Navigating the Complex Landscape of a Great Power Identity: The Predicament of China's Soft Power Projection

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Abstract

While achieving some success in the Global South, China's efforts in soft power projection have yielded limited results. This article posits that China's great power identity construction has introduced complexity to its soft power projection, exacerbated by the negative effects of great power competition, misperception bias, and geopolitical concerns. This article presents a text analysis of President Xi's speech (2012–2022) and China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs press conferences (2002–2022), aiming to decipher the underlying and substantial changes in China's great power identity construction. In projecting soft power, China faces navigating the intricate and multifaceted landscapes shaped by its great power identity construction, all within the context of a dynamic and fiercely competitive international environment.

China's development of soft power capabilities has attracted attention. Scholars have attributed the dramatic change in China's soft power projection policy to the long-existing wisdom of "winning victories without striking a blow."[1] China's current engagement with its neighbors through soft power projection is also a response to increasing regional concerns, as China seeks to pacify its neighbors that might take a balancing strategy toward it. However, despite heavy and comprehensive

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