

# Soft Power and Cultural Invasion through Anime Films and Series.



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## Conceptual Vision

Power is one of the components of a state in achieving its interests; it is the means and tool through which the state imposes its position and prestige within the framework of international relations that operate within the international system. Most states show great interest in distributing power among each other, and they strive greatly to achieve their position in the international system as a major actor for developing themselves and updating their capabilities through the formulation of political, economic, and security strategies to ensure their survival and independence among global powers.

The use of the concept of power has evolved, and its forms have diversified, and its uses have changed from the concept of hard power to soft power. Interest in this concept increased after the failure of military power to achieve the goals of strong states militarily, considering soft power as the least costly and most suitable and effective option in the long term. With the popularity of the concept of soft power thereafter, its application and use extended to many countries worldwide, expanding the scope of employing the concept by proposing alternatives to power through cultural, political, scientific, and other forms of attraction.

**Therefore, we will delve into a conceptual introduction to the types of power.**

### Firstly: Power

Power, in its general sense, is defined as "the ability to influence the behavior of others." It interprets international policies as a struggle for power. The sociologist Robert Dahl defined it as "the ability to make others engage in behaviors contrary to their priorities, which they would not have done without the exercise of that ability." This means that the political entity exercises its power over others to engage in behaviors despite their reluctance, fearing the capabilities of this political entity. The latter presses to obtain what it wants through coercion rather than persuasion, and the reaction of others to the political entity clarifies the extent of the power of the latter.

Therefore, the concept of power in its general sense does not only refer to military power or physical coercion in its narrow sense but also encompasses national power in its comprehensive concept with its various material and non-material elements and components such as geographical location, population, natural resources, level of technological advancement, and the nature of the political system. In the realm of politics, there are three approaches to defining power:

**The first approach** defines power as the ability to influence others.

**The second approach** defines it as active participation in making important decisions in society.

**The third approach** defines it as direct or indirect control or domination of a specific individual or group over political issues.

### Secondly: Soft Power

Soft power is a relatively modern term, emphasizing the non-material aspect of power derived from a state's culture, values, and credibility resulting from its practices consistent with these values. It underscores the necessity of not neglecting this aspect amid the focus on the material dimensions of military and economic power, which have held a central position in international relations and foreign policy literature.

Soft power is defined as the ability to influence desired outcomes and change the behavior of others when necessary, coupled with the term "soft" to denote its ability to achieve what it wants through persuasion and attraction rather than coercion.

Despite its relative novelty, the concept of soft power has evolved in its emergence and usage, becoming an important method for influencing minds, winning emotions, understanding the behaviors, tendencies, and inclinations of peoples. Tolerance and acceptance of others with an open-minded mentality have been among the most prominent factors in the rise of soft power. Its methods have become diverse, and its forms of presentation have varied. Soft power has contributed to influencing more than the traditional style that was used for decades, characterized by the use of force to achieve gains.

## Hard Power and Smart Power

### 1. Hard Power

The concept of hard power refers to the traditional notion of power, which defines power as the ability to impose control over others through coercion or material incentives. The primary sources of hard power are military strength and economic power.

### 2. Smart Power

Smart power aims to achieve objectives that cannot be accomplished solely through hard power or soft power alone. Instead, it involves integrating and directing both types of power towards a common path to achieve desired goals and outcomes.

### Thirdly: Cultural Invasion

Cultural invasion is defined as the attack on the foundations and cultures of nations in order to blur them and gain control over them, as well as to spread other beliefs and cultures. This type of invasion is often practiced on developing countries. The concept of cultural invasion refers to the efforts and practices exerted by a politically or economically dominant society to impose various aspects of its own culture on another non-dominant society, such as customs, traditions, religion, language, social and moral norms, and other aspects of the dominant economic and political systems that make up the dominant society. Cultural invasion is considered one form of imperialism, as the dominant state expands the power of its culture over other peoples through military, legal, educational, and other means.

The phenomenon of globalization, in the context of the great openness it has provided through its means of communication between cultures and peoples, has created an environment full of practices that diverge from the prevailing social and cultural norms in recipient countries. These countries have begun to perceive the negative implications of globalization directly on their overall internal life scenes. They have noticed the risks of cultural interference and realized the drawbacks of imposing the culture of others through modern digital communication

technologies and open media space in all directions without restrictions. This deliberate trend distorts the perceptions of peoples and disparages their cultural heritage through methods that adorn the incoming culture to the younger generation, posing a challenge of national identity distortion.

#### Fourthly: Anime

The phenomenon of anime is considered one of the tools of cultural invasion and one of the most prominent means of cultural penetration in our current time, specifically attracting the new generation. What exacerbates the danger is that the older generation has not yet realized the risks of anime movies and series and has not felt their future effects. Some psychologists point out the danger of anime by stating that "these series have become a real problem for children and families, mainly due to their distraction from studies and their excessive obsession with watching them, even though they may not be suitable for their ages, indicating that those cartoons, even though they are for children, are not intended for them, which makes parents unaware of their danger."

There is no doubt that the phenomenon of anime is filled with negative aspects and behavioral deviations. This indicates that anime movies and series may have their origins in Masonic entities. This is evidenced by the appearance of Masonic symbols such as illustrative images of Masonic symbols and statues, and the aim of these movies to establish the idea of polytheism, as well as starting to broadcast rituals and ideas that involve major polytheism, such as sacrifices, and other deviant ideas. This is evidence that all these movies and series aim to implant harmful ideas in the minds of our children and our Muslim generations.