



– Paris 2024, J+3- Influence & soft power

Defended by an American researcher associated with the Democratic administration (Joseph Nye, 1990), the concept of soft power refers to 'Methods of influence developed by a state which are not based on violence but on ideological or cultural elements in order to satisfy the interests of the nation that puts them into work». It may use brutal methods such as coercion, or use finer means such as incitement or seduction. The objective is to influence political decisions by making certain choices appear as priorities, so that they prevail through their credibility and legitimacy.

Influence strategy is when a country must gain membership, for example in an international decision-making body for its future on a particular project . When a country is a candidate for the Olympic Games, it must do everything possible to be as convincing as possible to the members of the IOC who constitute the electoral college that will vote for the successful candidate.

Several elements must be considered. The first is the image of the country in the world, is it generally positive but more particularly in the field considered? Is France a sports nation? The whole nation must be behind this project, which will take several years to complete. The country's sporting practice and place in international sports competitions are crucial factors. The sports movement is closely associated with its clubs and associations, members of federations that constitute the French National Olympic and Sports Committee (CNOSF), even if not all sports are Olympic. Athletes of international renown are also decisive in defending the national colors, especially Olympic champions.

Does France have the capacity to organize such an event – leaders capable of supporting and defending a bid that involves several levels of decision-making? The first is national- a strong executive in a State that is strong enough to ensure the sustainability (financial and political) of the project. The second level is that of the organizing city which must be highly motivated and ready to commit public funds (in partnership with other public authorities) For example, on sports infrastructure and transport.

France is an example of a sport governance that worked perfectly – a city that organized the event (Paris) supported by successive mayors (B. Delanoë and then A. Hidalgo) Very motivated, presidents of the Republic who all supported the Parisian candidacy (all political colors), a support of the regions (Ile de France first). The sporting movement was carried by two personalities who had a decisive influence on the Paris 2024 issue- Bernard Lapasset, former rugby leader (national and international bodies) who managed to convince a multi-medallist athlete, IOC member Tony Estanguet, Chairman of the Organizing Committee.

The IOC members considered in their vote elements both very objective- solidity of the sports and financial file, ability to fulfill the specifications over time (at least ten years) but also very subjective- the image of Paris, perfect setting to host exceptional Games, in partnership with other sites, in Ile de France and in France, sports and Olympic nation. The 2024 Olympic Games are above all a victory for a team without hostile and discordant voices – influence is only convincing if this *sine qua non* condition is fulfilled.

- (1) Bénédicte Halba « Soft Power et lutte contre la discrimination dans le sport- le cas de l'équipe féminine de football iranienne », Think Tank , juillet 2016
- (2) Joseph S. Nye, Bound to Lead, 1990 cité par le Centre de ressources et d'information sur l'intelligence économique et stratégique - <http://www.portail-ie.fr/lexiques/read/94>
- (3) Documentaire de Mickaël Gamrasni « Olympiques ! La France des Jeux », France, diffusé le 16 juillet 2024 sur France 2
- (4) Site officiel du COJO-<https://olympics.com/fr/>
- (5) Jules et Gédéon Naudet « Au cœur des jeux », France , 2024- **série de documentaires** <https://www.france.tv/sport/les-jeux-olympiques/6324884-ceremonie-d-ouverture-premiers-secrets-partie-1.html>

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