



The Impact of the 2020 US Election on Changing the Position of US Soft Power in the World

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Abstract

The 2020 US presidential election was held indirectly through the Electoral College with the rivalry between Trump and Biden from both the Republican and Democratic parties, and as a result, many American crises emerged, indicating a shift in the position of soft power. Soft power means convincing others to achieve the desired result through persuasion, which was invented by Joseph Nye. The soft power of the United States has led to a loss of its international appeal by taking a hard line on soft issues, such as ignoring public diplomacy. The question is, to what extent has the 2020 election affected America's soft power position? The emergence of crises, such as inefficiency in internal management, Trump's rejection of the election results, has led to the decline of America's soft power position in the world. Given this approach to the 2020 elections, this study seeks to examine the challenges posed by many analysts, both in the debate and after the election, through a descriptive-interpretive discourse analysis method. And explain how it has degraded America's soft power position and been able to have a direct impact on its future and global policies, such as the possibility of a power shift paradigm in the international arena. It also suggests that Iran can turn threats into opportunities with constructive policies, despite maximum US pressure.

Keywords: US Election, Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Public Diplomacy, Soft Power

Introduction

The 2020 US presidential election was held indirectly through the Electoral College with the rivalry between Trump and Biden from both the Republican and Democratic parties, and as a result, many American crises emerged, indicating a shift in the position of soft power. Soft power means convincing others to achieve the desired result through persuasion, which was invented by Joseph Nye.

The soft power of the United States has led to a loss of its international appeal by taking a hard line on soft issues, such as ignoring public diplomacy. The question is, to what extent has the 2020 election affected the position of American soft power? In this research, the method of discourse analysis based on Laclau and Mouffe theory with a descriptive-interpretive approach seeks to answer this question. Given this approach to the 2020 elections, this study seeks to examine the challenges posed by many analysts, both in the debate and after the election; And explain how it has led to the decline of America's soft power. And it has been able to have a direct impact on the future and global policies of this country, such as the possibility of a power shift paradigm in the international arena. It also suggests that Iran can turn threats into opportunities with constructive policies, despite maximum US pressure.

Previous research has not examined the position of US soft power from the perspective of the 2020 election; The difference between this study and other

articles presented is that this study, considering the proximity to the 2020 elections, examines the electoral debate and the events after the elections; And from this perspective, it examines the position of soft power in the United States. It also suggests that Iran can turn threats into opportunities with constructive policies, despite maximum US pressure. In other words, it examines the role of the 2020 elections on the position of US soft power and its impact on Iran.

The US presidential election is held indirectly by the people through the Electoral College or the Electoral College, which is in two stages. On election day, people write the names of presidential candidates on ballot papers, but in practice the Electoral College directly elects the president and his deputy. The 59th US presidential election was held on November 3, 2020, with the highest turnout since 1900. The two main parties participating are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Donald Trump's opponent was Republican Mark Sanford, who resigned. In fact, Trump was running for reelection in 2020 without facing a serious rival. Joe Biden, on the other hand, was elected as the Democratic nominee after defeating Bernie Sanders, his closest rival in the Democratic primary. There were several challenges in this election; Such as the existence of dysfunctional parties; Charges of two candidates against each other; Electoral laws and electoral voting methods; Donald Trump's rejection of the election results and allegations of electoral fraud, as well as inefficiencies in

internal management, especially the Corona virus and the region and the world.

The challenges posed by the 2020 US election are to undermine the components of US soft power, namely public diplomacy and foreign policy, universities and higher education, culture and values, norms and media, and technology. This study examines the impact of the 2020 US election on the US soft power position in the world and based on Joseph Nye's soft power theory, the hypothesis is followed that the sum of the mentioned factors has caused the decline of the US soft power position in the world.

In the 1990s, as the Cold War came to an end, Joseph Nye first used the concept of soft power in his book, *Obligation to Lead: Changing the Nature of American Power*. The concept of soft power, by creating different dimensions for classical sources of power, is a kind of handbook for building a structure by legitimizing the use of force for all countries that want to maintain power in their hands. Soft power sources have a legitimate influence on the policies of countries that others accept of their own free will. Many countries that realize the importance of soft power are trying to develop sources of soft power. (Yavuzaslan and Çetin, 2016).

The Impact of US Elections on Iran's Interests

The US election is important because it is an influential country in the international arena that deals with many of the world's

economic issues. Naturally, the Islamic Republic of Iran will not be immune from the effects of such an event. (<https://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/1143396>).

Due to the reasons that have affected the Islamic Republic of Iran, the impact of the US elections on Iran has gradually increased. Therefore, following the news of this country's elections in our society has been raised as a public phenomenon. (<https://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/1143396>).

With the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was based on cultural and religious foundations, relations and interactions between Iran and the West entered a new phase. With the withdrawal of the Islamic Republic of Iran from the Western camp and the choice of a "non-aligned" foreign policy strategy, a major blow was dealt to US interests in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf region. However, relations between the two countries have always been hostile in the years since the revolution; But one can see variation in the form of conflict - from hard confrontation and overt methods to soft struggle - between the two governments.

Since 1979, the United States has moved to contain Iran through pressure and threats, economic sanctions, and sometimes military action, but to no avail. For this reason, this country, along with its approach of sanctions, threats and economic and political pressures, has turned to a soft confrontation and has

sought to weaken the ideological foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a key strategy (Joneidi & Mollaei, 2019). Therefore, the study of the 2020 US elections and its impact on the soft power of the United States is an issue that is closely related to the national interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran and is important. And secondly, the macro and strategic policy makers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on the discourse and demands created in society, as well as the field realities and the image without retouching the ruling system of the United States of America, formulate and communicate policies in various military, economic, political and cultural fields. It is in such circumstances that the explanation of comprehensive strategies can strengthen the components of the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran in all dimensions and lead the country to its lofty ideals and goals.

This study seeks to answer the question of how the 2020 US election will affect the US soft power position in the world. The challenges posed by the 2020 US election appear to undermine the components of US soft power, namely public diplomacy and foreign policy, universities and higher education, culture and values, norms and media, and technology.

In the first chapter of this article, we will discuss the role of soft power.

In the second chapter, we examine the components of soft power such as public diplomacy and democracy.

In the third chapter, we explain the American crises and the impact of the

2020 elections on the position of soft power in this country.

Finally, conclusions and suggestions for the organs of the Islamic Republic of Iran are mentioned.

Soft Power theory

The theory of soft power was first proposed by Joseph Nye, and in his view soft power is the ability of a country to force other countries to do what it wants through cultural and ideological attractions. In other words; Soft power refers to the group of capabilities and abilities of a country that indirectly affects the interests or behavior of other countries by using tools such as culture, ideals or moral values (Hassan Khani, 2005, p. 138).

In other words, soft power is the ability to change or shape the priorities of others to think or act according to what we want. Thus, soft power belongs to the actors who get the desired results without using force; Because their policies and values are attractive to others. A government can rule within its own country in an orderly and authoritarian manner. Assertive power may be exercised by relying on incentives (carrots) or threatening tools (sticks). A government can achieve the desired results in the domestic arena and even in world politics, by taking steps to make others demand what we want; Or know what we like and what we do, right and according to their desire. This face of power contrasts with the domineering behavior of power, which can be called

absorption power or "soft power." (Nye, 2008, p. 100).

According to Nye, this type of power can be called the second face of power, which is the product of gaining international prestige and indirect influence with the satisfaction of others. (Tooyserkani, 2009, p. 22). Soft power includes cultural, ideological, political and artistic components. Values such as democracy and human rights, which have universal appeal, are other sources of soft power.

Soft Power Components

Joseph Nye believes that public diplomacy is one of the key tools of soft power, and that governments use it to mobilize resources (soft power) and to communicate and attract people from other countries, not just governments. In Joseph Nye's view, effective public diplomacy is like a two-way street that involves listening as well as speaking; Therefore, the efficiency of soft power depends on knowing how to convey our message to the audience (Nye, 2010, p. 199).

Democracy: Democracy is not an absolute concept that society either fully enjoys or does not enjoy at all; Rather, it is a question of the degree, scope, and depth of the realization of the principles of public oversight and equality in participation in political affairs and the distance or proximity of society to the ideal state, namely participation in collective decision-making. A country is called a democracy whose government comes to

power through competition in elections and is accountable to the people, and all adults in that country have equal rights to vote and stand as a candidate, and the law guarantees the protection of civil and political rights. (Beetham & Boyle, 1997).

The article Trump's actions and the soft power of the United States argues that America's soft power is undermined by the pragmatism at the heart of President Trump's approach to foreign policy.

In the article *The Decline of Soft Power in the United States*, the author first examines the components of soft power according to Joseph Nye's ideas; Then, with the help of this theory, he tries to examine the main question of the article, namely, the causes of the increase or erosion of American soft power in the last half century. The importance of soft power to achieve national interests is no less than the use of hard power (military force, economic sanctions, etc.); However, various trends have shown the decline of American soft power internationally since World War II.

With the help of various evidences, the author attributes the erosion of the soft power of this country to the contradiction between playing the role of leadership and pursuing economic interests and political interests outside the control of this country on the one hand; And has dealt with the challenge of Third World traditionalism, which was especially evident in the era of the so-called Arab Spring revolutions.

The article on the crisis of meaning and decline of the US government has tried to examine this hypothesis in the following areas by adopting a descriptive-analytical approach and quoting the works of Western novelists; First, the crisis of meaning interferes with providing a clear picture of the world for the individual Americans and American society. Second, the crisis of meaning disrupts timely decision-making in the political decision-making process and strategies. Third, the crisis of meaning causes a crisis in identifying and explaining the appropriate place for the individual and society in the system of political and social developments; And instead of understanding its identity, it may substitute its own desires for reality. Fourth, the crisis of meaning prevents timely and appropriate response to the changing and day-to-day situations of society, in the development of which several variables are involved. And fifth, the crisis of meaning leads to confusion in making the right decision and strategy in the face of changing situations that require the adoption of a strategy to maintain the status quo or change it to a certain extent and at a certain angle. Given what has been said, this study seeks to examine the requirements of the meaning crisis in these intermediate

variables and then the role of these intermediate variables in the decline of the United States.

An article depicting the decline of American soft power in the official media of this country deals with the assassination of George Floyd, a black American citizen; Who was killed by a Minneapolis police officer and sparked widespread protests by American citizens against systematic racism in the country. The scope of these protests was not limited to this issue, and people repeatedly attacked the basic symbols of this country, including the flag, statues of celebrities and brands, and the media (which are in fact the components of soft power in this country). All of these are clear signs of the decline of American hegemonic power. This study uses two methods of discourse analysis and semiotics to examine the representation of this important event in the mainstream US media such as CNN, The New York Times and The Washington Post. The results show that the mentioned media, although in the field of domestic politics, are critics of the Republicans and the Donald Trump administration; But during the 2020 protests, protesters challenged actions to attack American values and components of the country's soft power.

Table 1. Research Background

Authors (year of research) - method used	Main goals or questions (do not mention the title of the research, but state the main question or goal)	The most important findings (do not generalize the most important findings and results, emphasize the findings that are related to this article)
Fattahi Ardakani, Hussein, 2019 Qualitative method with descriptive-analytical approach by collecting libraries	What have been Trump's policies and practices in the field of soft power, and what factors have reduced his soft power among allies and the international community?	The United States has been at the forefront of this, with its many sources of soft power in the areas of culture, political values, and foreign policy. But with the advent of Trump and the announcement of his doctrine, especially in the field of foreign policy and diplomacy, the situation has changed. Trump's doctrine has been based on realism, one-sidedness, and protectionism of the American economy. Trump, with his unique personality traits and one-sided approach to international affairs, is taking steps to destroy America's software values.
Dalirpour, Parviz, 2012	The causes of the rise or erosion of American soft power over the past half century are examined.	The author first examines the components of soft power according to Joseph Nye's ideas, then with the help of this theory tries to examine the main question of the article, namely the causes of increase or erosion of American soft power in the last half century. The importance of soft power to achieve national interests is no less than the use of hard power (military force, economic sanctions, etc.); However, various trends have shown the decline of American soft power internationally since World War II.
Nowruzi, Mohammad Javad, 2020 Descriptive-analytical and citing the works of Western novelists	It seeks to examine the requirements of the meaning crisis in these intermediate variables and then the role of these intermediate variables in the decline of the United States.	The author argues, first, that the crisis of meaning interferes with providing a clear picture of the world for the individual and American society. Second, the crisis of meaning disrupts timely decision-making in the political decision-making process and strategies. Third, the crisis of meaning causes a crisis in identifying and explaining the appropriate place for the individual and society in the system of political and social developments; And instead of understanding his identity, he may substitute his own desires for reality. Fourth, the crisis of meaning prevents timely and appropriate response to the changing and day-to-day situations of society, in the development of which several variables are involved. And fifth, that the crisis of meaning leads to confusion in making appropriate decisions and strategies in the face of changing situations; Which requires the adoption of a strategy to maintain the status quo or change it to a certain extent and at a certain angle.

<p>Dehshiri, Mohammad Reza, 2018 It is an explanatory study method of library and documentary type and is applied in terms of purpose.</p>	<p>This article seeks to answer the question of why American power has declined and what have been the consequences.</p>	<p>The author believes that endogenous and exogenous factors have contributed to the decline of American soft power. Among the endogenous factors is the choice of introverted, utilitarian, militaristic and monopolistic approaches; Exogenous factors include unilateral, adventurous, interventionist, and antagonistic policies, increasing the asymmetric threats of non-state armed actors, shifting power from the West to the east, and the emergence of Eastern actors, and the possibility of a "bipolar system."</p>
<p>Alborzi Davati, 2020 Method of discourse analysis and semiotics</p>	<p>A Study of the Protests After the Assassination of George Floyd and Its Impact on the Decline of America's Soft Power</p>	<p>Under the pretext of the assassination of George Floyd, people repeatedly attacked the country's basic symbols, including flags, statues of celebrities, and commercial and media brands that are in fact manifestations of the components of soft power in the country. All of this is a clear sign of the decline of American hegemonic power. CNN, The New York Times, and The Washington Post, although in the field of domestic politics, are critics of Republicans and the Donald Trump administration; But the same Democratic media has challenged protesters during the 2020 protests to attack American values and elements of soft power.</p>

In the articles presented as research background, the soft power of the United States has been considered from various perspectives, but has not been examined from the perspective of the 2020 US elections; Because not much time has passed since this political event and we are still witnessing the events that followed, this research has been presented. Events such as the rejection of the election results and the alleged theft of ballots by Donald Trump and the invitation of his supporters to protest in the streets; The attack on Congress, encouraged by then-President Trump, has called into question the country's democracy as a claimant to the cradle of democracy in the world. Democracy is one of the most important components of soft power, and the emergence of electoral crises indi-

cates the weakening of the position of soft power in this country.

This research is based on the method of discourse analysis based on Laclau and Mouffe theory. Discourse analysis says that the world is the product of discourses. Of course, this theory does not deny the existence of reality. This theory believes that objects and phenomena become meaningful through discourse and gain important capabilities and cognition. At the same time, the scope of discourse is not limited to just meaning. Rather, each of these perceptions has specific social consequences. Identities and social relations are also the product of language and discourse and will bring about change in the social world. Discourse conflicts lead to change and reproduction of social reality (Hosseini Zadeh, 2003, p. 182).

The theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe is rooted in two structuralist theoretical traditions, Marxism and Saussure's linguistics. Marxism provides the basis for the social thought of this theory, and Saussure's structuralist linguistics provides the semantic theory required by this poststructuralist view. The theory of these two political thinkers has an extraordinary ability to explain political and social phenomena. This feature is achieved through the use of concepts such as articulation. Articulation is an action that creates such a relationship between different elements such as concepts, symbols, behaviors, etc. that their original identity is transformed and they find a new identity. Hence, the identity of a discourse is formed as a result of the relationship that is created through the act of articulation between different elements. (Tajik, 2004, p. 46).

The concept of discourse has been replaced by the concept of ideology in Marxism and language in postmodern theories by Laclau and Mouffe, who emphasize the anti-capitalist nature of their theory. In their view, there is nothing fundamental like Marxism that gives meaning and identity to other phenomena. The two concepts of signifier and signified play a key role in the theory of Laclau and Mouffe. Signs are persons, concepts, abstract or real expressions and symbols that indicate a specific meaning in the context of a particular discourse. The meaning and instance that a signifier implies is called modeling. The signified is a sign that makes sense

to us when we see that sign. The central slab also means the vertical of the tent, which, if removed, will collapse the tent. (Khalaji, 2007, p. 54).

Although discourse theories are largely relativistic compared to postmodern theories, they are able to explain and analyze most of the common developments at various points in human life. In addition, they can efficiently and significantly bring the understanding of future developments into the field of research. From a pragmatic point of view, another function of this theory is to help political subjects better understand existing social conditions and how to organize a new discourse for the hegemony.

In the theoretical field, the discourse of Laclau and Mouffe, both as a method and as a theory, opens the way for analysts to enter the field of socio-political phenomena with a descriptive-analytical approach and observance of neutrality (Mohammad Salar Kasraei, 2009, p. 358).

This research is based on the method of discourse analysis, which says that the world is the product of discourses. The research method is based on the theory of Laclau and Mouffe. The theory of these two political thinkers has an extraordinary ability to explain political and social phenomena.

These are some of the US electoral crises of 2020, which show the weakening of the soft power position of this country; Existence of dysfunctional parties, accusations of two candidates against each other, election laws and electoral methods, non-acceptance of

election results and allegations of election fraud by Donald Trump, as well as inefficiency in internal management, especially in Corona, the region and the world. This research is applied. The strategy of this research is qualitative. Information was obtained by studying the theories of scientists and experts in the field of research and books, journals and documents in the field of research were used.

The Impact of the 2020 US Election on the Position of Soft Power

The 2020 US presidential election was held between the two main parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Donald Trump's opponent was Republican Mark Sanford, who resigned. In fact, Trump was running for re-election in 2020 without facing a serious rival. Joe Biden, on the other hand, was elected as the Democratic nominee after defeating Bernie Sanders, his closest rival in the Democratic primary.

Soft power, invented by Joseph Nye, says the ability to persuade others to achieve desirable results.

Public diplomacy is one of the key tools of soft power, and governments use it to mobilize resources (soft power) and to communicate and attract people from other countries, not just governments.

The methods of data collection are library and the method of data analysis is based on qualitative research, which uses descriptive-comparative analysis with a discourse analysis framework.

The study of articles and comments of experts, analysts and theorists in the field

of political science and international relations, as well as domestic and foreign policy makers. The views of university professors have also been examined at US decline conferences.

At first, the title of the topic was selected according to the necessity and novelty, and the data were collected by discourse analysis method, and the data was analyzed, then written, and finally the conclusion was made.

Soft power is a theory first proposed by Joseph Nye. Nye describes soft power as: the ability of one country to force other countries to want what it wants; through the cultural and ideological attractions it possesses. In other words, soft power refers to that group of capabilities and abilities of a country; By using tools such as culture, ideals or moral values, it indirectly affects the interests or behavior of other countries (Hassan Khani, 2005, p. 138).

In other words, soft power is the ability to change or shape the priorities of others to think or act according to what we want. Thus, soft power belongs to the actors who get the desired results without using force; Because their policies and values are attractive to others. A government can rule within its own country in an orderly and authoritarian manner. Assertive power may be exercised by relying on incentives (carrots) or threatening tools (sticks). A government can achieve its desired results domestically and even in world politics; In such a way that actions are taken so that others know what they want or what we (the government) like and do, to know

that it is right and according to their will. This face of power contrasts with the domineering behavior of power, which can be called absorption power or "soft power." (Nye, 2008, p. 100).

According to Nye, this type of power can be called the second face of power, which is the product and result of gaining international prestige and indirect influence with the satisfaction of others (Tooyserkani, 2009, p. 22).

Soft power includes cultural, ideological, political and artistic components. Values such as democracy and human rights, which have universal appeal, are other sources of soft power.

Endogenous and exogenous factors have contributed to the decline of American soft power. Among the endogenous factors is the choice of introverted, utilitarian, militaristic and monopolistic approaches; And in the category of exogenous factors, the following items have been considered; One-sided, adventurous, interventionist and antagonistic policies, increasing the asymmetric threats of non-state armed actors, shifting power from the West to the East and the emergence of emerging Eastern actors and the possibility of a "bipolar system". The decline of America's soft power has had consequences such as declining elite immigration, the growing appeal of China and Europe, rising anti-American sentiment, the growing prevalence of terrorism, and the appeal of Islamist alternatives. (Dehshiri, 2018)

In fact, the debate over the decline of America's soft power has gone through

three waves so far; In the first wave, the debate over America's decline of world power began in the 1980s with the remarkable reception of Paul Kennedy's book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. In this book, Kennedy refers to the relative decline of American power, its decline due to the invasive and military expansion of American forces in the world, and the imbalance between America's self-serving global interests and the possibility of simultaneously allocating resources to all of them. (Kennedy, 2006; Brooks, Wolfforth, 2013, p. 9).

The second wave goes back to the post-9/11 developments. At this time, theories were put forward that the American hegemony was shaken and downhill due to the growing conflict in various regions, such as the natural decline of the fall of the great powers (Kurlantzick, 2006, pp. 419-424).

The following factors reduced the legitimacy and acceptance of American values and the decline of American soft power in the world; The US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Washington's extremism in the war on terror, the widespread abuse of torture against terrorism suspects, as well as Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib detainees, and practical human rights abuses, including the principle of prohibition of torture and international multilateral norms and institutions. According to Stephen Walt, the US approach to domestic development, rather than having influence outside its periphery, reduced its soft power (Walt, 2006).

In the post-9/11 period, there was a contrast between America's image of itself and others' image of this power (Mitchell, 2010).

Because perceptions and mindsets are so important, and as the United States seeks to create enemies through the abuse of power instead of finding friends, the negative perception of America's role in international politics has increased. In addition, the growing politicization of the "Voice of America", which was used as a platform to justify the war in Iraq, weakened American public diplomacy (Kurlantzick, 2006: pp. 419-424).

Joseph Nye believes that public diplomacy is one of the key tools of soft power and that governments use it to mobilize resources (soft power) and to communicate and attract people from other countries, not just governments. In Joseph Nye's view, effective public diplomacy is like a two-way street that involves listening as well as speaking; Therefore, the efficiency of soft power depends on knowing how to convey our message to the audience (Nye, 2010, p. 199).

Joseph Nye pays close attention to public diplomacy as one of the most important methods of soft power, and outlines three key components to it, including day-to-day communication with the public, strategic thematic communication, and the development of long-term relationships with key people in target countries. (Nye, 2004)

The third wave of theories about the decline of America is related to the se-

cond decade of the twenty-first century. In the wake of the so-called Arab Spring and the Wall Street movement, US intervention in Libya, as well as the Chinese uprising and Barack Obama's "Turn to Asia" doctrine, America's soft power declined; However, Obama made efforts to foster multilateralism, diplomacy and international cooperation, give more role to international organizations, increase the acceptance of the US role in the structure of the international system by other powers, and be more in line with the realities of the international system. At this point, the Supreme Leader stated that the United States, with all its show of strength, with all its uproar and controversy, is in a position of weakness and a shaky position today. The Occupy Wall Street movement is in the process of changing American cities, that is, the current situation is bad; That bad situation has not changed yet; Therefore, America is trapped (Khamenei, April 2012).

Sustainable peace, along with justice, prosperity and development, is and is one of the fundamental human aspirations. One of the efforts that has been made on the roots and context of war and peace is to examine the relationship between peace and the type of government and political system of states that has led to the hypothesis of democratic peace or democratic pacifism. The famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the first and most prominent theorist of this debate, was published in his most important treatise on international relations, lasting peace, in 1795, six years after the French Revo-

lution; Defends the need for democracy for government and foreign affairs. Sustainable peace, along with justice, prosperity and development, is and is one of the fundamental human aspirations. One of the efforts that has been made on the roots and context of war and peace is to examine the relationship between peace and the type of government and political system of states that has led to the hypothesis of democratic peace or democratic pacifism. Accordingly, the first principle (determinant of peace) is that; The civil and internal order of the government must be republican. By republican, he means a political society that guarantees three things:

1. Respect for individual freedom.
2. Common origin and unit of legislation and separation between executive and legislative authority.
3. Political equality of all citizens in resolving political relations based on the principle of right. According to the second principle, democracies share common moral values, and the commitments made on the basis of these values lead to the formation of a peaceful alliance. This type of union (peacemaker) is limited to a treaty between countries that, in addition to maintaining itself, also prevents wars and is constantly gaining momentum; In such a way that they form the "peace zone" among themselves in an institutional way. This approach transcended Kant's intellectual vision beyond national frameworks (Moshirzadeh, 2006 - pp. 29-30).

The decline of the United States intensified with the effectiveness of Donald Trump and the adoption of unilateral global policies. During Trump's presidency, America's soft power was severely compromised, which could be for the following reasons. Increasing importance of nationalism and internal political differences; Increase credits and economic and military capabilities relative to soft capabilities (diplomatic, discourse, and cultural) as arms to defend US interests; Pressure on other actors and the structure of the international system and non-compliance with their commitments to the international community on key issues. (Betley, 2017).

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Joseph Nye pays close attention to public diplomacy as one of the most important methods of soft power and outlines three key components, including day-to-day communication with the public, strategic thematic communication, and the development of long-term relationships with key people in target countries (Nye, 2004).

This research is based on the method of discourse analysis, which says that the world is the product of discourses. The research method is based on the theory of Laclau and Mouffe. The theory of these two political thinkers has an extraordinary ability to explain political and social phenomena. In this study, we want to examine the 2020 US election and its impact on the US soft power position.

Some of the issues raised in the 2020 US election debates that are directly related to the soft power position of this country are:

1- Trump's inability to manage the coronavirus and not accepting and not taking the virus seriously and proposing the injection of bleach instead of the vaccine, resulting in high death rates due to the virus.

Trump in the election debate: "I'm not saying the corona will end soon, but I'm saying we're learning to live with the corona."

Biden: "Are we learning to live with a corona? We are learning to die with a corona?"

2- The unprecedented economic downturn was raised by Trump's rival in the election debate, in which he warned Wall Street that a recession was imminent, to which Trump responded by saying he did not need Wall Street support.

3- Indirect influence of Iran and Russia on US elections. (Biden: Iran will pay the price of interfering in our elections). And (Biden criticized Trump for forcing Russia to intervene in previous elections).

4- Joe Biden said that if he wins the election, he will force China to comply with international law.

5- When asked about his relationship with North Korea, Donald Trump said that when he entered the White House, Barack Obama told him that the threat of war with North Korea was the biggest problem facing the United States. But despite this war warning, it did not happen.

6- Joe Biden responded to Donald Trump by saying that the stock market is not the only measure of the state of the economy. Mr. Biden said billionaires had amassed more wealth, but ordinary people would not benefit from the stock market boom.

7- Trump said about separating immigrant children from their families and throwing them in cages, these children were brought to the United States by cartels and smugglers. He said the children are very well cared for.

Biden said the children came to the United States with their parents and separated at the border. He called Trump's treatment of immigrant families "criminal."

Mr. Biden has promised to put people who were brought to the United States as children on the path to American citizenship, contrary to Trump's policy. Biden: We have institutionalized racism in America.

Biden said black families have to teach their children to be careful with the police because the police are violent against blacks.

Mr. Biden said Trump was the only president whose racial segregation and civil rights had not improved during his presidency.

In addition to the important issues mentioned in election debates such as; Lack of proper management of the coronavirus, unprecedented economic downturn, the rise to power of other powers, including Iran and Russia, and the impact on the fate of US elections, racism and racist policies; We see other factors that indicate that America's soft power is declining, including:

The wave of protests, especially after the assassination of George Floyd by US police; China as a major economic competitor; Questioning the US election law and consequently questioning the democracy of this country as the top claimant of democracy in the world; Violation of international law by withdrawing from the JCPOA, which was recognized by the Security Council (Chomsky); Gap in public diplomacy with increasing tensions with other countries, especially countries in the region; Partisan and factional divisions, that is, federal institutions and diplomatic apparatuses.

After the election, Trump did not accept the election results and announced on Twitter several times:

"This system is corrupt, and if it is not corrupt, it will easily corrupt," said Republican Nominee Trump, recalling his remarks about postal voting. They wait where they need to vote, then suddenly they get votes.

On January 6, everyone will take to the streets in Washington, DC.

Incumbent President Donald Trump reiterated the need for continued confrontation with the Democratic Party in a Twitter message as the power struggle continued in the United States, and criticized the lack of support from his own party.

Trump's Twitter message states in this regard; If a Democratic presidential candidate witnessed election fraud and the election was stolen from him, even with a body of evidence of such actions that had never been seen before, Democratic senators would consider it a war act and fight to the end. But Mitch (McConnell) and the Republicans are not doing anything, they just want to get over it. There is no struggle!

In another message, the US President added: "The Department of Justice and the FBI have done nothing to rig the 2020 presidential election, the largest fraud in our nation's history, despite the abundant evidence." They should be ashamed. History will remember. Never give up. We will see everyone on January 6 in (Washington) DC. (Mehr news agency)

While Donald Trump continues to lie about the election, his legal team in court has failed to provide relevant facts or evidence of widespread fraud. Experts broadly agree that there is no evidence, and election officials have declared the election won by Joe Biden to be the best in American history. (Guardian)

Meanwhile, Congress is scheduled to approve the Electoral College ruling on January 6; Trump, meanwhile, has refused to concede defeat, urging his supporters to take to the streets that day.

Biden's possible inauguration and handover of the White House to him will take place on January 20.

Both main candidates in the November 3, 2020 presidential election have accused each other of plotting against each other before and after the election; The fact that the great shortcoming in the country claiming liberal democracy is clear.

The head of the American Foreign Relations Institute, Richard Haas, tweeted after Trump supporters attacked Congress; We see images that I never imagined we would see in this country, in some other capitals, yes, but not here. It is unlikely that anyone in the other world would see us in the same way, respect us, fear us or depend on us. If the post-American era has a beginning in history, it certainly is today.

The aftermath of the US election shows that we are facing a country with a large military force of 25,000 to secure the inauguration. That number was 10,000 during the Obama administration, indicating a decline in domestic security. The number of these forces is more than the total number of forces stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan. A ceremony that President Trump did not attend.

According to a report published in the hill, four out of five Americans say that the United States is declining. (The hill news website)

The inauguration of US President Joe Biden took place without the presence of Trump, with unprecedented security measures.

After leaving the White House, Trump acknowledged that he had 75 million votes and that he was proud of it. We were mistreated. We will return somehow (Fars News Agency).

Some analysts believe that this return will be with the formation of the Patriotic Party by Trump; Especially after the invasion of Congress on January 6 and the distance of the Republican leaders with him, who will face the Democratic and Republican parties as a rival party. But it remains to be seen how far his impeachment is going and whether he is allowed to engage in political activity or not (The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting news).

There have been articles on the decline of the United States and the study of US soft power, but so far no article has been published on the role of the US 2020 election in the US soft power position. The investigation began shortly before the election debate began, and so far Donald Trump has refused to accept the election results. He called on his supporters to stage a street protest on January 6, which could change the US hegemony and raise new issues.

Conclusion

The use of soft power sources and their use to achieve the desired results in foreign policy and other areas of governance is common and well known. Many countries seek to identify their tools and

software resources to reduce costs and prevent violence and coercion in achieving their goals. Soft power, while strengthening the positive and attractive image of a government, makes it possible to achieve goals in a smooth and clear way. Before the rise of Trump and after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the United States was considered an exceptional power in the use of soft power. The country has been at the forefront of this issue with its numerous and diverse sources of soft power in the fields of culture, political values and foreign policy. But with the advent of Trump and the announcement of his doctrine, especially in the field of foreign policy and diplomacy, the situation has changed. Trump's doctrine has been based on realism, unilateralism, and protectionism of the American economy. Trump, with his unique personality traits and one-sided approach to international affairs, is taking steps to destroy American software values. It is no secret that the values of liberalism have given the United States the most resources and tools of soft power, but Trump's bad governance has rendered these resources inefficient and negatively impacting Trump's America. Trump's withdrawal from international multilateral treaties and agreements, known as the "exit doctrine," has dealt the biggest blow to America's soft power performance. With his unwavering support for American industries and manufacturers, Trump has ridiculed all American credibility in multilateral international

agreements, and by withdrawing from them, he has likened the signatures and promises of US officials to jokes. He has shown that he does not believe in the human right to immigrate and separates children from their parents; He ignores the right of the Arabs in the Palestinian cause to welcome Israel and Netanyahu, and withdraws from the UN Security Council and the Paris Environmental Treaty, despite the opposition of his close allies in Europe, and in fact dictates insecurity to the world and humanity ahead. These actions of Trump have destroyed the charms and the power of persuasion and justification of America in the eyes of the world, and for this reason, the position of American soft power during the Trump era is falling to the fourth place in the world. Ignoring the inalienable values and principles of public diplomacy and ignoring the agreements and commitments have weakened and destroyed the foundations of America's soft power. Confusion over Trump's announced policies and disagreements among his advisers, as well as the government's push for war and tough foreign policy, run counter to the teachings of software. Of course, it should be noted that this is a look at the structure of the United States and its policies, which has intensified with the presence of Trump.

Suggestions

This article warns and recommends bodies in the Islamic Republic of Iran such as the Ministry of Defense, the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Supreme National Security Council, the Office of the Leadership Institution, international and US analysts, as well as students; To turn threats from the United States under the guise of maximum pressure into an opportunity. Because, firstly, the public opinion of the Iranian society, far from the aggression of the foreign media as well as the domestic mercenary media, is in a convincing course towards the decline of the United States; Secondly, the macro and strategic policy makers of the Islamic Republic of Iran should formulate and communicate policies and policies in various military, economic, political and cultural fields based on the discourse and demands created in society, as well as the field realities and image without retouching of the ruling system of the United States of America. It is in such circumstances that the explanation of comprehensive strategies can strengthen the components of the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran in all dimensions and lead the country to its lofty ideals and goals.

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