

**THE PRESS AND VIETNAM'S SOFT POWER RELATION IN GLOBAL  
INTEGRATION: HO CHI MINH'S CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES  
REVISITED**

**Duong Xuan Ngoc**

*Professor, PhD., High-ranked lecturer, Faculty of Politics, Academy of Journalism  
and Communication, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Email: [dxngoc@yahoo.com](mailto:dxngoc@yahoo.com)

**Phan Minh Duc**

*PhD, Lecturer, Faculty of Political Economics, Academy of Journalism and  
Communication, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Email: [phanminhduc@ajc.edu.vn](mailto:phanminhduc@ajc.edu.vn)

**Duong Ngoc Anh**

*PhD. Candidate, Lecturer, Faculty of Political Economics, Academy of Journalism  
and Communication, Hanoi, Vietnam*

Email: [duongngocanh@ajc.edu.vn](mailto:duongngocanh@ajc.edu.vn)

---

**ABSTRACT:** *This paper adopts the culture definition of Ho Chi Minh, a great leader of Viet Nam people, in exploring the connection between types of powers in the political arena. In case of Viet Nam, the revolutionary leaders' directions can become a wonderful source for professional practice of the media, which is considered the fourth estate of a nation. Therefore, there are some qualitative clues that trigger us to explore the press in its traditional formats and in a more modern context of social media, proving its close relation in promoting the cultural identities of the country, which is also a component of soft power.*

**KEYWORDS:** culture, fourth power, Ho Chi Minh, soft power, the press, Viet Nam

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Viet Nam has entered its era of Renovation process (Doi Moi) since 1986, at the 6<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Central Communist Party. More than 30 years have past by with remarkable changes in the economy and the levels of global integration that it has achieved. In the recent years, Viet Nam economy has been being ranked at the groups of the highest GDP growth rate globally, of around 6.5% each year just below the corresponding figures of China (Statista, 2019). Moreover, the country has been of strategic or total partnership diplomatic cooperation with several nations in the world, having successfully signed more than 10 bilateral and multilateral active free trade agreements (FTA) with key nations and regions in the world (VCCI WTO Center, 2019). On June 7<sup>th</sup> 2019, Viet Nam has been elected as a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for the second term of 2020-2021 in its history. These phenomena have gradually proved the focus of the nation on global integration and economic development targets, and its increasingly significant role in the global

political arena. This context may root from the so-called “soft power” that Viet Nam has been establishing and trying to foster in the Renovation process. It, the diplomatic culture of Viet Nam, has attracted foreign investors into the country to help grow various industries, while convincing the nations’ representative voters to support Viet Nam in the polls.

This soft power, on the other side, can be explained to be partially created by the power of media to some certain extent. This is because the classical media has played an important role in the nation governance of the mankind. Printed newspaper, radio, television channels and 1st generation website are believed to possess their own power that can be offered to the state and their citizens as a fourth estate. And, in fact they have did it being a facilitator for policy implementation, a connector between the commoners and the governments, and even a tool for political, cultural and economic assimilation taken by the world giants. Furthermore, in this digitalized era of the economy, the web environment offers an unprecedented way of transmitting information through social media platforms. These high-tech bases are changing the power shape which has had a long history in the conventional media order, in which the news media (literally. press) have promoted the images of the nation in a much more efficient way. This helps create the country identities that attract the outsiders to support its development in a suitable manner.

Moreover, Viet Nam is known to be a nation of long history, where the cultural tradition has been deeply imbued with national identity. This advanced cultural background has paved the way for intertwining the traditional strength and the contemporary strength, the people’s strength and the international strength to create typical Viet Nam’s soft and smart power. Along with this, President Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese hero of national liberation and great man of culture (as being noted by the 1987 UNESCO Records of 24<sup>th</sup> Session General Conference in Paris), has coined his own definition of culture that has led the way the whole nation move in establishing its soft power. In the Volume 3 (p.431) of the second edition of the Total Compilation of Ho Chi Minh’s works in 2000, his preserved Chinese manuscript said “Either for the survival purposes or for the other targets of life, human beings have created and invented languages, texts, moral standards, laws, sciences, religions, literatures, arts, the daily used instruments regarding dressing, eating and sheltering demands and the ways to use them. All of those are culture.”. In other words, the Vietnamese culture can be well understood in 3 key characteristics: serving mankind, consisting physical and spiritual aspects, combining all of daily methods in a human life.

Therefore, this paper aims at exploring the news media and their roles in the process of building and enhancing the soft power of Viet Nam in the period of Renovation though the lens of Ho Chi Minh’s perspectives on culture. The study is expected to lay a foundation of theory on the connection between the fourth power of the states and their soft power in the global context. This task is believed to have not been addressed by any previous researching projects from Vietnamese scholars.

---

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *A fourth power*

In his era-benchmarking work of “The spirit of the laws” dated back to 1748, Montesquieu has been the first one to propose the term of “trias politica”, which separates the state powers into three distinctive branches of legislature, executive and judiciary (Charles Montesquieu, 1899). Also later in the 18th century, the term “the fourth estate” (the fourth power) was accidentally proposed by Edmund Burke, an Irish politician, in his parliamentary debate (Thomas Carlyle, 1905). Since then, though unofficial the media (aka. news media or press) has been supposed to have a very significant role in state governance. As per Thomas Carlyle (1905), Literature has become a metaphoric Parliament to the country, which shapes concepts, commentaries, regulations on every social interaction that inevitably influence the policy-making process of the authorities, supervise the execution of laws and somehow testify the judgments of courts. In this sense of power, the media provides citizens adequate information regarding the undergoing socio-economic and political progresses to ensure the formation of a democracy. Thus, people shall have an effective communication channel with the government for fully understanding their rights and obligations to the society (Nahida Begum N., 2014). This enables them to act in favour of positive changes to the mainstream issues that the nation has to cope with in the contemporary times. In other words, this can be generally considered as the educational power that the news media represents in the theme of the fore-mentioned saying. It has continuously been educating the public ever since.

Besides, there are several real-life circumstances that can be used to denote the ‘power’ that the press brings to the society. In America, for instance, the traditional media is thought to disseminate political information alongside policies very effectively to almost all of its people over the vast area of the country through news radio frequencies, delivered printed newspapers, and the three main television networks in around the early 2000s (Louis Klarevas, 2003), right after the period of the dot-com bubble. Increasingly noteworthy, they have tended to move towards the paid cable-TV channels and the online newspapers for 24/7 news service in the recent times. This mixes the powers of traditional and modern press communication. Therefore the American media broadcasting stations, which are frequently owned by well-known private press conglomerates (Harry Henderson, 2004), do not only lay their impacts on the ways that people think and act but also help reflect the public responses and opinions on the emerging issues of the society. In China, on the contrary, the media has been strictly controlled by the government for the political orientations of successfully building a socialist society (Tahirih V.Lee, 2000). The consequence was the birth of several state-run media stations (including press, film and radio) in the 1920s – 1930s period. In this circumstance, the news agencies did play a critical role in communicating with the masses to get them involved and the state and Party’s activities and monitoring their behaviour towards a profound solidarity of the people. In the biggest country in the world in terms of dimension, Russia Federation, the mass media autonomy has witnessed both the rise and fall in the history of the nation of 11 time zones and around 10 climatic themes. Moving backward, the former Soviet Union came up with the theory of mass media propaganda to promote the Union’s policies (of the Party and of

the governments) and the decency of the people. While the production of different kinds of media was closely supervised, the media impacts on the citizens' perception had been ignored (Olessia Koltsova, 2006). This, later on, partly contributed to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in late December 1991 after the promulgation of the 1990 Law on Press, which paved the way for the privatisation of state-owned media corporations and the establishment of private press agencies with a freer approach in speech.

In short, rooting from its fantastic ability of educating the public, the news media can help build a richest nation of freedom of speech, strengthen the 1.4-billion community spirit of solidarity to reach a common social target, and can even destroy a greatest Union of 22,402,200 km<sup>2</sup> ever in mankind history. But, we shall underestimate the potential of the press by looking at those symbols only. Instead, its magic power should also be scrutinized within the classical media order and the state-of-the-art social media platforms.

### ***Soft power, hard power, smart power and sharp power***

In "Bound to lead, the changing nature of American Power", Professor Joseph S.Nye has been the first one to address the notion of soft power, which he stated to be a "second face of power" that countries have got when the others want to follow and support them. This power is thought to contain national culture, people's ideology and political institutions (Joseph S.Nye, 1990). Again, in 2005, he added that it is hard to find the identical sources of power to replace one while it has been already established (Joseph S.Nye, 2004). This conceded that the soft power while having been created is not interchangeable, and is exclusive to the case of each country in the world. The discrepancies in culture not only distinguish the countries, but also are the key reasons to the different approaches to interests among them. Thus, soft power can be understood as the gain of what an entity wants through influencing the others to do things at their changes in value system by altering their mindset to be aligned to the influencer's expectations. In case of a country, the fundamental characteristic of the national soft power is the ability in inducing admiration and respect of the global communities. The culture can be considered to be the first and the salient component of the soft power because it creates the basic value system of the society, while the political ideology and the socio-economic policies are all built from those core beliefs. Besides, the attractiveness of a country's soft power may also lie in the correspondence between the national characteristics and traits that trigger their mutual support to each other for the benefits of common attainments.

Hard power, on the contrary, grows from the military strengths or the economic status of a country (Joseph S.Nye, 2006) that, in some ways, enables them to coerce the others to do things that the stronger nations want. However, the military power tends to be of less utility in the contemporary times than it did tens of years ago, and it has become dependent on the variety of culture and political situations (Colin S.Gray, 2011). This is mainly because the world context has changed to a more advanced one with global community's resistance to using brutal forces in diplomacy. In reality, hard power usage often incurs the responses in violence and it cannot guarantee a diplomatic success for the ones who take advantage of it. This can be the case of the US with the war in Viet Nam, while the giant came with a lot of power from a huge asset of military state-of-

the-art weapons that no other adversaries of theirs possessed at the time, but they still could not bring the small country to their knees as per the war-igniting nation's initial aspirations (Joseph S.Nye, 2004). Hence, the use of hard power today entangles both the military and economic threats to be much more effective in leading to the final outcomes that the stronger countries desire.

Noteworthy, the soft power can turn “smart” while being used in combination with the hard power in a savvy way, which involves a right choice of diplomatic tools (economic, political, military, legal and cultural ones, for instance) (Mandip Singh, 2018) to impose threats and constraints upon others through attraction, payment and coercion. With this in hand, the small countries shall have more chances in laying impacts on the bigger ones with the wise uses of soft power when their military and economic threats may cause few political destructions to the opponents/partners, whereas the more powerful countries can turn more gentle in their approaches to the weaker ones, treating them with due respect for the sovereignty, but maybe on the surface only. Recently, the case of China's Confucius Institute Project (Zheng Yue E, Wei Xinyi, 2018) has implied another term for power, which is literally called “sharp power”. This is known to be able to manipulate abroad policies with the use of political power, force, culture, language, religion, media, academics, Chinese mass migration and other initiatives (Mandip Singh, 2018). The rise of China's power here commences with the part of soft one while hundreds of Confucius Institutes globally have to fulfill their mandate to foster the cultural exchange, Chinese culture education, and to promote the Chinese ideologies and characteristics. Later on, with the soft power in place, the mindset assimilation shall be utilized to change the policy structure of the host countries into a favorable stance to the economic giant. Therefore, the sharp power is thought to be prevalent among the cases of bigger countries where they have enough resources to form the gradual inner-changes of power shape that deeply affects the policy decision-making process of the local authorities.

### ***Soft power from the cultural perspectives***

Once a national cultural identity becomes popular and widely-acceptable in all over the world, that country is able to take part in any of the global collaborative schemes in establishing international regulations for different industries and aspects of life, so both that country's soft power and soft strength increase accordingly. Culture, rather than the ideology and policy, is inclined to be popular much more easily internationally, so that it can be considered as the main root for country soft power with the outside world. As a real-life example, in the past four decades, the increasing influences of Chinese culture on the world communities have raised a researching topic of how the Chinese have been doing with exporting culture and Chinese language teaching in a soft power building strategy (Xiaogang Deng, Lening Zhang, 2009). Nowadays apart from the overwhelming proliferation of the Chinese goods in almost every corner of the world, the number of people who are studying Chinese have increased dramatically, the Chinese cultural research institutes have also expanded in number, while media of cultural information communication have been strategically promoted. This is thought to be the China's preparation to become the world most powerful nation. Such future power has been revealed to be co-made (Michael Barr, 2011) by various media in global politics like country advertisements, online blogging pages, printed and online

newspapers/magazines, academic researching articles and other news broadcasting channels. This triggers fear for the other giants because the power is real. In another example, the former world second economy, Japan, has built their global appeal so successfully in culture exporting just as the case of China with the birth of such comics, anime, K-pop and Pokémon game, which has been called a J-wave that is alluring to the other countries' youth (Anne Allison, 2008).

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to conduct the research, the researchers intend to inductively use qualitative approach in reviewing the relevant documents regarding press and soft power, especially for the case of Viet Nam, to generate the possible conclusions and recommendations to Viet Nam political authorities.

## **FINDINGS**

### ***Press in the classical media order***

#### *Classical media order*

The classical media should refer to the traditional ways of broadcasting information for the enhancement of public awareness before the birth of the Internet interaction platforms, in which the social media appears to be one of the most popular method in circulating news among the communities. To comprehend this order fully, we need to follow the history of the press, especially in the country with the world-class Pulitzer prize, for a better grasp of what were really included in the classic one. First, the printing press has triggered the whole progress of the communication industry since the American civil war in 16th century with very fundamental forms of pamphlets and handbills, which were used by the army for the propaganda purposes (Harry Henderson, 2004). Popular printed media that can be evolutionarily named afterward are books and much more importantly newspapers. At the beginning the printing of newspaper was put in a tight control of the authorities, so that they cannot be utilised by the political dissidents to promote opposition ideology to the common public, but this circumstance changed dramatically in a more democratic world of press businesses. Only till 1920s – 1930s, the weekly magazines with up-to-date news like Reader's Digest, Fortune, and Life were introduced to the audiences. Second, radio came along with its first broadcast in the American 1920 election and proliferated in only 10-year time with more than 600 stations in the country, promoting latest news to more than 13 million households at that time (national population of 123 million contemporarily). Third, electronic and cable television network use skyrocketed in the period of 1945 – 1960, while the number of U.S households own a television set reached 90% (approximately 45 million) in 1960 (Harry Henderson, 2004). Films, documentaries, newscasts and even the shows like presidential debates began to appear on the screen, laying special political impacts on the viewers because of the innovative ways in transforming and transmitting news. Nevertheless, the classic media had to encounter the force of globalisation with the intrusion of the world wide web in around 1989. There was no such thing as one-direction message from the broadcasting stations under communication platforms owned by the large private conglomerates and the free-to-use 1st generation of website (static webpage). Nearly all of the traditional broadcasters now owned their websites.

Pluralism, then, needed to be addressed to ensure the diversity of information, meeting the tastes of various cultural groups of people (James Curran, 2002).

*The fourth power within the order*

The traditional news media is supposed to be in the hand of the governments (Dan Nimmo, Michael W. Mansfield, 1982), and partly under the control of big media conglomerates. Therefore, if there lies a fourth power, then the authorities and/or company leaders should be the ones who hold it. Actually, the press and its roles have been altered due to the changes in the mottos of different governments, along with the relationships they has with the commoners (Nahida Begum N., 2014). We now take an inductive approach of examining the power of the media in the cases of countries/regions in the world to come up with conclusions on how it is in the classic order.

In France, the press had taken its first steps very soon after the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789) with the emphasis on the freedom of opinions. Close legal considerations were put in the publications of newspapers, books, radio and television programs, especially when they dealt with the contents regarding infants, adolescents, and the youth in general (Francis Balle, Jean Marie Cotteret, 1982). The industry was opened to the private programming companies for a more competitive market to the national channels, but they had to obey the laws on corporations and special stipulations on the media that the Prime Minister signed each year. The French media can be said to have been in the direct and indirect supervision of the government through choosing the high-ranked officials in the national mainstream communication networks, and setting forth the regulations by the legal documents respectively. On the contrary, the media also lays its effects on the governemnt in return. This process has been done through the less official channels of communication, which discuss political concerns through more informal means to form such a so-called “supplementing democracy” in France. These meetings, conferences, clubs and societies’ activities with handouts and pamphlets have put pressure back on the government in their legislation, legal execution and judiciary.

In Africa, as a global theme of shared influences, the giant countries, such as America, Britain, France, Russia, China and India, have gradually inserted their soft power of the media into the countries like Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Egypt and even South Africa to gain their political and economic interests (Daya Kishan Thussu, 2016). India uses their own culture, which have been long-established in the society of many African countries, as a mean of provoking the need of communication between people and people, so it relies much on the Internet to transmit Indian contents to the African. Not to mention, the U.S culture has more chances than the other giants in being promoted in every world corner, ranging from Holywood to Harvard-typed of contents. The cable television networks with most induced channels from the U.S (Voice of America, CNN, Discovery, etc.) and the other popular channels from Britain (BBC World Service), France (TV5 Monde), China (CCTV News’ Africa Live and Talk Africa), and Russia (Russia Today) are being tailor-made to the tastes of African audiences to lay on them international influences that the local media cannot defeat in fact.

In Latin American countries, oppositional media corporations and the mainstream ones of the leading Parties are in a fierce battle using the inner powers of each side to affect the common ideology of the people (Roberto Follari, 2014). This leads to an inevitable media reform in the region dealing with plurality and equality that it imposes on the society, but the reform differs in countries with their unique state-led approaches. The modification of the media structure in South America creates chances for diversity of voices, enhances the democratic movements, and fosters the imagination of the new development tracks to the national and regional economies (Katherine M. A. Reilly, 2014). The plurality, here, is intended to ensure the fair distribution of resources in the nations in mass production economy. The democracy can be better guaranteed with the innovations in the media through the new-tech insertion and application to be much more effective in terms of openness and coverage. These targets would be reached through the impacts of the media on the governments and citizens in the Latin American countries, where can be considered as one single economy of shared culture (David McQueen, 2014).

Throughout the examination of the three above, we can admit that the media in its classic order has conquered the field of communication in all senses. In the first sense, it can be well-deployed by the State to implement rules of laws, to envision a country of equality and a society of speech freedom, and to depress the ongoing aggression from the oppositional entities. It can also be a feasible method that the common public use to show their own feedbacks to the authorities on the imposed policies, here in very simple forms. Lastly, the media helps the countries, especially the developed ones, conduct their diplomatic activities and gain possible economic interests through extensively long-absorbed cultural and political influences on the less developing ones.

### ***Press in the social media context***

#### *Contemporary social media context*

With the boom of the Internet, more and more user-friendly platforms, surpassing the fundamental static website, are being invented, including social media. This type of media has enriched the ways people communicate with each other and has challenged the governments much more in dealing with their citizens. As mentioned, social media can be defined as the Internet-based application which is created on the interaction-led platform of web (Web 2.0) allowing the users to share and exchange their own generated contents (Kaplan, A.M., Haenlein, M., 2010). The data that are collected through the use of social media regarding the personal profile, individual opinions, comments revealing thoughts and online behaviour become a valuable resources to politics, business, and other social processes (Evangelos Kalampokis et.al., 2013). Social media exists in various forms, including content communities (blogs, microblogs, photo and video sharing, podcasts, RSS feeds), social networking sites and collaborative projects (wikis), virtual games and social worlds (Iris Xie, Jennifer Stevenson, 2014) (Kaplan, A.M., Haenlein, M., 2010), so it can be well used as a technical tool for communicating information or socialising between people (Christofer Laurell, 2017). However, the era of advanced social media does not only include itself in the process of transmitting information, but the aforementioned old-styled media. This context, therefore, can be called the hybrid media system, comprising oral-print

media (in social rituals, for instance), print-aural media (recorded sound), electric media (telephone, television), and digital newer media (Internet) (Andrew Chadwick, 2013). The integration of conventional media and the digital media like social media platforms have enlightened the public much more than ever before through profound participation and engagement in the broadcasting process. This contemporary context promisingly brings about much more powers for the involved parties.

*The fourth power within the context*

With the interactive platform of Web 2.0, the modern news media consists of official channels from the governmental broadcasting stations and giant private media corporations, and the social media channels through various forms of communication. The fourth power, then, has been agreed to have changed its fundamental shape into a hybrid one (Andrew Chadwick, 2013), controlled by a trio of government, business and the country citizens. The traditional activism now collides with the digital activism in getting people involved comprehensively to strengthen the democracy and the civic engagement in the countries.

Taking Europe as an instance, the social media is now considered as one crucial part of the main dish in the public diet schedule of information, and the indispensable professional tool of the journalists for making any update of news to the audiences. Most of the journalists in Finland, Germany, Sweden and Britain to have been asked in a recent survey answer that they did use the social media to broadcast news in their routine work (Pablo Barberá et.al., 2017). Social media is transnational in Europe for the fact that their citizens meet on the webs to discuss the political issues regarding the whole group of countries like refugee chaos or Internet privacy laws. Citizens' profound knowledge of the issues and their responsive actions, then, cannot be neglected by the EU legislators and even by the traditional media owners as well. However, the overuse of social media also raises the questions of genuineness of the pieces of information it broadcasts. This, if happens, can falsify the power that it deserves to have.

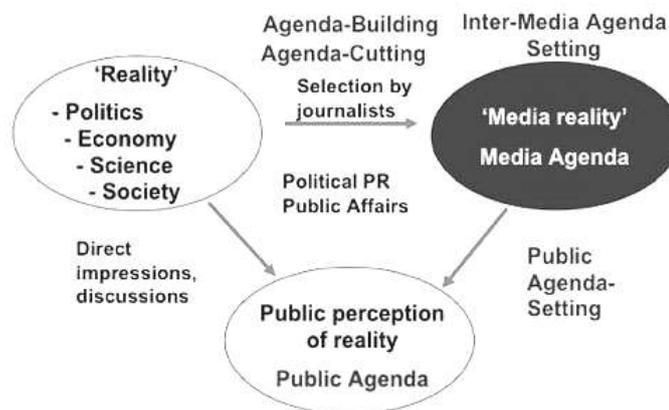
In Singapore, for example, though the significant trend of audiences' moving to the Internet for online news and non-mainstream channels of information is being witnessed, there is still an affirmation that the national mainstream media, which is operated by Singapore Press Holdings and MediaCorp, is the most trustworthy source to rely on (Augustine Pang et.al., 2014). In a bigger country like India, the classic media, mainly radio, has its own value in being closer to the rural areas than the other channels of information, which are now focusing on the entertainment needs and the context of the urban life (Y. T. Jayaprakash, Brian Shoemith, 2007). In fact, the South Indian tribes' social awareness, entertainment and economic development are much indebted to the more than 200 radio broadcasting stations around the country. Although these two cases has illustrated the power of the classic media in the social media time, there are still some failure to be observed. It is remarkable to note such failure in the case of American press with the Iraqi war and the Katrina hurricane (W. Lance Bennett et.al., 2007). The manipulation of the press news has been heavily blamed for the disastrous journey of the American troops in Iraq and the political ignorance of the aftermath of the Katrina storm. These public experiences account for the loss of faith in the

mainstream traditional media of the nation, and encourage them to move on to the net to get relief from the social interactions there offers.

Last but not least, the advance in technology will lead the media world to many other efficient and smart ways to communicate with their potential audiences. In that circumstance, the power of the media will be reshaped. Like in the above context, it has been proved that the one-way power has become an old-fashioned style of the media. Instead, the balance of power using is what is really needed in a world of uncertainty and chaos.

### *Vietnam's "soft power" from fourth power*

The media's impacts on reality have been discussed in the model of Semetko et.al. (2011), which addresses the flow of public diplomacy that a country may employ to get a desired attention of the world public.



**Figure 1. The media's impacts on reality**

The model has emphasized the focuses of media, which are economy, politics, science and society. They are the real world that the media want to reflect in their products deliberately through selecting favorable news for building media agenda and inter-media agenda. This is called Media reality. However, the real world and the world in media cannot solely form the public perception of reality, but they are to co-create the public agenda through the prioritization of the public discussions on real-life events and the subjective choices of the media. Therefore, the soft power, if established, should lie in the public agenda of the audiences, where they hold their feelings, emotions, judgements, beliefs and support. And, the whole process can be considered as the political public relation (PR) activities of a national media, upon both domestic and international news public.

In Viet Nam, the press has played a pivotal role in disseminating the news of the latest socio-economic achievements, global integration process, the Central Party's directions, and the governmental policies towards the outside potential investors. Throughout the analyses of the press, the global community can understand Viet Nam's circumstances much more in a correct way. Most of the prestigious publishers are governed by the state, so the cultural diplomacy has been smoothly conducted alongside the use of different online and traditional offline media. The foreign affairs communication process, thereby, has taken place at both country-wide and world-wide levels with several press conferences, workshops, exhibitions, film festivals, Vietnam

cultural space activities and President Ho Chi Minh testimonial events. At the moment, Viet Nam has more than 700 active press agencies, which exist in diverse formats ranging from traditional newspapers to online radio and television channels. This has been a remarkable improvement in the state media agenda while there were only 350 agencies in 1992 (Phạm Gia Khiêm, 2019). Among them, VTV4 channel of Vietnam Television has been broadcast around the clock to almost all Vietnamese expatriates in the globe. The channel and other foreign language-based media have been transmitted, and successfully contributed to the promotion of Viet Nam's image and culture. More on the public agenda setting, Viet Nam is now turning its mandate in multilateral foreign affairs from “taking part” to “actively and pro-actively participating” (Phạm Bình Minh, 2019), so the outbound media to the world must become more and more active in their approaches, thereby conveying the cultural diplomacy of the country. Accordingly, the public agenda and the soft power may be somehow gauged by the increase in the economic achievements of the country after launching these media campaigns of cultural diplomacy, such as the rise in annual export and import positive balances, the actual FDI investment, and the annual number of foreign visitors to the country. These figures have all witnessed substantial changes in recent years that partially proves a gradual success of using the fourth power in building and fostering the soft power of Viet Nam in the long run.

## DISCUSSION

On discussing Vietnam's “soft power” from cultural perspectives, the authors have chosen to adopt President Ho Chi Minh's perspectives on culture to guide the fourth power of the nation in promoting the former power to the highest level it can be.

Firstly, in the long history of evolution and survival through the harshness of the environment, the human kind has invented the culture, and in its turn, the culture has made the human to a more perfect state in civilization and humanity. While we assert the breed characteristics of our culture, we do not deny its people traits, but when the breed level is high the people traits become more and more imbued with national identities. Thus, the national culture may reach to another level of attractiveness to the outsiders.

Secondly, Uncle Ho has emphasized the significance of spiritual culture, which is the result of language, hand written characters, morality, legal framework, sciences, religions, literature and arts. Notably, the religious origin of people has been mentioned to be covered in the cultural frame. This was an innovating idea at the time of Ho Chi Minh. Those spirits should be successfully delivered to the world while a country wants to promote its cultural identities.

Last but not least, with the most general meaning of its, the culture relates to the daily routines of people's life at either physical or spiritual aspects. Relying on the growth of culture, the human beings build their knowledge, personal and public morality, soul, dignity, lifestyle, will, levels of profession, and even talents and toughness. In short, this illustrates the personal growth inside the development of the human culture. When the people get stronger, especially in their spirits, the promotion of their culture tends

to work much more effectively, and a higher soft power of the country may come afterwards.

## **CONCLUSION**

A small country in size and economic scale cannot deny the fact that they are so tiny to the whole world. However, this does not correspond to the strength it possesses. That is why the notion of soft power comes along. In the case of Viet Nam, a country can make use of its cultural identities and a good system of media channels in promoting its soft power globally. Up to its eternal leader's ideas, the culture to be presented to the world should develop through times, yet holding its imbued national identities, and it should be approached in a multifaceted mindset while promoting widely for being much more effective and efficient.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We are greatly indebted to the country, from which we have grown with this paper ideas. Also, our nation's pathway in economic integration and our beloved eternal leader (Uncle Ho Chi Minh) have enlightened and inspired us in our scientific study. They are all deeply appreciated.

## **References**

- Andrew Chadwick. (2013). *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power* (1st ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Anne Allison. (2008). The attractions of the J-wave for American Youth. In D. L. Watanabe Yasushi, *Soft power Superpower: Cultural and National assets of Japan and The United States* (pp. 99-110). New York: An East Gate Book.
- Augustine Pang et.al. (2014). Media relations in an evolving media landscape. *Journal of Communication Management*, 18(3), 271-294.
- Charles Montesquieu. (1899). *The Spirit of the Laws* (1st ed.). New York: 1873 Press.
- Christofer Laurell. (2017). A spatial approach to social media. *Management Research Review*, 40(6), 671-683.
- Colin S.Gray. (2011). *Hard power and Soft power: the utility of military force as an instrument of policy in the 21st century*. Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute.
- Dan Nimmo, Michael W. Mansfield. (1982). *Government and the News Media: Cross National Comparisons*. In M. W. Dan Nimmo (Ed.), *Government and the News Media: Comparative Dimensions* (pp. 1-8). Texas: Baylor University.
- David McQueen. (2014). *Media Democracy and Reform in South America: Lessons for Europe*. In E. V. Cheryl Martens (Ed.), *The International Political Economy of Communication: Media and Power in South America* (pp. 31-45). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Daya Kishan Thussu. (2016). *The Scramble for Asian Soft Power in Africa*. In H. W. Xiaoling Zhang (Ed.), *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa: Promotion and Perceptions* (pp. 33-46). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Evangelos Kalampokis et.al. (2013). Understanding the predictive power of social media. *Internet Research*, 23(5), 544-559.

- Francis Balle, Jean Marie Cotteret. (1982). Government and the Media in France. In M. W. Dan Nimmo (Ed.), *Government and the News Media: Comparative Dimensions* (pp. 9-28). Texas: Baylor University.
- Harry Henderson. (2004). *Power of the News Media* (1st ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc.
- Iris Xie, Jennifer Stevenson. (2014). Social media application in digital libraries. *Online Information Review*, 38(4), 502-523.
- James Curran. (2002). *Media and Power* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Joseph S.Nye. (1990). *Bound to lead: The Changing nature of American power*. New York: Basic Books.
- Joseph S.Nye. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Joseph S.Nye. (2006). Soft power and European - American affairs. In T. L. Ilgen, *Hard power, soft power and the future of Transatlantic relations* (p. 26). Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Kaplan, A.M., Haenlein, M. . (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Katherine M. A. Reilly. (2014). Media and Multilateralism in South America: How the International Matters to Domestic Media Reform. In E. V. Cheryl Martens (Ed.), *The International Political Economy of Communication: Media and Power in South America* (pp. 149-168). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Louis Klarevas. (2003). Media Impact. In M. J. Rozell (Ed.), *Media Power, Media Politics* (pp. 265-296). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Mandip Singh. (2018). From Smart power to Sharp power: How China promotes her National Interests. *Journal of Defence Studies*, 12(3), 5-25.
- Michael Barr. (2011). *Who's afraid of China: The challenge of Chinese soft power*. London and New York: Zed Books.
- Nahida Begum N. (2014). Media Ethics: Different Perspectives. *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1), 8-12.
- Olessia Koltsova. (2006). *News Media and Power in Russia* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Pablo Barberá et.al. (2017). Social Media, Personalisation of News Reporting, and Media Systems' Polarisation in Europe. In A. M. Mauro Barisione (Ed.), *Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology - Social Media and European Politics: Rethinking Power and Legitimacy in the Digital Era* (pp. 25-52). London: Springer Nature.
- Phạm Bình Minh. (2019, 7 28). Nâng cao hiệu quả công tác đối ngoại và hội nhập quốc tế. Retrieved from Ministry of Foreign Affairs: [www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/nr040807104143/nr111027144142/ns170105101915](http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/nr040807104143/nr111027144142/ns170105101915)
- Phạm Gia Khiêm. (2019, 7 28). Công tác Thông tin Đối ngoại góp phần quan trọng trong việc thực hiện thắng lợi Nghị quyết Đại hội Đảng X. Retrieved from Ministry of Foreign Affairs: [http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/cs\\_doingoi/nr070523093001/ns110228103055](http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/cs_doingoi/nr070523093001/ns110228103055)
- Roberto Follari. (2014). The Endless Battle: Populism and Mainstream Media. In E. V. Cheryl Martens (Ed.), *The International Political Economy of Communication:*

- Media and Power in South America (pp. 132-148). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Semetko et.al. (2011). News, international relations and public diplomacy. EU, US and China: Towards a New International Order. Bruges: College of Europe.
- Statista. (2019). Vietnam: Growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) from 2014 to 2024\* (compared to the previous year). Retrieved 7 13, 2019, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/444616/gross-domestic-product-gdp-growth-rate-in-vietnam/>
- Tahirih V.Lee. (2000). The Media and the Legal Bureaucracy of the People's Republic of China. In C.-C. Lee (Ed.), *Power, Money and Media: Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China* (pp. 208-244). Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Thomas Carlyle. (1905). *On heros, hero-worship and heroic in history*. New York: Longmans, Green, And Co.
- VCCI WTO Center. (2019). Tổng hợp các FTA của Việt Nam tính đến tháng 7/2019. Retrieved 7 13, 2019, from <http://www.trungtamwto.vn/thong-ke/12065-tong-hop-cac-fta-cua-viet-nam-tinh-den-thang-112018>
- W. Lance Bennett et.al. (2007). *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina* (1st ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Xiaogang Deng, Lening Zhang. (2009). China's cultural exports and its growing cultural power in the world. In M. Li, *Soft power: China's emerging strategy in international politics* (pp. 143-158). Plymouth: Lexington Books.
- Y. T. Jayaprakash, Brian Shoemith. (2007). *Community Radio and Development: Tribal Audiences in South India*. In L. K. Fuller (Ed.), *The Power of Global Community Media* (pp. 43-54). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zheng Yue E, Wei Xinyi. (2018). Construction of China's soft power: comparing news coverage of the Confucius Institute Project in China and U.S. Media. *Global Media Journal*, 16(31), 1-9.