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TAKING A SOFT POWER APPROACH TO CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION

Toward an empirical methodology¹

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Introduction

Despite the growing realization by nation-states and other actors that cultural heritage protection plays a critical role in supporting diplomacy, primarily via its connection with the concept of soft power (Thomas 2021; Luke and Kersel 2012; Schreiber 2017; Grincheva 2020), this recognition has not always been evident in policy. Historically, there have been many instances in which policymakers saw the goal of cultural heritage protection as in competition with states' security, economic, or political priorities. Furthermore, a lack of shared indicators that can highlight common interests and preferences has been another obstacle to making cultural heritage protection a more integral part of states' development and diplomacy agendas (Hankins 2021).

This chapter seeks to fill the gap between heritage protection and soft power both conceptually and in developing a comparative empirical framework. The chapter theorizes and operationalizes soft power concepts to develop a mixed-methods research framework that provides both quantitative and qualitative comparative indicators for assessing the presence of soft power values in cultural heritage projects. Drawing on Joseph Nye's original formulation (Nye 2004) and *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power (1st Edition)* (Chitty et al. 2017), soft power is conceived quantitatively in this chapter in terms of culture, values, and foreign policies (Singh and MacDonald 2017). The mixed-methods approach also incorporates the soft power framing approach taken in Thomas (2020) through using a soft power ecosystem model as the frame for this study.

The chapter's empirical contribution is in two parts: the first provides content analysis and empirical tests of the presence of soft power and cultural relations values in cultural heritage projects. We document the presence of these value levels through a machine-enabled comparison of key words and n-grams in key documents. The second part develops qualitative and quantitative indicators of soft power and cultural relations for four countries' international cultural heritage protection programmes. The international cultural heritage protection programmes studied are: The UK's Cultural Protection Fund; the US Ambassadors' Fund for Cultural Preservation; Norway's Cultural Heritage Protection Fund; and the Netherland's Prince Claus Fund. The chapter's theoretical and empirical analyses provide a further guide to researchers and policymakers on how to implement and think of heritage projects involving soft power and cultural relations.

Our main findings are that the three European cultural relations approaches are similar to each other, and the US approach is more instrumental in placing weightage on cultural protection as public diplomacy. The quantitative data also demonstrate the linkages between soft power and cultural relations values. As explained later, while soft power accrues value to the ‘donor’ state, cultural relations is about building long-term reciprocal relations (British Council & Goethe-Institut 2018). The two are not mutually exclusive. Fostering long-term commitments and engagement with the local community and national level representatives from relevant institutions is a natural outcome of cultural heritage protection. This principle of partnerships is embedded in all the four countries’ programming but emphasized most explicitly in the British Council and the Prince Claus Fund documents.

Conceptualizing soft power and international heritage protection

Soft power can deliver a series of influence and attraction outcomes to improve a country’s, region’s, or city’s image abroad (British Council 2018). Soft power relies not on coercion but persuasion, the capacity of actors to convince others to pursue goals that match their own (Nye 2004). Joseph Nye (2021, p. 201) writes: ‘Hard power is push; soft power is pull’. Persuasion depends both on the values and culture of the actor exerting soft power (and attractiveness of this culture) as well as the values of the target audience (Singh and MacDonald 2017; Thomas 2020, p. 6).

The soft power of archaeological or historical objects provides both a historical validation and a new opportunity for foreign policy engagements. At a multilateral level, UNESCO is perhaps best known for activating a powerful global set of norms, instruments, and resources toward heritage preservation. The role of individual actors and nation-states is regularly acknowledged in such endeavours including the role of French Minister André Malraux when the World Heritage Program was being created in the 1950s and the role of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, for championing ideas that would in 2003 lead to the creation of the intangible cultural heritage programme in UNESCO (Singh 2011).

Like the multilateral efforts toward international heritage protection, the bilateral efforts also parallel universal notions of caring enshrined in international instruments. They accrue value to external donors by increasing their soft power and cultural appeal. Archaeological practices have long been part of bilateral diplomatic practices as they offer opportunities for meaningful foreign policy engagements (Luke and Kersel 2012) and most ‘current US-sponsored and directed archaeological projects operate within US diplomatic agendas’ (Luke and Kersel 2012, p. i). Similarly, the external evaluation of the United Kingdom’s Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) highlighted that,

stakeholders provided evidence that the Fund has offered a means to improve the reputation and recognition of the UK, particularly associated with cultural heritage. On a global level CPF is said to have generated curiosity at the highest level (i.e., from country leaders), and at a country level it has, for example, enabled the British Consulate to engage in a more productive way.

(British Council 2021)

This section first discusses the evolution of soft power as a concept, within academia and policy circles. While doing so, there will be a discussion of how this concept relates to cultural heritage protection. The connecting bonds between soft power and cultural heritage protection are *cultural values and relations*, all relating to one state’s or society’s care and attention for another’s tangible and intangible representations of memory and identity. After a brief review of soft power – its origins,

how it evolved, and what it comprises – the subsequent subsections will discuss its relationship with concepts such as public diplomacy, international heritage protection, and the cultural relations approaches to heritage protection. The theory section will finish with a discussion of some of the fraught issues that arise from the dynamic, ever-changing, political, and contested nature of memory, identity, and heritage.

The origins of soft power and how it has evolved

To assess how soft power, as a concept, relates to cultural heritage protection, this section first presents the birth and evolution of this concept for context. As Joseph Nye explains, he proposed the concept of soft power as he examined two puzzles, one relating to the international relations discipline and the other relating to policy. The disciplinary puzzle resulted in the recognition of a new type of power to bridge a gap in the understandings of power in the discipline of international relations. The policy puzzle was related to responding ‘to the widespread view that American power was in decline’ (Nye 2021, p. 199). This view was later criticized, with scholars arguing that soft power merely expressed dominant forms of cultural production in the United States (Ang et al. 2015). The elements of the concept can also be seen in the early days of Hollywood’s global reach (Jarvie 1992; de Grazia 2006) and in the fight against Soviet propaganda after World War II, such as in the cultural programming introduced via the 1948 Smith-Mundt Act (Luke and Kersel 2012, p. 201; Schneider 2010).

The disciplinary puzzle behind the soft power concept pertained to the dominance of realism in international relations until the 1980s. Around this time, Nye, along with scholar Robert O. Keohane, wrote *Power and Independence: World Politics in Transition* (Keohane and Nye 1977). While incorporating both realist and liberal insights, Keohane and Nye describe a complex dimension of ‘interdependence where states were not the only significant actors, security was not the primary issue, and the military was not the primary power resource’ (Nye 2021, p. 199). Despite criticism that the definition of soft power rejects realism, Nye explains that his intention was not to reject realism but rather to highlight its incompleteness. Nye suggests that ‘analysts start with the overall structure of power and realism, but not stop there’ (Nye 2021, p. 199).

Policymakers later endorsed this concept. Interestingly, these endorsements initially came from scholars outside of the United States, likely because American foreign policy is often couched in the language of strength and toughness. After 9/11, despite the emphasis on fighting radicalization and the need to attract moderates, institutions of hard power only gradually began to accept the importance of soft power (Nye 2021, pp. 204–205). Nye gives the example of the US Navy, which openly acknowledged soft power as an essential part of its strategy and further argues that soft and hard power could be combined into *smart power*, a term often used by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (Nye 2021, p. 205). Repnikova (2022, p. 44) writes that the idea of soft power in the United States was always ‘additive’ to push back ‘against the arguments that the United States was facing an impending decline’.²

What does soft power comprise?

Correctly defining the term is a prerequisite to empirically measuring it in the second part of this chapter. Soft power ‘is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments . . . It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies’ (Nye 2004, p. x, 2008, p. 94). One of the mistakes often made when defining the concept of soft power is to argue that it is an all-encompassing term; it is not. It can be considered a *pull factor*

associated with ‘legitimate agenda setting, persuasion, the attractiveness of values’ and the ‘impression of kindness, competence or charisma’; this stands in contrast to hard power, which functions as a *push factor*, employing the ‘use of force, payment and some agenda-setting based on it’ (Nye 2021, p. 201). However, soft and hard power resources are not as clear-cut and distinguishable as they may initially seem. They vary along a spectrum. The actor who generates soft power is also not always clear-cut. Hard power resources can generate soft power outcomes, as seen in the soft power generated by the US Navy ships that provided tsunami relief to Indonesia in 2004 and the subsequent rise in pro-American attitudes in that country due to those efforts (Nye 2021, p. 201).

As previously mentioned, soft power emphasizes attraction rather than coercion. Power, as traditionally conceived, is related to the ability of Actor X to get Actor Y to do something. Coercion backed by military power or threats is arguably the ultimate instrument of such power. However, such notions of power do not take into consideration the everyday acts of attraction, goodwill, or benevolence.³ There may be instances in which Actor Y acts due to the ‘attractiveness’ of Actor X’s ‘culture, political ideals, and policies’ (Nye 2004). Soft power is ‘getting others to appreciate you to the extent that they change their behaviour to your liking’ (Snow 2020, p. 4). Soft power is a complex phenomenon, as its attractiveness depends on the target and varies by context (Chitty 2021; Repnikova 2022). Furthermore, ‘the power of attraction is not inherently liberal or Western’, since a Hollywood film, for example, ‘may produce attraction in Brazil at the same time it produces repulsion in Saudi Arabia’ (Nye 2021, p. 201). Repnikova (2022) distinguishes between the US and Chinese approaches to soft power: the former based on the country’s liberal values (now declining), and the latter based on the ‘pragmatics’ of Chinese economic strength.

Soft power and public diplomacy

Soft power attracts actors to the table, but other diplomatic instruments are necessary to affect outcomes. Just as a military threat may lead to diplomacy and negotiations to alter outcomes, soft power instruments can further a country’s interests. Chief among these instruments is public and cultural diplomacy. Even if there is no consensus on the definition of ‘cultural diplomacy’, it is often seen as part of ‘public diplomacy’ as the ‘idea of mobilising one’s cultural resources for diplomatic purposes’ (Goff 2020, p. 30). Nye (2008, p. 95) writes that public diplomacy is ‘the instrument that governments use to mobilize these (soft power) resources (i.e., values, culture and policies) to communicate with and attract the publics of other countries, rather than merely governments’. Such instruments include broadcasting, social media, digital diplomacy, and cultural exchange. Cultural values are an essential element of soft power; therefore, aligning cultural values in foreign policy through cultural diplomacy is an essential resource for building relationships and affecting outcomes in one’s favour. As Snow points out, countries have a bigger ‘soft-power advantage’ when ‘a nation has greater access to multiple communication channels that can influence how issues are framed in global news media’ (Snow 2020, p. 5). She continues to argue that the United States’ superiority in international communications is now diminishing and replaced globally with a ‘confused or fragmented information environment’ (Snow 2020, p. 5).

Public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy are also in constant flux, moving from the ‘diplomatic policy emphasis’ to the ‘public involvement emphasis’ (Snow 2020, p. 8). Traditional public diplomacy was meant for the nation-state even if it emphasized public involvement (Snow 2020, p. 9). The definition of cultural diplomacy, over time, has shifted to be less state-centric. Arndt’s definition of cultural diplomacy was state-centric, executed through formal diplomatic channels at the behest of the national interest (Goff 2020, p. 31; Arndt 2007). Milton Cummings’ definition describes cultural diplomacy as ‘the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among

nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding' (Goff 2020, p. 31, building on Cummings 2009). The newer interpretations include a multiplicity of actors and cultural diplomacy defining goals that are not always about the national interest of the state (Goff 2020, p. 31). As will be seen in the next sections, a cultural relations approach to international heritage protection also emphasizes these mutual exchanges, relationship-building with the local communities, and reciprocity. In that sense, both soft power and cultural relations approaches to international heritage protection make use of public and cultural diplomacy as catalysts to create the desired outcomes.

Soft power and international heritage protection

Protection of international heritage – both in its tangible and intangible forms – is enshrined in international treaties such as the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Along with the recognition that world heritage sites belong to all humanity, the 1972 Convention established the List of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and this exercise was repeated with UNESCO's 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention. According to Schreiber, 'the rapid pace of ratification of this international treaty and the large number of nominations pending entry on the Representative List, shows that states recognize the constantly growing role of cultural heritage in building their image in international relations' (Schreiber 2017, p. 47).

Archaeologists and international heritage protections play an important role as potential agents of soft power and cultural diplomacy. Heritage protection embodies Nye's notions of public diplomacy and smart power through various characteristics – the most important of which is continuous communication. To continue their operations in host countries effortlessly and to successfully disseminate their results, archaeologists must be in constant communication with local communities. As explained within the context of US archaeological work abroad, archaeologists' grassroots work and their 'networks and relationships are extremely useful in creating favourable impressions abroad and in deepening an understanding of what Americans and America represent' (Luke and Kersel 2012, p. 13).

Fostering long-term commitments and engagement with local communities and national-level representatives from relevant institutions is a natural outcome of cultural heritage protection. This includes employment of local people and resources and collaborations with in-country educational institutions and museums in varied roles. Archaeologists can also help to expand the in-country networks and facilitate grants and cultural exchanges (Luke and Kersel 2012, p. 13).

Soft power and cultural relations approaches to international heritage protection

When discussing the soft power approach, it is useful to compare it with the cultural relations approach, which owes its origins to the British Council and its practice towards intercultural and development work. The cultural relations approach is 'the mutual exchange of culture between peoples to develop long-term relationships, trust and understanding for the purpose of generating genuine goodwill and influence abroad' (Rivera 2015, p. 11). Cultural relations involve reciprocal interactions between state and non-state actors from different societies. Cultural relations foster participation, dialogue, reciprocity, and trust. In other words, cultural relations approaches are people-oriented and feature partnerships with local communities. Cultural protection involves the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage through social networks that mobilize cultural identity, collective memory, and cultural practices (Anheier and Isar 2010). Historically, cultural relations involved 'cross-cultural exchanges in arts and science, education, and language, as well as sharing understandings about societal issues, such as human rights and empowerment' (Singh 2019, p. 6).

Cultural relations, as the name implies, is more focused on relationships and reciprocity, while soft power is more instrumental in terms of returning some benefits to those wielding it.

Culture has multiple meanings. For example, it can refer to human beings' aesthetic, symbolic, or linguistic expressions or a community's or organization's way of life. While related, the expressions are manifestations of human creative endeavours, while the latter pertains to the anthropology of everyday life. Cultural expressions and ways of life are connected through notions of memory and collective identity (Anheier and Isar 2010). Culture is a central component in both the soft power and cultural relations approaches to international heritage protection. Attraction comes more easily when it appeals to another person's way of life or their aesthetic representations or heritage. Both approaches represent the care and attention one state or society affords to the tangible and intangible representations of memory and identity of another state's citizens. Both approaches can contribute to a country's standing in international affairs.

Emphasis on cultural heritage is a shared value; hence, the importance of its protection is evident in both the soft power and the cultural relations approaches to protection. Due to this commonality, protection of cultural heritage provides stakeholders with 'safe spaces for dialogue', despite the reality that 'cultural heritage is very far from being apolitical'; cultural heritage, 'like sport and other areas of arts and culture, . . . can often serve the purpose of a topic around which people and organisations with diametrically opposed views can convene, potentially as a precursor to engaging in a dialogue about more contentious issues' (In2impact et al. 2021, p. 42).

Fraught issues

Thus far, this chapter has only evaluated the soft power approach to cultural heritage protection in a positive light. It has emphasized the shared nature of international heritage, how protecting it has developed into an act to protect the shared history of humankind, and how cooperation in this regard can serve to facilitate relationship building, especially with respect to the rationale behind soft-power interventions. That being said, the soft power approach to international heritage protection is not immune to criticism. Memory, identity, and heritage are all fluid, subjective, and constructed concepts, and as such, they are dynamic, ever-changing, constantly recreated, political, and contested. These characteristics highlight various fraught issues.

One such issue relates to the genuineness of the actor exerting soft power and the extent to which the real goal is to protect shared heritage, as opposed to furthering the foreign policy objectives of the actor. After all, when one investigates sponsored heritage projects, the selected beneficiary countries often conform with the strategic objectives and priorities of the donors. This is to be expected, given that the money spent on such projects needs to be justified domestically. One straightforward justification that has often been used is that such projects contribute to winning the hearts and minds of local communities.

One might also question the authenticity of the rationale behind the soft power approach when one examines countries that have invested in heritage projects but have not yet repatriated some of the art objects that they had previously taken from the countries they have invested in. The case of the Elgin Marbles, taken from the Parthenon in the early 19th century, is the most famous incident of removal of cultural property, and the incident continues to cause strife. A recent controversy arose over Germany's attempt to project its soft power through its €644 million Humboldt Forum, a museum of non-European art, that opened in Berlin in September 2021. One of the debates leading up to the opening, which was fostered by the museum's creators, was over the status of art objects that had not been repatriated. The museum was to feature over 20,000 objects from Berlin's Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art. At the time the museum opened,

the Humboldt Forum published a collection of essays titled *(Post)Colonialism and Cultural Heritage* (Humboldt Forum 2021), which brought together a prominent global group of curators and intellectuals to debate the issue of post-coloniality and heritage.

Nazan Ölçer, the curator of Istanbul's Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, addresses issues of power inherent in post-coloniality at two levels. First, the Istanbul museum showcases many collections that were forcibly acquired by Ottoman Sultans, including those from private foundations or *waqfs* set up by local dignitaries or nobles to evade Istanbul's grasp. She acknowledges that 'pious foundations', or *waqfs*, were used by local dignitaries to evade the Ottoman Sultans' coercive powers of confiscation. Furthermore, Ölçer describes processes of restitution, including those in Türkiye, that have, through international negotiations, repatriated these art objects to their original societies. Ölçer goes beyond the discussion of restitution, offering the following powerful advice:

Over time, patronising, condescending, particularising or marginalising discourses must be critically screened, and slowly but surely eliminated . . . oppositions or conflicting views should be written into museum or special collection catalogues, item-by-item descriptions, or information panels. They should also be reflected in school curricula and textbooks.

(Ölçer 2021, p. 35)

Thus, one important fraught issue is the paternalistic approach to cultural protection that externalizes cultural expertise to organizations and individuals situated outside of the place where cultural preservation takes place.

Another fraught issue relates to power relations and deciding what constitutes cultural heritage. Given that power plays an essential role in the construction of heritage, symbols relating to the identity of the dominant cultural group often determine what constitutes shared heritage. This occurs often to the exclusion of the other identities, and decisions to exclude the heritage of 'others' within a community are not random, as parties often clash over such decisions (Blake 2015, p. 284). Incidents in India clearly illustrate contesting claims to heritage, as 'inter-religious tensions . . . between Hindus and Muslims have led not only to the exclusion but also the destruction of the physical fabric of cultural heritage' (Blake 2011, p. 210); for example, in 1992 militant Hindus destroyed the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh) that was built by Mughal Emperor Babur in 1528, and the 'act of destruction resulted in extremely serious clashes between Muslims and Hindus' (Blake 2015, p. 284). As Graham explains, 'all heritage necessitates disinheritance of some sort for some people in some circumstances' and 'heritage disinheritance exists on a spectrum from a purely hypothetical or potential condition to violent, deliberate disinheritance associated with human atrocity towards the disinherited' (Graham et al. 2000, p. 34). In summary, what counts as heritage and the decision about whose heritage is to be preserved are frequently contested. Additionally, despite being the foremost organization globally for preserving cultural heritage, UNESCO has often been criticized for its paternalistic tendencies in its role as a global ministry for culture, both in its lack of understanding of what counts as culture and cultural heritage in the Global South and for favouring the listing of cultural heritage sites in the Global North (Singh 2011; Frey et al. 2013).

Just as power dynamics in cultural relations create fraught issues, the same problem arises in soft power discussions. Many have argued that 'soft power implies state power over citizens, rather than the empowerment of citizens, which arguably, is the ultimate goal of cultural relations' (British Council & Goethe-Institut 2018, p. 13). As history has shown, 'even cultural relations devoid of any signs of the hand of government can carry connotations of colonialism, imperialism and propaganda since dominant states have always used culture to transmit political, social, and economic

values' (British Council & Goethe-Institut 2018, p. 13; also see Nisbett 2013). In comparison to cultural relations, both soft power and smart power often carry deep associations with domination and imposition (Lukes 2007). The vocabularies of soft power and cultural relations can often sound a-historic and devoid of conflict in emphasizing the attraction of values or in promoting dialogue and reciprocity. However, the issue of cultural preservation cannot be divorced from questions of cultural restitution and the provenance of art objects in museums, most of them in the Global North.

Empirical analysis

The empirical strategy in this chapter examines the international cultural heritage preservation practices of four countries to account for the presence of soft power and cultural relations values. The empirical evidence demonstrates that these values are present but also accounts for their variations and overlaps across countries and is therefore suggestive of the dynamics and variations globally. This section provides a brief review of the content analysis of project documents that distinguish soft power and cultural relations approaches toward cultural preservation in the United Kingdom, United States, Netherlands, and Norway, before presenting quantitative analysis of similarities and differences among country approaches. The research steps are also described in detail to allow for replication in future studies (and to allow for a critique of our own).

Content analysis

The goal of the content analysis methodology was to provide an assessment of how the different international heritage protection funders contribute towards a soft power and a cultural relations approach. The evaluation methods involve text mining, qualitative indicators generation, quantitative analysis, and social network analysis. The data sources are eight reports and materials collected from the US Ambassadors Fund (Social Impact 2019; US Department of State 2019a, 2019b, 2019c), Prince Claus Heritage Protection Emergency Fund (PCF 2020), Norwegian Support to the Protection of Cultural Heritage (NORAD 2009), and the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund (British Council 2021; In2Impact et al. 2021). In total, four documents are analyzed from the United States, two from the United Kingdom, one from Norway, and one from the Netherlands.

The first step of the evaluation process is to tokenize the documents. Tokenization is a way of tearing apart unstructured text documents and breaking down a piece of text into smaller units called tokens (e.g., words). Specifically, this research applied the following rules to extract single words (1-gram) from each document:

- 1 Encode a text document in 'UTF-8'.
- 2 Strip extra whitespace as a single blank from a text document.
- 3 Remove punctuation marks from a text document.
- 4 Remove numbers from a text document.
- 5 Remove stop words from a text document.
- 6 Remove special symbols from a text document.

The initial tokenization analysis yielded 7,871 unique words used in one or more of the reports from each country. In addition, this research includes a few phrases (2-grams) that are deemed to be associated with cultural relations or soft power, such as foreign policy, public diplomacy, and civil society. Afterward, JP Singh and Neslihan Kaptanoğlu reviewed relevant literature and

Table 4.1 Examples of keywords in each concept

<i>Cultural Relations</i>	<i>Both Cultural Relations and Soft Power</i>	<i>Soft Power</i>
community-based	development	contractor
mutual	evaluation	diplomatic
reciprocal	governance	embassy
local	heritage	foreign policy
participant	international	ministry
exchange	monitor	political
unesco	support	state

Table 4.2 Summary of keyword distributions

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>US</i>	<i>NL</i>	<i>NO</i>
Cultural Relations Only	133	89	48	39	90
Soft Power Only	106	78	53	39	74
Both Cultural Relations and Soft Power	684	525	398	294	488
Total Word Counts	923	692	499	372	652

independently determined whether an extracted word or phrase reflects a concept of cultural relations, soft power, or both cultural relations and soft power. When there was a discrepancy between Singh's and Kaptanoğlu's decisions on the word assignment, Singh and Kaptanoğlu discussed the case until a consensus was reached. The classification of the keywords into the concepts is subjectively assumed to be mutually exclusive and to be a spectrum ranging from cultural relations to both cultural relations and soft power, and from both cultural relations and soft power to soft power. Repeatedly, a keyword was coded within one category because of the dominance of that terminology in either the cultural relations or the soft power literature. Additionally, the cultural relations keywords include more reciprocity, whereas soft power keywords are more one-sided. Sometimes, the keywords were categorized in different categories such as 'center' and 'central' belonging to the mutual category, whereas 'centralised' belonged to 'only soft power' category.

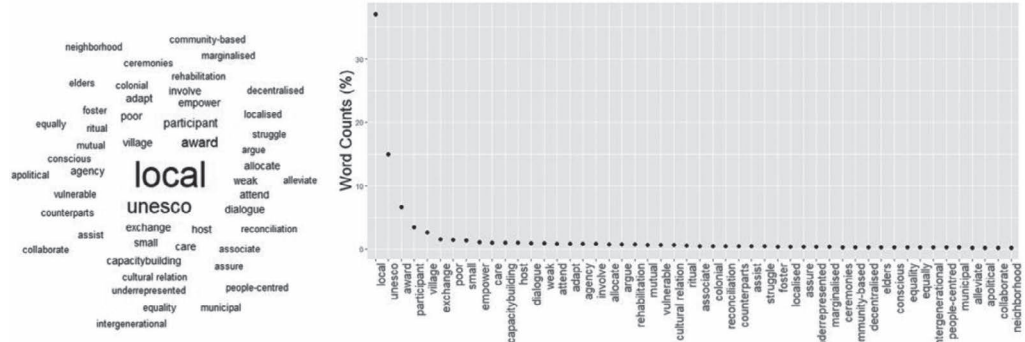
The examples of keywords in each concept are listed in Table 4.1.

Results

Table 4.2 summarizes the distribution of keywords in each concept by country. The total number of selected keywords is 923. Among those, there were 133 keywords associated with cultural relations, 106 keywords associated with soft power, and 684 keywords associated with both cultural and soft power.

Cultural relations

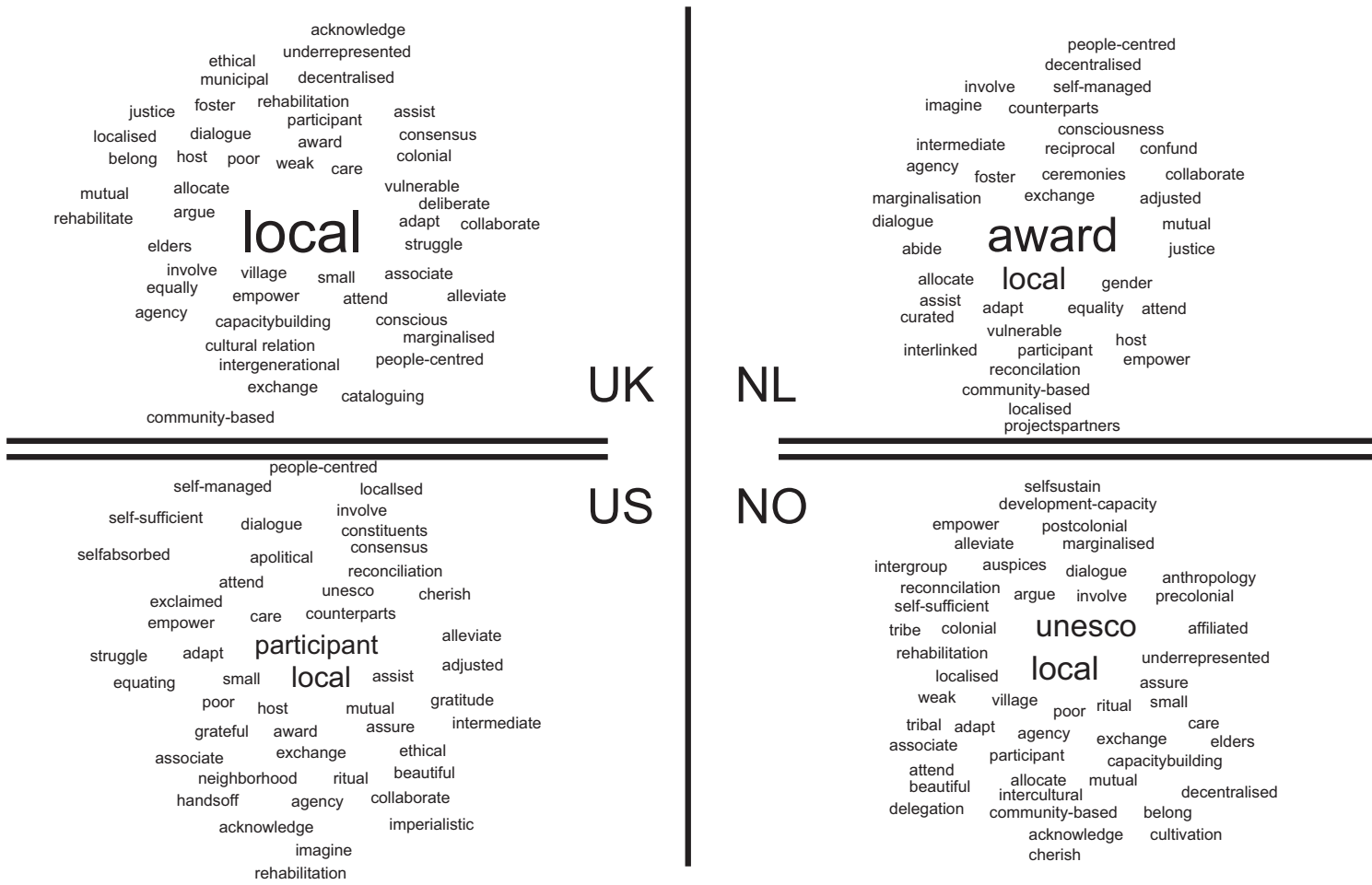
Figure 4.1 provides an aggregated word cloud and distribution of word counts for the top 50 cultural relations keywords in the United Kingdom, the United States, Netherlands, and Norway. The word clouds are proportional to keyword counts, meaning that the large size of a word and centralization of a word in the word cloud reflects the high frequency of a word used in the reports.



Top 50 Keywords in Cultural Relations



Figure 4.1 Top 50 cultural relations keywords in all countries and by country



Taking a soft power approach to cultural heritage protection

Figure 4.1 (Continued)

In general, the word cloud shows that 'local, UNESCO, award, and participant' are important keywords to represent cultural relations. The same figure breaks down the word cloud by four countries. The four-word clouds show that 'local' is a crucial keyword and repeatedly used in all countries. Both the United Kingdom and Norway frequently used 'local and UNESCO' in their reports, while the United States favours using 'local and participant,' and the Netherlands prefers to use 'award and local'.

Soft power

Figure 4.2 exhibits an aggregated word cloud and distribution of word counts for the top 50 soft power keywords in all countries. The graph illustrates that 'state, strategy, ministry, aim and provide' keywords are frequently used in the reports reflecting the concept of soft power. The four-word clouds in the same figure show that the most important keywords of soft power vary by country. The highest frequency of word counts used in the United Kingdom reports is 'assets'. The United States used 'state' very often, the Netherlands preferred to use 'power', and Norway repeatedly used 'strategy'.

One of the important findings of this study is the difference between overall cultural relations and soft power approaches across the four countries studied here. The cultural relations approaches seem to converge among European countries and are generally similar to each other. However, there is a wide variation in soft power approaches. In particular, the US documents eschew the term 'soft power' in favour of the term 'public diplomacy' in describing the US approach.

Both cultural relations and soft power

Figure 4.3 performs an aggregated word cloud and distribution of word counts for the top 75 keywords associated with the concept of both cultural relations and soft power. The most frequent keywords in this concept were 'heritage, project, evaluation, development, fund, and support'. The same figure provides four-word clouds of the keywords related to the concept of both cultural relations and soft power. The United Kingdom frequently used 'heritage, project, and fund', while the United States favours using 'evaluation, project, media, and grant'. The Netherlands regularly used 'fund, change, output, and monitor', but Norway commonly used 'heritage, project, development, and support'.

Similarity analysis

The analysis reveals the different keyword patterns used by each country. To understand the similarity and dissimilarity of the keyword use in the three concepts, this research conducted a correlation analysis to discern how the common keywords are used across the four countries (Figure 4.4) and applied network analysis techniques to explore how the keywords are 'co-used' by countries (Figure 4.5, Figure 4.6, Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.4 presents three correlation matrices among the four countries. In the concept of cultural relations, there were high similarities of keywords between the United Kingdom and Netherlands (84 percent correlation) and between Norway and the Netherlands (75 percent correlation). The rest of the correlation coefficients are also relatively high, (close to 50 percent correlation) except for the correlation coefficient (33 percent) between the United Kingdom and the United States. As for the concept of soft power, the Netherlands had high correlation coefficients with the United Kingdom and the United States (both close to 50 percent). The United States is more

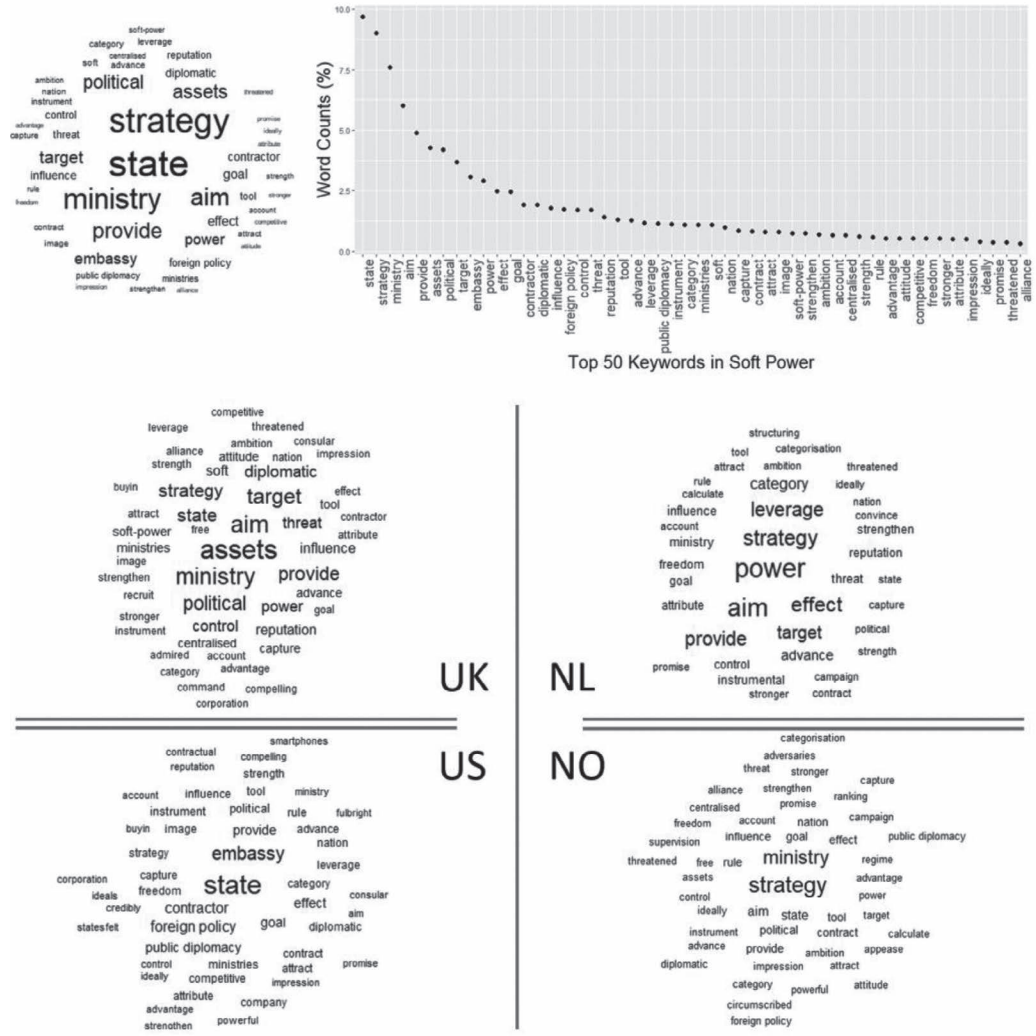


Figure 4.2 Top 50 soft power keywords in all countries and by country

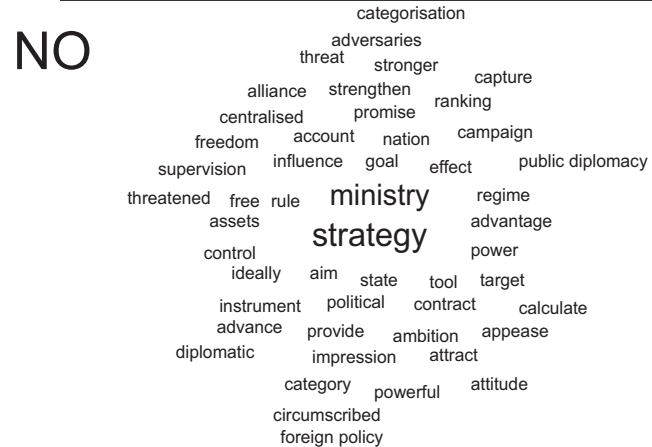
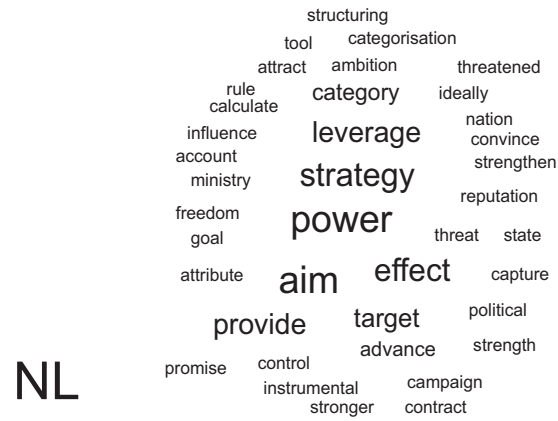
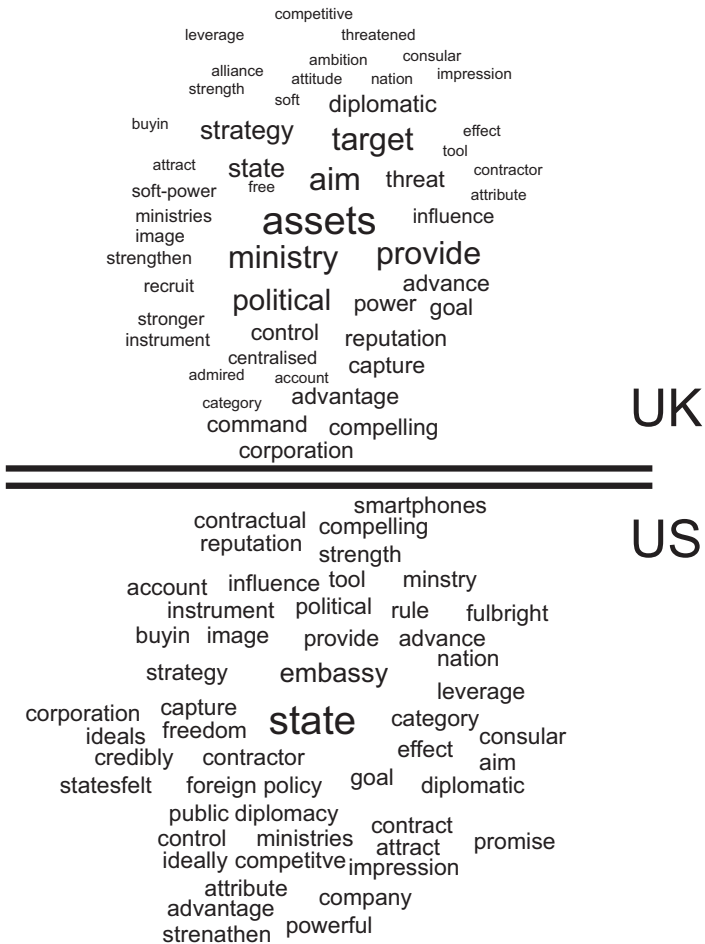


Figure 4.2 (Continued)

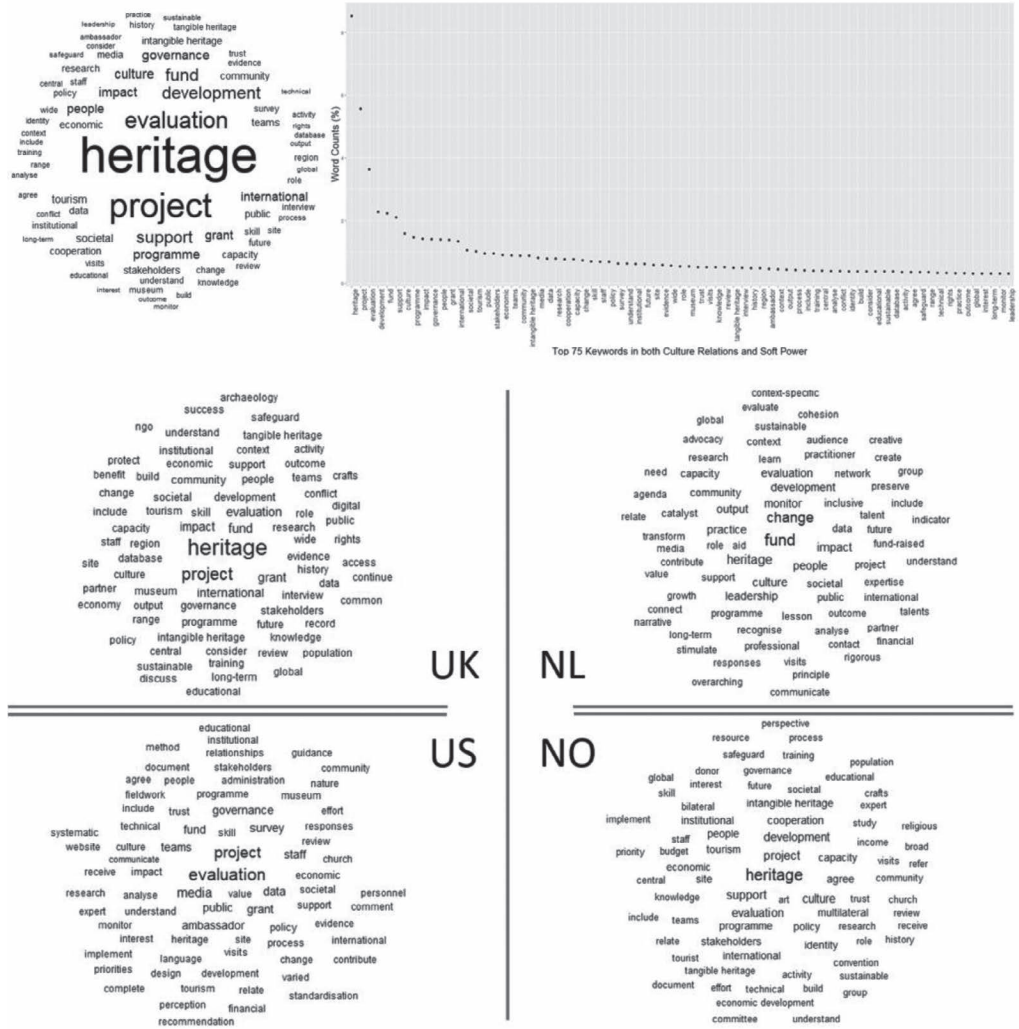


Figure 4.3 Top 75 both cultural relations and soft power keywords in all countries and by country



UK



US



NL



NO

Figure 4.3 (Continued)

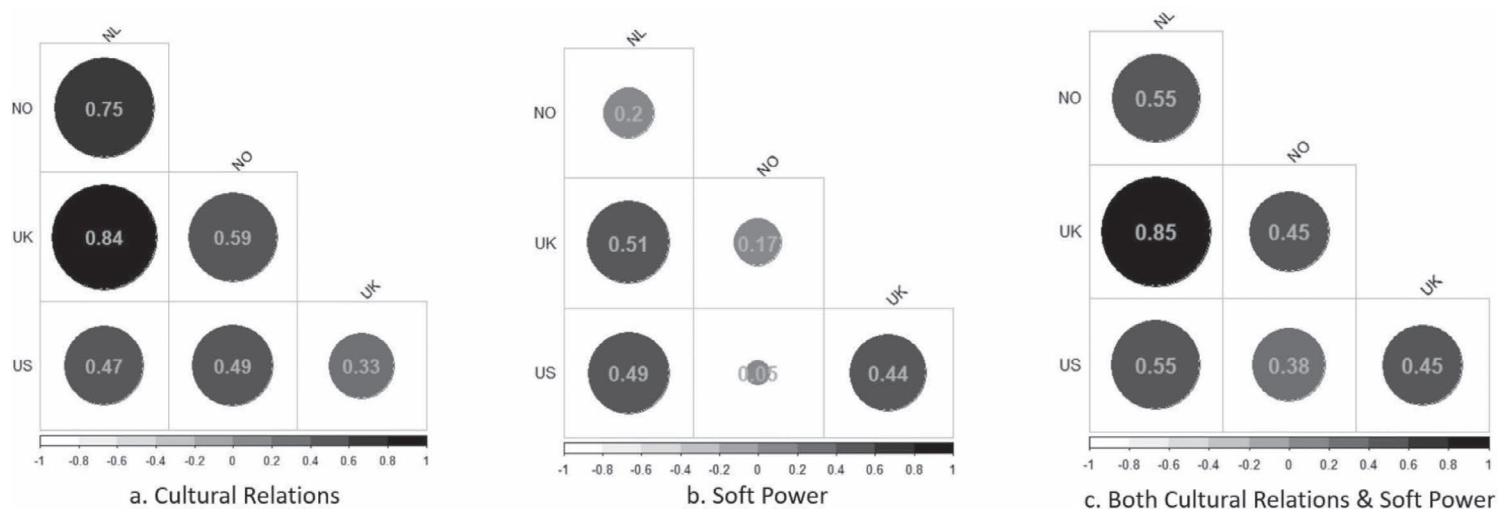


Figure 4.4 Correlation analysis



Figure 4.5 Similarity of top 10 cultural relations keywords among four countries

similar to the United Kingdom (44 percent correlation). In the concept of both cultural relations and soft power, the United Kingdom and Netherlands had a significantly higher correlation coefficient (85 percent) than other associations. The Netherlands also had 55 percent similarity with Norway and the United States. There was a 45 percent correlation between the United Kingdom and the United States and between the United Kingdom and Norway. Interestingly, the Netherlands had high correlation coefficients with the United Kingdom and the United States across all three concepts.

Figures 4.5–4.7 provide two-mode network analysis by three concepts. The vertices in two-mode networks contain two attributes: country and keywords. A keyword edge between two countries represents a keyword used in both countries’ reports. To make the network visualization more readable, this research selected the top 10 keyword counts of the three concepts from each country. Figure 4.5 is the cultural relations network showing that ‘local, award, and UNESCO’ were frequently and popularly used in at least three countries. Figure 4.6 is the soft power network.

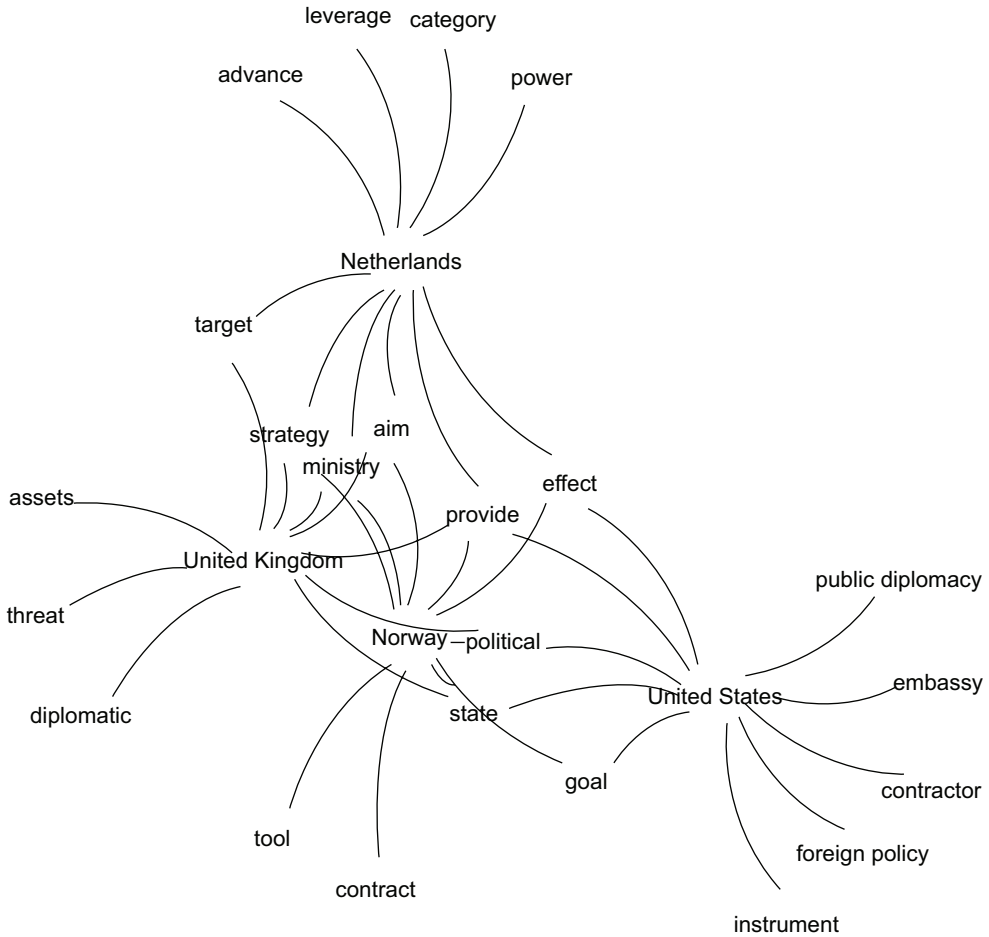


Figure 4.6 Similarity of top 10 soft power keywords among four countries

This network is denser than the cultural relations network, implying that more co-used keywords appear between countries. The keywords ‘strategy, aim, ministry, aim, and provide’ were used in at least three countries’ reports. It is worthy of note that the United States only has five keywords frequently co-used by other countries, while Norway had eight keywords frequently co-used by other countries. Figure 4.7 is both cultural relations and soft power network. This network is fragmented and clustered into two groups: Norway, and the rest of the countries. Norway’s report does not have highly frequent keywords co-used by other countries. The second group constitutes the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Netherlands. The United Kingdom plays a critical bridge role in this group because the United Kingdom had four highly frequent co-used keywords with the Netherlands, and five highly frequent co-used keywords with the United States. There was only one highly frequent co-used keyword (i.e., ‘fund’) between the Netherlands and the United States.

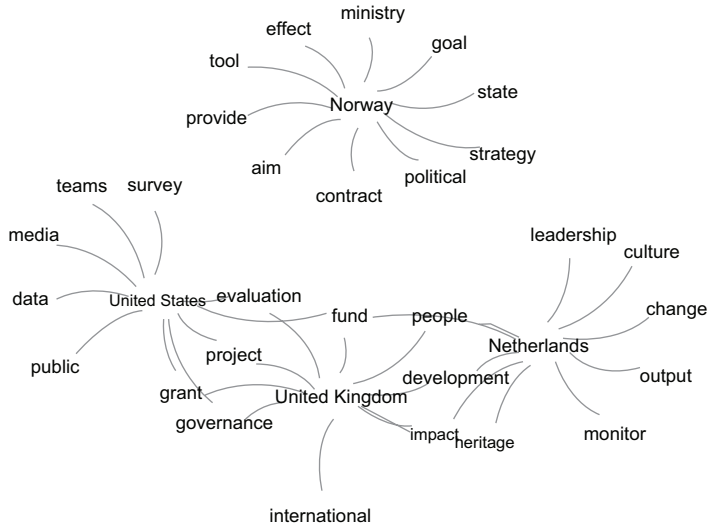


Figure 4.7 Similarity of top 10 both cultural relations and soft power keywords among countries

Analysis and conclusion

As the previous sections have demonstrated, cultural relations and soft power are complex concepts with multiple meanings for different actors, and they are practiced in accordance with those differing understandings. Given that ‘uniform decisions of culture and cultural relations and its related concepts are ultimately neither possible nor desirable’, it might therefore make sense to accept the advice of an earlier report ‘to work with the diversity of notions of cultural relations emerging in different countries at different times and through different institutions’ (British Council & Goethe-Institut 2018, p. 13). Successful cultural relations and soft power approaches share common elements of culture, including shared values and principles of cooperation, mutual trust, and reciprocity. Nevertheless, soft power is more instrumental in terms of benefits, while cultural relations more of a process about strengthening mutually beneficial interactions.

In four countries – the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Norway – a significant amount of programming was conducted, taking into consideration the need to improve these countries’ images abroad. The effects of programming on cultural relations and soft power goals are often measured using online surveys. For example, a Social Impact Inc. (SI) survey, conducted as an Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) performance evaluation found that ‘88% of the respondents reported their AFCP projects collectively had a noticeable positive impact on public diplomacy or foreign policy objectives in the country’ and that ‘the projects promoted a positive impression of the US, increased US visibility in the host country, and/or promoted mutual understanding’ (Social Impact 2019, p. 1). The British Council evaluation reports also report on soft power, but they go one step further, explaining that these soft power goals are closely aligned to the British Council’s Cultural Relations mission. The evaluation concludes that ‘the fund is generating soft power benefits for the UK and supporting the FCDO’s (Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office) ambition that the UK is seen as a Force for Good’ (In2Impact et al. 2021). Furthermore, it has become a valued tool for British diplomats abroad, since it serves as a *diplomatic*

icebreaker, helping to ‘open ministerial doors and can strengthen UK government to government relations’ (In2Impact et al. 2021, p. 4). However, ‘most examples of these changes were anecdotal and not systematically tracked’ (US Department of State 2019a, p. 7). The British Council (2021, p. 16) also mentions several challenges with evaluation reports, including a lack of logic underlying these projects, methodological opaqueness, problems with data and the attribution of causality to outcomes, counterfactual evidence, and a lack of critical insights.

This chapter has provided the conceptual and empirical context necessary to evaluate the soft power and cultural relations approaches to cultural preservation. The resounding conclusion is that the two approaches complement one another. In terms of keywords outlined in this study, 76 percent of the keywords are related to both cultural relations and soft power goals. Another lesson in this study is the similarity of the three European approaches. The United States has been explicit in describing its cultural preservation approach as a form of public diplomacy, in contrast to the Europeans, who see the approach as a component of their soft power toolkit.

Notes

- 1 This chapter is based on a report prepared for the British Council, which funded the endeavor. JP Singh, Meng-Hao Li, Neslihan Kaptanoğlu, and Eric Childress (2021). *Soft Power and Cultural Relations Approaches in International Heritage Protection*. A Study Commissioned from the British Council. Executed by Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University 3351 Fairfax Drive, MSN 3B1, Arlington, VA 22201. Available from: www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/evaluating-impact-cultural-protection-fund.
- 2 Repnikova (2022) distinguishes between the US and Chinese approaches to soft power: the former based on the country’s liberal values (now declining), and the latter based on the ‘pragmatics’ of Chinese economic strength.
- 3 These issues are addressed in a cultural relations context in various works such as in the introduction of *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power (1st Edition)* (Chitty 2017), in Grincheva (2020) and in Wang and Chitty’s (2021) work on Chinese diaspora in Australia. Within the literature on power and influence, there is sometimes a distinction between the ‘intended’ and ‘unintended’ components of power. As Chitty (2021, p. 8) explains, in Nye’s discussions of power, he ‘privileges preferred outcomes over unintended consequences’ and ‘unintended soft (power) is often a by-product of people’s daily lives’ (Chitty 2021, p. 8). This is in opposition to Lasswell’s and Kaplan’s view, which treats only ‘intended’ influence as power (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950).

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