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Global politics
Higher level and standard level
Paper 1

18 May 2026

Zone A afternoon | **Zone B** afternoon | **Zone C** afternoon

1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions to students

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Answer all the questions.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[25 marks]**.

Power in global politics: Types of power

Read all the sources carefully and answer all the questions that follow.

Source A

Adapted from “Germany: Selected metrics”, a social media post by The Soft Power 30, dated 14 June 2016.

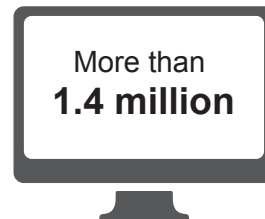
Soft Power Index for Germany, 2016

Germany’s total Overseas
Development Aid is over
USD 17,799,000.000

**EMBASSIES
ABROAD: 147**



Germany has
a FIFA (the
international
football
association)
ranking of 4



**SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS**
of the German Head of State
(from outside Germany)



Number of
tourist arrivals:
33 million

Source B

Removed for copyright reasons

Source C

Adapted from “A critical approach to soft power”, a paper written by Umut Yukaruç and published in the *Bitlis Eren University Journal of Social Sciences* (2017).

Hard power is based on economic and military capabilities to make and fulfil threats. These capabilities, such as the size of a country’s army or financial means, are easily measured. Soft power is based on less tangible factors such as influence and popularity, thus one of the problems of soft power is that it cannot be quantified easily.

Examples of soft power, like government-sponsored American newspapers, radio and TV stations such as Radio Sawa, Al Hurrah, or Voice of America have played a crucial role in transmitting US values to the Middle East. Similarly, Middle Eastern channels such as Turkey’s TRT and Qatar’s Al Jazeera are broadcasting globally in English. The long-term influence of these media broadcasts, however, is not clear.

There are some attempts to measure the soft power of countries. One of these is The Global Soft Power Index. The research of the index is based on questions asked to people from 25 countries. However, the vagueness of soft power ensures that it has very little impact. It is impossible to prove that one country changes its behaviour due to the soft power of another country.

Source D

Adapted from “The problem with soft power”, an online article written by Margaret Seymour for the *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (2020).

Soft power has been practised by states for centuries. Still, it has yet to gain the same credibility as hard power. Soft power is hard to quantify, and thus it is hard to measure its success. Hard power is focused more on measurable resources (money, soldiers, bullets), which are easy to quantify. Soft power aims to change attitudes, which is harder to express in numbers.

Soft power is not limited to the actions of national governments. Public and private industries can also contribute to their countries’ influence abroad. For example, 93 % of people in the Netherlands speak English, largely due to the dominance of American movies and music. However, US soft power, by some measures, is in decline. The Soft Power 30 project ranked the US fifth globally in 2019, its lowest position since the project began. The US military budget also clearly shows that the focus is much higher on the tools of hard power than soft power.

Most critics believe soft power doesn’t work in global politics, but offer little evidence to support this view. Soft power certainly has limitations, and there are challenges to its effective use in global politics. However, many of these challenges are due to governments’ unwillingness to give soft power a chance, rather than it being universally ineffective.

1. Using Source A, identify **three** aspects of soft power. [3]
 2. With explicit reference to Source B **and one** example you have studied, explain the role of hard power in global politics. [4]
 3. Compare and contrast the views presented in Source C **and** Source D regarding soft power. [6]
 4. “Soft power is an ineffective tool of global politics in the 21st century.” Evaluate this claim using **at least three** sources and your own knowledge. [12]
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References:

- Source A** The Soft Power 30, 2016. *Germany: Selected metrics*. [infographic online] 14 June. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/softpower30/photos/germany-remains-the-primary-driving-force-in-european-affairs-it-is-still-widely/2182251388580294/> [Accessed 31 March 2025]. Source adapted.
- Source C** Adapted from Yukari, U. (2017). "A critical approach to soft power." *Bitlis Eren University Journal of Social Sciences*. Source adapted with permission of the author.
- Source D** Seymour, M., 2020. The problem with soft power. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, [online] 14 September. Available at: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/09/the-problem-with-soft-power/> [Accessed 31 March 2025]. Source adapted.