

CALL FOR PAPERS

Communicating Soft Power: Contrasting Perspectives from India and China

Date: 9 and 10 September 2013

Venue: University of Westminster, 35 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5LS

Organized by the India Media Centre and the China Media Centre of the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI) of the University of Westminster, London

The notion of soft power, associated with the work of Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye, is defined as ‘the ability to attract people to our side without coercion’. Nye’s concept, whose focus is primarily on the United States, has been adopted or adapted by countries around the world. It has generated much debate about the capacity of nations to make themselves attractive in a globalizing marketplace for ideas and images.

This two-day international conference will explore competing and contrasting approaches to soft power in India and China, the world’s two fastest growing economies, whose rise is set to reconfigure global power equations in a multi-polar world. The conference will discuss the American origins of the concept and how it has been extrapolated in non-American contexts, namely in India and China. Contributors to the conference will examine whether soft power needs to be de-Americanized and expanded to be more inclusive, and historicized to take account of the role of countries and civilizations, such as India and China, in the global communication sphere. India’s global cultural presence is primarily driven by its privately-owned creative and cultural industries – it is home to the world’s largest film industry, as well as a hub for the global IT industry. In the case of China, the state has taken the commanding role in promoting the country’s soft power to supplement its hard economic prowess, as the world’s second largest economy. This is evident in the Chinese government’s extensive investment in international broadcasting as well as in setting up Confucius Institutes around the globe.

The University of Westminster, which hosts the highest-ranked research department in media and communication in the UK, is home to specialist media research facilities in the China Media and India Media Centres. This pioneering attempt to discuss Asian soft power in a comparative framework will provide an opportunity to examine the strengths and limitations of the idea of soft power, deploying a multi-perspectival approach.

Suggested topics for papers include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Rethinking soft power
- Diaspora as soft power
- Public Diplomacy Web2.0
- Contest or cooperation – towards a ‘Chindian’ public sphere?
- Bollywood as soft power
- Media and diplomacy - a global CCTV?
- Soft, Hard and ‘Smart’ power
- Branding nations and cultures: Yoga, Confucius and spiritualism
- Soft power – democratic vs. authoritarian discourses
- Creative industries as soft power - globalization of India’s IT industry
- Engaging with Chindia – international perspectives
- Comparing communication strategies – challenges and opportunities

Keynote plenary speakers:

Professor Amitabh Mattoo

Australia-India Institute, Melbourne and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Professor Hu Zhengrong

Communication University of China, Beijing

Martin Jacques

Author of *When China Rules the World* (TBC)

Lord Bilimoria

UK-India Business Council

Conrad Bird

Prime Minister’s Office & Cabinet Office Communications, UK

Professor Rachel Dwyer

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Professor Jiang Fei

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing

Isabel Hilton

Editor, *China Dialogue*, London

Dr Dibyesh Anand

University of Westminster, London

Professor Zhong Xin
Renmin University, Beijing

Professor Jaideep Prabhu
Director, Centre for India & Global Business, University of Cambridge (TBC)

PROGRAMME AND REGISTRATION

The conference will take place on Monday 9 and Tuesday 10 September 2013. The fee for registration will be £195 with a concessionary rate of £99 for students, to cover all conference documentation, refreshments, lunches, wine reception and administration costs. Registration will open in June and not conditional upon presenting a paper.

DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACTS

The deadline for abstracts is Friday 17 May 2013. The abstracts will be peer reviewed and successful submissions will be notified mid June. These should be between 200-350 words and must include the presenter's name, institutional affiliation, email and postal address, together with the title of the paper and a brief biographical note. Please send abstracts to Helen Cohen, Events Administrator at journalism@westminster.ac.uk

For any academic-related inquiries please contact the conference organizer Professor Daya Thussu, at D.K.Thussu@westminster.ac.uk

A selection of the best papers will be published in an edited book and in a special themed issue of a peer reviewed international journal.