


# Chapter 4

## Soft–Power and Assimilation in the International Order: Rethinking Influence and Transformative Trends

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### ABSTRACT

*The concept of power has always been an immediate goal for state and non-state actors in international politics. The transformative order reflects the growing relevance of 'complex interdependence' and cosmopolitan ideals, where power operates through the assimilation of diverse identities into imagined or harmonious communities. This shift does not merely challenge the state's territorial monopoly, but it also facilitates the assimilation of diverse socio-cultural identities into a speculative or imagined sphere. The implication of soft power or 'non-coercive power' concepts which remove heterogeneity of socio-cultural identity into single or harmonious identities. The present paper's main argument is to what extent the concept of soft power affects assimilation. Is assimilation responsible for new trends in power politics? Or does power politics utilise the concept of assimilation as a means for power interests in the international order? To answer these assumptions, the present research method is purely theoretical and descriptive through the collection of secondary data.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The concept of power politics is an approach to talking about power. The concept of power politics is always the centripetal concept that makes all political phenomena remain around power, which is always a vital discussion among all international intellectuals (Carr, 2001; Guzzini, 2007; Morgenthau, 1948; Poggi, 2011; Waltz, 1979). So, not a single piece of literature on international politics is assumed to be complete without discussion about the concept of power and power interest. The concept of 'power' is abstract; it only feels and senses like 'love' (Nye, 2004; Rieger & Bart, 2025). The changing nature of international order moves away from the traditional state base to non-state actors towards a cosmopolitan era or new world order. In this sense, due to the transformative nature of international order, it always emphasises reconceptualising and rethinking power, its diverse face and its implications. As David Held, he explained power politics, culture, and other important notions, such as state-based politics: "We must recognise that political power is being repositioned, recontextualised, and, to a degree, transformed by the growing" (Held, 1998).

The transformative nature of international order is not limited to the concept of the power of only state entities or the hard-power concept. The disparities of argument among intellectuals on power give various faces and implications about the notion of power (Poggi, 2011; Walker, 1992), which is not confined to political or state-based actors but also exercised by other international societal actors or non-state actors (Dormer, 2017; Lebow, 2008; Wendt, 1992, 1999), which places a huge exchange of intellectual ideas on the notion of power. Social scientists expose that power is everywhere, and no one can be alone in power relationships since everyone is influenced by others and influences each other (Poggi, 2011). As Robert A Dahl explains, "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Dahl, 1957). Hence, the phenomenological notion of power causes the power to become ubiquitous and cover all spheres of social life, as well as entangle, for reasons ambiguous to recognise actual actors who exercise power, from where, and how (Guzzini, 2007; James, 1964).

Moreover, the drastic change in international order from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century, i.e., nationalism and nation-state politics, identity politics, refugees, immigration and losing state territory, has forced the concept of assimilation in the cosmopolitan era – global governance and institutions politics have given new space for the concept of assimilation. The term assimilation refers to the process of removing the disparities of diverse cultures and identities and making one culture and identities of a nation or state (Kivisto, 2005; Laubenthal, 2023; Statham & Foner, 2024). In this sense, assimilation could be defined in international politics as which minority group or state (developing and underdeveloped) follows the dominant state or major

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