This paper presents ongoing research at the intersection of science diplomacy and soft power. An underlying premise of soft power, as conceived and propagated by Joseph S. Nye, Jr., is that a nation’s influence depends, in part, on its ability to establish favorable rules and institutions to govern international action. Achieving and wielding influence becomes easier to the extent that a country’s culture and values are universally accepted.

Extending my dissertation research on the rhetoric of soft power diplomacy, I assert that values inherent to the process of scientific research and discovery—including but not limited to merit-based decision-making, transparency and openness, peer review, and evidence-based argument—make science diplomacy a potent force to generate or accrue soft power influence. When animated in discourse, these values serve as a rhetorical resource to reconstitute the reasons or justifications for action, and also possess the potential to reconstitute relations among nation-states and other entities bound in that discourse.

Nye identified technology, education, and economic growth as sources of power, and named networks of scientific communities among the new and non-traditional actors who may exercise soft power. My review of the soft power literature, however, suggests that scholarly attention is more often fixed on nation-state influence. Accordingly, my paper is an initial attempt to fill in this knowledge gap, with regard to non-traditional actors' soft power resources and strategies in the pursuit of democratic and economic reforms and international development goals and objectives.

Furthermore, this research buttresses the idea of new public diplomacy. New public diplomacy, attributed to Brian Hocking, is an international strategy of optimal use of new media to allow participants in discourse (i.e., audiences) to amplify and reconstruct the ideas espoused. In my critique, I explore whether and to what extent scientific communities engage in conversation about ideas, and identify the rhetorical processes through which ideas become communal and motivate action. Additionally, this research extends scholarly inquiry into soft power as a relational strategy of engagement, with an emphasis on science diplomacy as a means through which the United States engages with the Muslim world. Values ascribed to scientific inquiry may be a rhetorical resource to consubstantiate relations between the United States and Muslim-majority countries, as envisioned under President Obama’s Cairo Agenda.

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To explore the themes discussed above, I conduct a rhetorical critique of narratives that emerge in the planning and practice of science diplomacy initiatives. My initial effort alights on three sources or sites of ongoing discourse. One set of discourses is comprised of public statements of the U.S. science envoys charged with deepening engagement with the Muslim World. Since the President’s announcement of the Science Envoy Program, under the auspices of his Cairo Agenda, nine individuals have served or are currently serving in this capacity. Supplementing the envoys’ public statements, I include in my discursive archive public statements of U.S. State Department and USAID officials likewise engaged in science diplomacy initiatives.

Non-governmental/civil society initiatives provide a second locus for narrative analysis; in this paper, I draw especially on discourses generated through SciDev.Net, MuslimScience, and the AAAS Center for Science & Diplomacy. Public-private partnerships, in which governmental and non-governmental actors coalesce in a unified effort, provide a third source of discourse, with an initial emphasis on USAID’s LAUNCH and PEER programs. These sources and sites afford comparison of the nuances that accompany governmental, non-governmental, and partnering initiatives in science diplomacy and the soft power potential inferred.

This paper presents preliminary findings of my rhetorical critique for discussion and elaboration with policy makers and practitioners of science diplomacy. A specific question addressed through my critique is how discourse generated through science diplomacy initiatives constitutes grounds for decision making and consubstantiates communities in shared values and concerted action. I also attend to the orientation of discourses towards pragmatism and idealism, how participants in discourse exercise their voice and social agency, how values are articulated in discourse, and how issues and ideas are framed. With further analysis and refinement of answers to these questions, and other questions suggested by conference participants, I hope to provide new answers that may contribute to our understanding of soft power processes.
The concept of soft power, in discussions since Keohane and Nye’s 1998 *Foreign Affairs* article “Power and Interdependence in the Information Age,” has been widely discussed, but rarely measured. Soft power can be measured, but so far there are not commonly accepted norms. This paper will explore a few potential metrics.

In contrast to military and economic power, soft power is interactive. People can choose who influences them. This means those who are subject to soft power have leverage as well.

Military power, for example, can be a one way street. If I expand my country’s army and purchase more equipment, my military power has increased. Soft power is not a one way street; it is definitely at least a two-way street and often a roundabout.

I doubt a single indicator captures soft power. I plan to explore historical indicators that could establish standards for how soft power is measured in the future. The categories will be pairs or groups of indicators that reflect the interaction of producer, consumer, and, sometimes, observer in the use of soft power. Several candidates include:

- **Movies:** If the number of movies a country produces is one indicator of soft power, it should be paired with how many people in the world bought tickets to those movies. Also, in a given country, from which foreign country are most popular?
- **Tourism:** How many foreigners visited a country and from where did they come from? Also, for a given country, which other countries do its citizens like to visit? A visit is a larger commitment than buying a movie ticket.
- **Foreign language:** In which language(s) in a given country do people choose to learn? Also, in the world, which languages are the most popular second languages to learn? This is a commitment not only of money, but also substantial time.

To date I have the basic data to examine these three indicators and possibly more. Compared over time and over a wide cross-section of countries, the data may not only show U.S. dominance, but also shed empirical light on why some states like Qatar, Singapore, and the Nordic countries appear to be more influential in international affairs than their military and economic power would lead one to expect.
US public diplomacy practices involve efforts to shape public opinion and create relationships that facilitate understanding across cultural divides and within political conflict. US public diplomacy is often justified from the standpoint that exposure to US cultural resources and accurate depictions of its foreign policy yield "soft power" benefits that translate into tangible policy objectives. The presence of communication technology within public diplomacy practice, from the rise of multi-platform journalism in US international broadcasting to the heavy emphasis on social media in US counter-narrative strategies against Russia, suggests a particular strategic significance attached to the perceived capacity of technology to achieve foreign policy goals. The rhetoric of technology in the service of public diplomacy, however, also reveals how policy objectives are shaped around the recognized capacity of communication, as much as they are tied to broader strategic perceptions of necessity. Drawing on insights from Media Studies and Science and Technology Studies, this paper assesses the consequences of such perceptions on the formulation of communication strategy and the development of public diplomacy practice.
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