

Markscheme

May 2026

Global Politics

Higher level and standard level

Paper 1

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Power in global politics: Types of power

Bulleted lists in this markscheme indicate likely points that candidates may include in their answer: they are not exhaustive, and examiners should credit other valid points not listed.

1. Using Source A, identify **three** aspects of soft power. [3]

Points from the source may include:

- Source A states development assistance is a significant aspect of soft power, with Germany contributing over USD 17 billion.
- Source A highlights significant number of tourists visited Germany, with over 33 million people visiting.
- Source A indicates Germany has a significant reach on social media, with more than 1.4 million people outside of Germany following the German head of state.
- Source A shows Germany scoring high in the FIFA ranking, highlighting the role of sports in soft power and the promotion of a state's popularity abroad.
- Source A illustrates the presence of 147 embassies abroad shows a robust presence of German soft power in global politics.

Award [1 mark] for each relevant point up to a maximum of [3 marks].

Other relevant points not listed can also be rewarded.

2. With explicit reference to Source B **and one** example you have studied, explain the role of hard power in global politics. [4]

Answers from source B may include, but are not limited to:

- Source B shows the hard power of the US through trade sanctions or military activity.
- Source B illustrates that economically more influential countries may have power over less wealthy countries, e.g. Germany's ability to enact economic measures over Greece.
- Source B highlights that organizations such as the EU or more powerful countries can cause countries to change their regulations, e.g. Spain to change its spending levels.

Answers from own knowledge may include, but are not limited to:

- The use of hard power by states like North Korea using nuclear power as a threat.
- Actions of China in the South China Sea and the coercion of Hong Kong and Taiwan.
- The use of hard power by the US using the WTO and IMF for economic sanctions against countries which do not follow its trade policy.
- The use of hard power by Israel against Palestine and by Russian against Ukraine in the recent past.

Other relevant points not listed can also be rewarded. Students are not expected to make four separate points in order to achieve full marks. For each relevant point a maximum of [2 marks] may be awarded, up to a total of [4 marks]. If only accurate source detail is used or only accurate own-knowledge points are provided, award a maximum of [3 marks].

3. Compare and contrast the views presented in Source C **and** Source D regarding soft power.

[6]

Potential points of comparison include:

- Both sources agree that it is difficult to measure soft power. Source C says “...thus one of the problems of soft power is that it cannot be measured easily” and Source D says, “Soft power is hard to quantify, and thus it is hard to measure its success.”
- Both sources agree that the spread of media such as radio stations, films and music can be used to assess soft power. Source C gives the example of Turkish and Qatari channels while Source D develops on the power of American media in the Netherlands.
- Both sources agree that the spread of English helps the broadcasting of ideas across national boundaries. In Source C this is seen in the example from Turkey and Qatar, while in Source D this is seen in the example of the Netherlands.
- Both sources identify at least one index to measure soft power. Source C makes reference to The Global Soft Power Index and similarly Source D makes reference to the Soft Power 30 project.

Potential points of contrast include:

- Source C believes that soft power is an ineffective tool in global politics, while Source D believes that it could be effective, but that governments are unwilling to use it.
- Source C states that there are few tangible impacts as a result of the use of soft power, with few long-term impacts of the American media, while Source D states that 93% of people in the Netherlands speak English as a result of the influence of US soft power.
- Source C states that soft power is about influence and popularity, while Source D argues that it is about changing attitudes.
- Source C identifies the government sector as the promoter of soft power, while Source D talks about the role of private sector in spreading soft power.

Award [2] per relevant point of comparison or contrast up to a maximum of [6]. For a [6] mark response expect detailed comparison and contrast but do not expect all of the points above and allow other relevant points. For responses that do not attempt to compare or contrast the relevant sources at all or fail to meet the standard described award [0] as the command term was not addressed.

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]

Question 4 is assessed according to the markbands that follow, in conjunction with these marking notes.

Source material may include, but is not limited to:

Source A

- Provides several ways in which soft power can be measured showing its efficacy in the field of sports.
- Highlights the role of tourism in assessing the soft power of a country. Desirability as a travel destination shows its global standing thus adding to its soft power.
- Aspects of aid are highlighted by the focus on overseas aid given by Germany, thus strengthening its soft power.
- The presence of embassies across the globe in 147 countries showcases the effective use of soft power by Germany.

Source B

- Gives examples of the efficacy of hard power by highlighting the role of the US and Germany using sanctions and military hard power to achieve their policy goals.
- Sources of hard power, such as geographic advantage, are more stable.
- Countries which rank high on soft power index also do quite well on hard power rankings. This makes it difficult to attribute their successes purely to their soft power.

Source C

- Soft power is limited as it is not as tangible as hard power.
- Governments may invest resources into soft power initiatives such as global broadcasting, but the impact of this is doubtful.
- The role of soft power through use of language is highlighted especially in the case of countries like Qatar and Turkey doing their transmissions in English.
- The soft power index is mentioned as an attempt to measure soft power, however, it is criticized for its vagueness.

Source D

- Efficacy of soft power highlighted as a tool that has populated the use of the English language, with the result of 93% of Dutch people speaking English.
- The Soft Power Index and the US's decline in rankings are highlighted.
- Efficacy of hard power highlighted because it is measurable.
- Soft power is useful but not politically desirable as a tool of global politics.

Own knowledge could include, but is not limited to:

- China as a case study provides an excellent counterclaim to the question—from panda diplomacy to Confucian centers.
- India's example of using Yoga diplomacy and Gandhian ideals for foreign policy. Yoga diplomacy refers to the growing recognition of Indian practices such as Yoga including but not limited to the declaration of June 21st as World Yoga Day.
- Recent examples of the growing use of hard power in the case of Russia and Israel could be highlighted.
- Soft power remains an ineffective tool in the face of growing nuclear armament.
- Soft power remains an ineffective tool as countries are unable to see its immediate results such as in the case of American food—like Coca Cola—which may have been a global phenomenon but its role in global politics is unclear.
- Even IGOs like the EU and the UN often fail to regulate countries which misuse their hard power.
- Most states pursue smart power, combining aspects of soft and hard power.

- Candidates may argue that soft power is less effective at international level, but more effective at national or local level.

Do not expect all the above, and reward other relevant points not listed. These points need to be woven into well-organized arguments and counter-arguments.

If only source material or only own knowledge is used, the response can only be awarded a maximum of [8]. To achieve the maximum [12], responses must refer to at least three sources.

Responses with effective evaluation will clearly conceptualise what soft power is and indicate how far it is or is not an effective tool. Students may indicate that there are differing definitions of the term (indicated in the sources). Students may also highlight that it is more effective for states (and other actors) if they also have hard power. Smart power may also be introduced in this context. Students may also highlight political actors who can effectively use soft power but lack hard power and therefore argue against the statement. Students may evaluate the statement by discussing the validity of the statement when the actions are from different actors or in different contexts. Claims and alternative claims can be drawn from all sources.

Students should synthesize and evaluate evidence from the sources and from their study of the prescribed content and key concepts of the course.

Markbands for paper 1, question 4

Marks	Description
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	The response shows a limited understanding of the demands of the question. • Little relevant knowledge is demonstrated. • References to the sources are made, but they are mostly descriptive or no clear evidence is integrated in the response. • Different perspectives are not identified.
4–6	The response shows some understanding of the demands of the question. • Some knowledge is demonstrated, but this is not always relevant or accurate. • Evidence from the sources is partially integrated into the response. • Different perspectives are identified, but not explored.
7–9	The response shows adequate understanding of the demands of the question. • Relevant and accurate knowledge is demonstrated. • There is synthesis of own knowledge and source material. • Different perspectives are explored.
10–12	The response shows an in-depth understanding of the demands of the question. • Relevant and accurate knowledge is demonstrated throughout. • There is effective synthesis of own knowledge and source material, with appropriate examples integrated in the response. • Different perspectives are explored and evaluated.