

## The Research on the Soft Power of City Culture

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### Abstract

The soft power of city culture is the core of the city soft power. It refers to the influence, cohesion and appeal that a city possesses, which is the main element of the competitiveness and interacts with hard power, for example economy and technology. The soft power of city culture contains the cohesion of city culture, the appeal of city culture, the innovation of city culture, the integration force of city culture and the radiation of city culture. To improve the soft power of city culture, we must treated the following relationships well: the relation between soft power and hard power, the relation between the soft power of national culture and city culture, and the relation between the soft power of culture in this city and in other cities.

**Key words:** Soft power of city culture; Cohesion of city culture; Appeal of city culture; Innovation of city culture; Integration force of city culture; Radiation of city culture

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### 1. THE BASIC CONNOTATION OF THE SOFT POWER OF CITY CULTURE

"Soft power" was raised by Joseph S. Nye in the *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* published in 1990, who is the dean of the Harvard Kennedy School and the ex-assistant secretary of the US Department of Defense. In the *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics* published in 2004, he gave a further exposition to soft power, which has made marked effect on the current international relationship studies. Joseph S. Nye holds that the comprehensive national power contains not only the hard power in the economic, technology and military, but also the soft power on the basic of culture, values and other attractions. Based on the above, we can summarize the definition of soft power: it is the power that may attract others, instead of forcing to realize the purpose, which mainly contains the appeal of culture and the foreign policy, the ideology and the political value. During those, the cultural attraction is the essence power and the profound origin. American scholar John. P. Lovell said, "we all grow up in the culture atmosphere, and are bred in the fundamental value, the custom and believe. Those who master the political power in a society are easiest to be influenced by the social culture, whose behaviors and attitude have numerous cultural origins. Besides, in each national country, the govern and the setting of foreign policy are both under a culture."

American cultural anthropology scholar Leslie. White also agreed that it was the special cultural psychology or ideology to determine the character of a national country, instead of the external structure of the race.

Since city came about, each field of human life has shown the high developing tendency. It is the city culture that accelerates the urbanization and the modernization, and becomes an important element of a city. To a country, culture is the soul of a nation; while to a city, the soul is its special culture, for it can improve the lives and provide spiritual power for the construction and development of a city. The traditional city which has played important role in the Information Age, will be at a disadvantage in the new competition, if it cannot adapt itself to the change of the technological revolution and the challenge of the times, cannot gather the strength of culture to push forward the development of the city. Nevertheless many cities that was unknown before, may grasp the opportunity to make a correct development orientation. So they can develop rapidly and become the main forces during the new word pattern.

For the above we need draw lessons from the concept of “soft power of national culture”, and construct the concept of “soft power of city culture”. The soft power of a city mainly covers the capacity to promote its social and economic purposes to be achieved, by giving full scope to the ability of citizens’ mind. To make it, we should not only uplift the citizens’ morale, and display their talents, but also need attract talents, funds and technology. Contrary to hard power such as infrastructure, the soft power of city culture is on the basis of city culture, spirit, environment, government public service, human quality and other immaterial elements. It is the summation the appeal of the city’s innermost value, the appeal of city’s spirit, the innovation power of citizens, the integration force of policy, and the cultural radiation. Without the improvement of the soft power of culture correspondingly, hard power will be limited by opinion and consciousness when it develops to a certain degree, even lead to the alienation of excellent culture, or the cultural conflict. That is because the hard power will lose necessary support without its cultural inclusiveness and appeal. Based on this viewpoint, the effect that the soft power of city culture has played in the modern city construction is more and more important. The soft power of city culture can attract other districts’ elements of production and consumption, and promote the coordination during the social economy system. Only if the development of society, politics, economy and culture has been improved, the comprehensive competitiveness can be strengthened. Then the nice image of a city has been shaped, which can offer powerful support for the harmonious development to the city life.

## 2. THE ELEMENTS OF SOFT POWER OF CITY CULTURE

The soft power of city culture refers to the influence, cohesion and appeal that a city possesses, which is the main element of the competitiveness and interacts with hard power. We can divide the soft power of city culture to five: the cohesion of city culture that spurs a city to product powerful centripetal force; the appeal of city culture that wins others’ imitation; the innovation of city culture that pursues development and precedence; the integration force of city culture that makes cultural elements to be an organic whole; the radiation of city culture that shows its intension to outside. Among which, the cohesion of city culture is the core, the appeal of city culture is the foundation, the innovation of city culture is the multiplication, the radiation of city culture is the presentation.

### 2.1 The Cohesion of City Culture

City is often regarded as the container of culture, and the cohesion is the first element of the characters of city. In the process of history, a city absorbs and protects the cultural factors, then inherits and reconstructs them. Only this, the culture can become the cultural character of the city. To keep the cohesion of city culture, we should protect effectively the former culture achievements, as well as draw on other cities’ various culture and change the beneficial to ourselves’ new cultural character. Furthermore we also need rework effectively all the culture factors and make them become new cultural products, in order to broaden the cultural market and satisfy the cultural needs of the people.

### 2.2 The Appeal of City Culture

The appeal of city culture based on the favorable culture construction, possesses special charm and becomes the focus. Inside, this appeal can make citizens have centripetal force, positive feelings and pride for the city; outside, it can attract people from other cities to feel the city’s intimacy and appeal. So the key to enhance the appeal of city culture depends on effective culture construction to promote the particular charm of city culture, and show positive image to the world by its unique charm.

### 2.3 The Innovation of City Culture

Simply said, the innovation of city culture is the capacity to rework the cultural factors and materials ever gained, and depend on the new cultural products to affect the market. The capacity to draw different cultural factors is essential, while the capacity to preserve, rework and fulfill the cultural factors, as well as the ability to broaden the market and promotion is the essence of the innovation of culture. However the concept, the method and the capacity of the innovation of city culture will change greatly

with the development of times. The form of site, the production enterprise and the operation mode that the cultural innovation depends on will change as well.

#### **2.4 The Integration Force of City Culture**

The integration force of city culture is the ability to show a city's positive factors to the world by effective operation and coordination, and the ability to market them. Furthermore, it also contains the ability to realize the power of the city accurately and to cognize the figure of the city roundly. There are numerous ways to raise it: the large scale cultural activities organized by the government, for example, sports meeting, exhibition, cultural celebration, award ceremony and so on; nongovernmental commercial activities and cultural exchange; the civilians' initiative cultural exhibition as well as the cultural show and so on. As long as the activities can spread the cultural character of the city, which may help the city with its positive and healthy image, they should be the valuable activities of cultural integration which can benefit the improvement of the competitiveness.

#### **2.5 The Radiation of City Culture**

The radiation of city culture depends on the excellent fruits of city culture to expand the image of the city, and its popularity. The radiation of city culture colligates a lot of factors, which reflects the great vigor of development of the city, the economic increasing capability, as well as the association ability with the world. Besides, the radiation can reveal the ecology of the city. All the above are the important contents of the radiation of city culture. We can estimate a city's quality and image by experiencing its charm as well as the deep-seated and persuasive power.

### **3. THE RELATIONS THAT SHOULD BE TREATED REASONABLY TO IMPROVE THE SOFT POWER OF CITY CULTURE**

#### **3.1 The Relation Between the Soft Power of City Culture and Hard Power**

Soft power and hard power are both the components of comprehensive strength. They are complementary, which are different but interrelated.

The difference. First, their essence or nature is different. The hard power is a kind of comprehensive strength presented by the economic lever, science and technology, military force and other visible material factors, which can be quantified. For example, we can hold a city's strength and influence by means of quantizing its totals and speed of economic growth, the contribution rate of technological inventions, the military equipment, the quantity of nuclear weapon and so on. While soft power is the invisible spiritual power in the comprehensive power of a city that can produce an effect on others' desire. It cannot be quantified, including literature and art, value systems, behavior

pattern, citizen qualities and lifestyle. Second, their coefficient of difficulty is different. To some extent, a city's hard power can be transplanted, then reach a higher lever during a short time. On the contrary, the development of soft power is long-term and herculean, whose forming requires secular accumulation.

The relations and interaction. In a city the soft power and hard power are impartible, and one's development depends on the other. Therefore the improvement of the soft power must be on the basis of the great hard power. Without the hard power as the foundation, the ideology of the city and the cohesion of city spirit will be rootless. However the hard power cannot develop without the soft power. That is because the hard power cannot be improved spontaneously, it is the result of all the subjects' efforts. Nevertheless the process of strength is lopsided. It is important to keep a harmony between soft power and hard power, for their dislocation won't always exit. In addition, the relation between soft power and hard power is not unilateral or inflexible, but dialectical and unified. If the economy intends to develop to higher lever, it must get help from soft power in order to be the motive force for the sustainable development.

#### **3.2 The Relation Between the Soft Power of National Culture and City Culture**

In practice, the improvement of soft power of national culture exceeds the city culture. So the country should understand the regional and the city culture from different angles, who surely realize the soft power of national culture as the most important, and serve it on themselves' conditions. The soft power of city culture must be reflected by the soft power of national culture, for only the soft power of city culture which attributes to the soft power of national culture is the most reasonable. Including the ones develop fast, if a city cannot consider the public interest, it cannot realize its interest too.

In a word, there is a complementary between the soft power of city culture and the national culture. The soft power of national culture without the city culture is barren. Only the cultural soft power which is accepted by the country can be the soft power of city culture; only the soft power of city culture which is known jointly by the countries, it can be maintained effectively; only the soft power of city culture which benefits all the related countries, it may make the nation state realize the necessary of its expend in the game playing with other countries. It is weak for the soft power of national culture without the city culture as its safeguard.

City possesses obvious accumulative effect and economies of scale, so the productive factors, such as the labor, capital, technology and information, which are more centralized, will have more prominent attractiveness to the surrounding areas, as well as make more contribution to the economic growth. For that reason, a city should make the most optimum distribution of economic factors, and

the reasonable disposition of the industries, in an attempt to promote the economic growth. Accordingly it is one of the significant driving force to rapidly promote the soft power of city culture, and the strategic choice to ensure that the economic growth keeps a sustained and rise in high speed.

### 3.3 The Relation Between the Soft Power of Culture in this City and Other Cities

Each city has its cultural advantage, which is its foundation for existent and development. Accept advancing and enriching its fine cultural heritage, a city should learn others' outstanding culture as well. It's a significant way to increase the soft power of city culture that drawing lessons from others' cultural achievements.

In addition, it is important as well to absorb other cities' experiences who have done well in the promotion of the soft power. However we ought to hold a scientific approach- discarding, fundamentally, which not only means conquering but holding. Not to take all in, or to turn all down, we should conquer the negative and the decayed, at the same time hold the advanced and positive, for the culture from the first-class cities also have weakness.

When we use the experience of other cities' advanced culture, we must hold on the spirit of abandoning on the basis of actual situation. It cannot highlight the character by imitating simply, on the contrary, the innovation based on the imitating may increase the appeal of culture. As a

result, we require the innovation rather than "bringing" through absorbing and copy. Regarding to the foreign culture, the valid view should be all-sided and three-dimensional. Because each city has its developing environment which covers not only the historical cause, but also the humanist tradition, we should take the actual situation and culture into consideration when we transplant the foreign culture. Then the foreign may bloom and fructify on our ground.

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