовах сучасних науковотехнічних та соціокультурних викликів.

**Ключові слова:** інформаційне суспільство, комунікативний простір, соціальна комунікація, індивідуальне і суспільне, соціалізація, соціальний розвиток.

## Вступ

За останні роки відбулися істотні зміни у засобах та технічній базі соціально-комунікативних зв'язків, які значно розширили свої можливості за рахунок розвитку перш за все дистанційних методів навчання та спілкування. Розвиток новітніх інформаційних технологій, поява штучного інтелекту сприяли якісним змінам у характері буття віртуального, зумовили нові аспекти у взаємовідносинах у рамках

інтерактивної системи «людина-машина», визначили появу нових тенденцій у характері і засобах соціалізації індивідів, співвідношенні особистості й колективу, що потребує подальшого соціальнофілософського осмислення.

Різні аспекти трансформації соціальнокомунікативних зв'язків, зокрема у плані осмислення наслідків і результатів розвитку новітніх інформаційних технологій, почали привертати увагу