STUDY ON THE ROLE OF CULTURAL SOFT POWER IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract: In a complex international context, cultural soft power is a key factor in sustaining national cohesion and national vitality. In order to clarify the importance of cultural soft power in international competition, the positive role of cultural soft power needs to be analyzed. Using the knowledge spectrum as a basis, the connotation of cultural soft power is analyzed. The impact of the globalization situation on the enhancement of cultural soft power is also analyzed from two perspectives: cultural survival power as well as cultural innovation power. On this basis, the role of cultural soft power in international communication is analyzed in three aspects: comprehensive national power, international centripetal power and international competitiveness, with the aim of promoting the construction of national cultural soft power.

Keywords: globalization situation; cultural soft power; international discourse; comprehensive national power

1.   Introduction

Cultural soft power is a complex concept, and understanding cultural soft power involves grasping "culture" and "soft power" in a general sense, as well as analyzing its basic components, in order to grasp cultural soft power more accurately [1] . There are two main views on the definition of culture in the theoretical field, one is a broad view of culture, which emphasizes that culture is related to the social practice of human beings. The other viewpoint defines culture in a narrower sense, arguing that culture is "a concept that belongs to the social structure. It is conveyed by specific symbols (language and other symbols) and is the sum of ideas, social life, and norms of behavior created by human practices." Western scholars' definition of "culture" is mostly related to symbols, and they believe that culture refers to the way of life of human beings closely related to nature, and is the symbol of human beings' understanding and perception of nature and themselves, as well as the fruit of social practice. For example, the American anthropologist White believes that without symbols, there is no culture, and without culture, human beings lose their distinction from animals and do not become human beings. First, culture can be understood from two perspectives: in a broad sense and in a narrow sense. Culture in the broad sense, as Hegel said, "culture is the second nature created by human beings", refers to all the results related to human social practices, including both material and spiritual aspects, and emphasizes the category corresponding to natural substances, i.e. humanized nature[2] . Culture in the narrower sense corresponds mainly to culture and matter, and

refers specifically to the spiritual products of human practice, used in parallel with politics and economy, including customs, values, ways of thinking, moral sentiments, academic thought, science and technology, various institutions, etc. As can be seen, the broad level emphasizes the subjective role of man on nature, where man acts on nature, while the narrow sense culture focuses on the influence of culture on the spiritual world of man, where culture as a spiritual product of man acts in turn on human life and man himself. The "culture" in the cultural soft power discussed in this paper mainly refers to culture in a narrow sense, emphasizing on the one hand that culture as a spiritual product is "soft power" as opposed to "hard power" such as economy, military and politics; on the other hand, it emphasizes that culture as a spiritual product is "soft power". "On the other hand, it emphasizes that culture as a product of human practice has a negative effect on human beings, and culture as a superstructure is determined by the economic base and also has a negative effect on the economic base. Secondly, culture is both national and global in nature [3]. Horizontally, culture is produced by the social practice of people in different time and space. Due to the influence of geographical environment, climatic conditions, natural resources and other objective conditions, each nation and country is bound to form its own distinctive way of labor, customs, moral and ethical cognition and way of thinking over a long period of time. Although the way of practice of society plays a decisive role in culture, the culture of any nation is formed by long-term accumulation of history, which may be manifested as different types of culture in different periods, but there must be a universal and monolithic cultural trait running through it, otherwise, it will lose its vitality. The cosmopolitan nature of culture means that there is something common and universal in the cultures of all nations, which becomes a prerequisite for the exchange and intermingling of different nations and cultures [4] .

2.   Basic connotation of cultural soft power

National cultural soft power is the cohesion, penetration and vitality of a country or region to other countries or regions based on culture, as well as the resulting value influence and cultural identity. National cultural soft power is different from hard power, and is a concentrated expression of a country's cultural strength, as well as an integral part of a country's comprehensive national power. The development of a country requires not only the improvement of hard power such as total economic volume, military strength, and scientific and technological strength, but also the improvement of soft power such as value influence, cultural appeal, and the superiority of political system, and the promotion of comprehensive national power through the joint development of hard and soft power. It should be said that the national cultural soft power directly affects the level of comprehensive national power of a country or region, and is also an important basis for its international discourse and the size of national influence. National cultural soft power is the cultural soft power shaped and constructed by national power, and cultural soft power is a derivative concept of "soft power"[5] . Therefore, in order to fully grasp the basic connotation of national cultural soft power, it is necessary to conduct an academic exploration of the genealogy of the knowledge of "soft power" and "cultural soft power" and other related concepts. The comprehensive power structure of the country is shown in the figure 1 below.
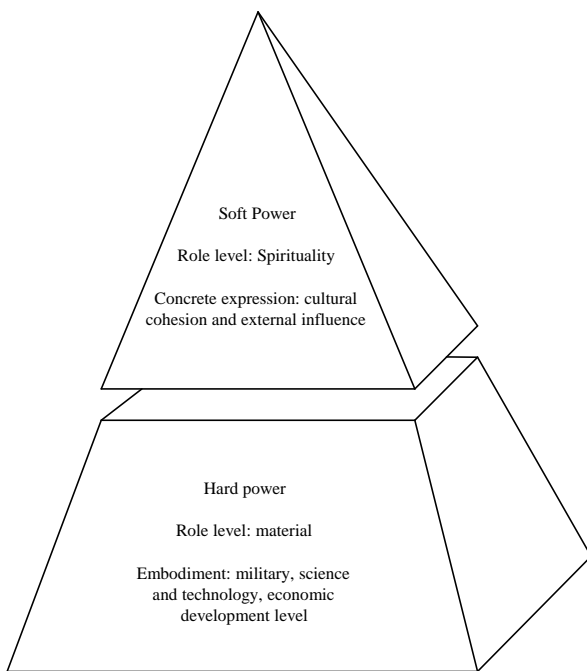
Figure1 Structure of comprehensive national power

From the academic combing of the concepts of "soft power" and "national cultural soft power", it can be seen that the following consensus has been formed in the study of soft power in domestic and foreign academic circles: first, soft power and hard power together constitute the comprehensive national power of a country; second, soft power is different from the hard power constituted by a country's scientific and technological power, military power and economic power. Second, soft power is different from the hard power constituted by the country's scientific and technological strength, military strength and economic strength, which mainly includes a country's culture, values, national institutional dynamics and diplomatic capabilities; Third, the play of soft power mainly depends on its own appeal, cohesion and penetration, is a non-coercive means. From this, it can be concluded that soft power is a kind of hard power different from national hard power, consisting of a country or region's culture, values, national system and diplomatic ability, etc., which influences the behavioral choices

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and value judgments of other countries and their people through non-coercive means such as infiltration and inspiration, so as to achieve the goals of its own interests. Soft power mainly includes cultural soft power, political soft power and social soft power, etc. Cultural soft power is formed on the basis of the analysis and research of soft power, which refers to the ability of culture to promote a country's comprehensive national power. Culture promotes the country's comprehensive national power by cooperating with hard power such as economy, politics and military, etc. The performance of cultural soft power is based on the country's hard power, which makes the substantial influence of hard power play to a greater extent, and then enhances the influence of the country's comprehensive national power[6] . In a comprehensive manner, national cultural soft power refers to the ability of a country's culture and the value pursuit and evaluation scale formed by its embedded values and ideology to influence the behavior of its own and other countries, so as to use flexible and non-coercive means to achieve the established goals and emotional affinity[7] .

National cultural soft power plays a central role in the entire national soft power system. A country's culture, especially its political culture, is the main source of its soft power appeal, influence and affinity. The generation of national cultural soft power depends on the integration, promotion and development of the country's cultural traditions, core values, cultural undertakings and cultural industries, which requires the country to effectively resolve the differences between traditional and modern culture, and between its own culture and foreign culture, to realize the harmonious coexistence between different cultures or civilizations, and to establish a cultural concept suitable for the development of the country, especially the intrinsic values and moral codes. For our country, adhering to the Marxist concept of culture and promoting the combination of the basic principles of Marxism and the construction of our national cultural soft power are the basic principles that must be adhered to in order to improve the national cultural soft power. In addition, the inherent charm of culture itself is the leading factor in promoting the development of national cultural soft power, which plays a unique role in national and cultural interactions precisely through the subtle way, by virtue of its transcendence and permeability.

3. Impact of globalization on enhancing national cultural soft power

Culture is one of the dimensions of globalization, and globalization has given culture a greater space for practice. Globalization has broken the original geographical and national restrictions, prompting exchanges, conflicts and integration between different cultures, which breaks the original closedness of culture, bringing new cultural contents and concepts to the relatively independent local culture, forming a good competition and intermingling situation, so that the survival, innovation, dissemination and dominance of local culture will have certain positive effects[8] .

3.1 *Enhancement of national cultural viability*

Globalization can bring in "fresh blood" to a country's indigenous culture, which is beneficial to the viability of the country's culture. Local culture, sometimes called national culture, is the sum of customs, ways of thinking, values, moral beliefs and other concepts accumulated by a country or nation over a long period of time in a specific natural environment and historical development process, and is a reflection of the production methods of a specific country, nation or region. Every country and nation has its common values, customs, moral beliefs and ways of behavior, and they are all deeply hidden in the national psyche as an internal mindset. If we can analyze the reasonable, progressive and scientific contents of various cultural products that are branded with other national cultures for our use, then the local culture will be constantly updated and enriched, and will be more in line with the development of the times and meet people's spiritual and cultural needs, which will strengthen the viability of the local culture and consolidate the dominant position of the local culture. Only by actively absorbing advanced foreign cultures in the exchange of multiple cultures and taking advantage of their strengths and weaknesses can the national culture survive in the competition and grow and continue in the development. Moreover, only by placing itself in the process of global civilization can national culture reflect its own value and play its own role, so as to stand firm in the wave of globalization .[9]

3.2 *Enhance national cultural innovation*

Cultural innovation is the source of life of national culture development. Domestic scholar Wang Shuxiang synthesizes various ideas about cultural innovation and believes that "cultural innovation is a progressive movement in which human beings gradually make revolutionary transformation and abandonment of old cultural patterns and systems on the basis of borrowing and inheriting the national culture and foreign culture, combining with new social practice needs, so as to create new quality culture, which is an important practical way of

promoting social progress and realizing human beings' own values." It can be seen that the power source of cultural innovation is to meet new social practice needs, the basis is the national culture and foreign culture, and the content is the transformation and abandonment including the whole cultural model and system. The impact of globalization on national cultures has prompted nation-states to make efforts to innovate in accordance with people's new cultural needs in order to survive and develop[10] . The three dynamics of cultural innovation are shown
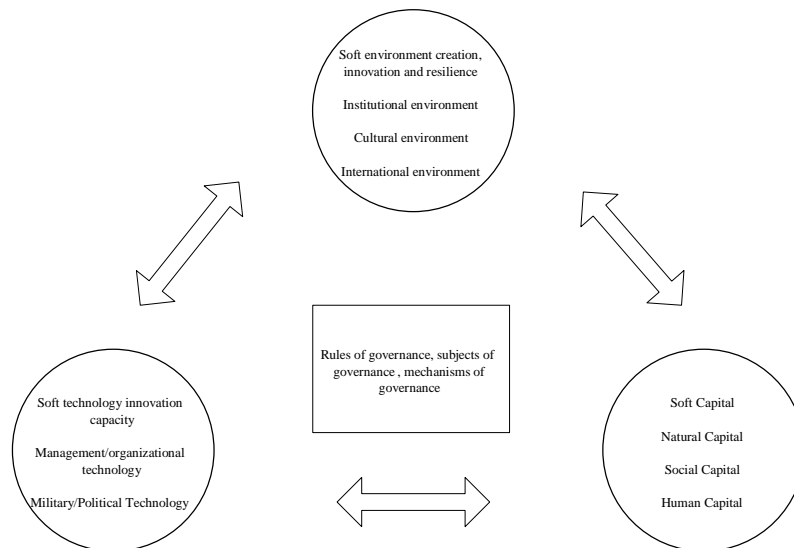
in the figure 2 below.

Figure 2 The three drivers of cultural innovation

The above chart shows that the main source of national cultural innovation power lies in the ability to innovate with technology, the ability to create soft environment and soft capital. The new cultural industry is the most dynamic and potential part of the international cultural trade, and it is also the key to play a late-stage advantage and achieve catch-up in enhancing the national cultural soft power. New cultural industries represented by digital publishing, mobile multimedia, animation and games are flourishing and have become one of the fastest growing and leading industries in the world after the industrial T industry. A variety of novel cultural products and services are emerging, which are highly sought after and loved by young people, providing a new market space for Chinese culture to go out. We should make use of high technology to transform traditional cultural industries, promote the concentration of innovative elements in cultural enterprises, and strive to launch more new cultural products and services with both technological and cultural contents. Take the initiative to participate in the research and development of international cultural science and technology standards, accelerate the research and development of key Internet technologies and core equipment as well as the pace of localization, and seize the high ground of digitalization and networking competition

3.2.1   *Provides impetus for national cultural innovation*

National culture is first of all to inherit the main line, but the inheritance is never to simply, unchanged in the past to use in the present, but needs to be refined and transformed, the inheritance must be through the abandonment of the culture of the progressive, reasonable part of the preservation, but also in the new practice needs and the characteristics of the times based on the transcendence and innovation. Cultural innovation and cultural heritage are intrinsically unified. It is impossible for a culture to remain unchanged in order to be inherited for a long time,

while cultural innovation is not just an imagination, it is necessarily an innovation on the soil of a certain traditional culture. Cultural innovation is essentially an intrinsic requirement for cultural development, but the urgency and pace of innovation are accelerated by external forces[11].

3.2.2   *Provide new ideas for national cultural innovation*

Globalization has given an external impetus to cultural innovation, and at the same time has prompted us to change our mindset in cultural innovation. In the past, national culture considered more about how to survive and develop within its own nation, but nowadays, globalization is the most significant background for national culture development, which makes it necessary to consider the needs and acceptability of foreign audiences in addition to national audiences when developing and

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innovating, so that not only local culture can be used but also advanced foreign cultural elements can be absorbed into our own innovation process. This is the first concept that our cultural innovation subjects need to change.

3.2.3   *Provide new content for national differentiated innovation*

Cultural pluralism has brought different cultural values to each nation-state, so that not only the original mainstream culture exists within the country, but also various ideologies, values, customs and traditions from external cultural systems, which gives the national culture the right to seek development and innovation with richer and more diversified choices. In the midst of intense exchanges, collisions and conflicts, the cultural patterns of various ethnic groups, driven by the inherent need for cultural innovation and the external impetus of globalization, take their essence and transform themselves to form a new culture with national characteristics. Globalization makes it easier and faster for cultural innovation to access rich and colorful cultural resources[12].

4.   The Role of Cultural Soft Power in International Communication

4.1   *Improving comprehensive national power*

Cultural soft power is an important part of the country's comprehensive national power, which is complemented by economic power, military power and other hard power, and together constitute the country's comprehensive national power and promote the development of the country's comprehensive national power. In the comprehensive national power framework, hard power forms the basis for soft power, providing essential material support for its development. The enhancement of national soft power, in turn, offers spiritual and intellectual backing to hard power, providing scientific values for its growth. The interplay between national hard power and soft power reinforces cohesion, attraction, and connection for the country. Simultaneously, it generates external deterrence and coercive capabilities. By employing flexible, non-coercive approaches, a nation can effectively garner recognition for its values, codes of conduct, and customs among other nations and their populations. This infectious power, affinity, and influence facilitate the attainment of national objectives. As an important part of soft power, cultural soft power is its core, and improving the country's cultural soft power is conducive to enhancing the country's comprehensive national power[13].

First, improving national cultural soft power can promote national economic development. The construction of cultural soft power involves the development, excavation, dissemination and consumption of cultural undertakings, cultural industries and peripheral goods, and the enhancement of cultural soft power is inextricably linked to the development of cultural industries. The improvement of the country's cultural soft power can effectively promote the development of many industries such as science and technology, cultural goods design, film and television industry, and construct a perfect cultural industry system, which makes the production,

dissemination and consumption of culture more standardized. At the same time, the development of cultural industrialization will further promote the diversification of market economic structure, so that people can get more experiences from the consumption of spiritual and cultural products while consuming material products.

Second, improving the country's cultural soft power helps to achieve benign social development. The evaluation indicators for measuring social development include not only hard indicators such as economic growth, institutional construction and environmental optimization, but also soft indicators such as the level of civilization and cultural literacy. While the material level of development is of fundamental significance for social development, cultural factors constitute the soul of social development. Without the support of culture, especially values, social development will lack intrinsic value roots. Therefore, a society needs not only economic development and growth, continuous improvement of ecological environment and institutional design of governance system, but also cultural strength and value leadership. Improving national cultural soft power can further manifest the mainstream values, ideals and humanistic sentiments advocated by society, making social development more humanistic and better inspire people's emotional resonance and value recognition.

4.2   *Strengthen national centripetal force*

The inherent cohesiveness, appeal and affinity based on culture and its values are important features of national cultural soft power. With national cultural soft power, values can be transmitted to other countries and their people without their noticing the experience, inducing them to understand and identify with the values and behavioral habits, and even to support the country's foreign policy and its ideas on the construction of international affairs. National cultural soft power has a significant impact both at home and abroad, internally, it can strengthen national political identity, promote social value identity and ethnic identity by shaping the core values of society, so that the citizens of the country form a strong group identity, thus strengthening the centripetal force of the country [14]. First, improving national cultural soft power can enhance national political identity. Political identity is the source of national legitimacy, and is the premise and core of promoting the construction of the Chinese national community. Only by forming a strong political identity can we better unite China's strength and carry forward the Chinese spirit, providing strong spiritual guarantee and intellectual support for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The construction of political identity involves the construction and guidance of citizens' values, ideologies and lifestyles, and requires the widening of channels for citizens' political participation and the guidance of their political participation behavior. National cultural soft power reflects the ability to influence the cultural psychology, value choices and behavior norms of social members by non-coercive means based on the needs of mainstream ideology and promoted by state power. Enhancing the soft power of national culture can improve the alignment between mainstream ideology and the daily lives of citizens. It strengthens the guidance of citizens' values and moral norms in their everyday behavior. Furthermore, it fosters emotional resonance between citizens and national culture, social life, and political operations, thereby enhancing citizens' understanding of national culture, political systems, values, and governmental policies. This, in turn, cultivates a unified political cognition and connects the diversified realities of the society.

Second, improving national cultural soft power can strengthen social value identity. The core of culture is reflected in the value creation of people in certain social production relations, which is based on certain social practices and often contains the values advocated by a country or a society, and is the carrier and external expression of social values. In China, socialist core values occupy a dominant position in the cultural soft power,

which embodies the essence of our national culture and mode of production, and is the soul of the national soft power, which is rooted in the excellent traditional culture of China and has a powerful spiritual power.

Finally, improving national cultural soft power can promote inter-ethnic identity. Culture is the fundamental marker that distinguishes a nation from other ethnic groups. A strong cultural soft power is the internal driving force for a community's survival and reproduction, cultural inheritance and external communication. Enhancing national cultural soft power can strengthen national political identity and social value identity, while also generally enhancing national psychological identity, enabling the integration of different ethnic groups through cultural ties, enhancing national mutual trust, breaking through national boundaries, and promoting the construction of national identity based on the realization of national identity. At the same time, by improving national cultural soft power, it can also promote emotional identity among different ethnic groups, form national affinity, promote national cultural exchanges, deepen the understanding of culture, psychology and traditions among different ethnic groups, thus promoting national integration and the harmonious coexistence of values, living habits and moral norms among different ethnic groups.

4.3 *Enhancement of international competitiveness*

International competitiveness refers to the influence of a country's own strength on other countries in the country-to-country interaction. International competitiveness is closely related to the comprehensive national power of a country, and its strength or weakness depends on the sum of national power and its integration and application, which is jointly constructed by economic power, military power, scientific and technological power, diplomatic power and cultural power. As an important influencing factor and core component of comprehensive national power, cultural soft power is of great significance to the enhancement of national comprehensive national power. Enhancing the cultural soft power of a country can effectively promote the influence, appeal and affinity of its culture, core values and moral code in the international community, thus enhancing its international competitiveness. International competitiveness generally includes explicit competitiveness and implicit competitiveness, and the specific measurement indicators are shown in the table 1 below.

Table1 International competitiveness measurement system

Tier 1 Indicators	Secondary Indicators	Tertiary Indicators
Apparent Competitiveness	Overall Competitiveness	Total Operating Revenue
		Total Asset Turnover Ratio
		Sales Profit Margin
	Market Competitiveness	Overseas Market Share
		Overseas Investment Projects
		Export Scale
Hidden Competitiveness	Brand competitiveness	Brand recognition
		Brand recognition
	R&D competitiveness	Number of standard certifications
		Percentage of technical personnel

	Talent Competitiveness	Labor efficiency
		Production personnel ratio

First, improving national cultural soft power can enhance our international discourse. International discourse reflects a country's ability to participate in global affairs marked by discourse in the international community. Along with the in-depth development of globalization, human society is facing many global issues. The composition of international discourse is not only economic discourse, political discourse, but also cultural discourse and public opinion discourse. It is mainly embodied in two aspects: the right to participate in governance and the power that permeates the process of governance. Specifically, it refers to the constructive power and influence on the setting of governance themes, rules of governance agenda, construction of governance platforms and creation of governance systems in the process of global affairs governance. Therefore, enhancing international discourse power and strengthening influence and control over the governance of global affairs and its direction are increasingly becoming the top priority of international competition[15] .

Improving national cultural soft power can effectively enhance national influence in the international community, make other countries accept, recognize and imitate their own values, behavioral habits and policy goals, thus reducing resistance in the process of dealing with international issues, strengthening the political identity of the international community, enhancing national leadership, influence and appeal in the international community, and enhancing the right to speak in the international community. It is the common expectation and important mission of all countries in the world to work together to address various risks and challenges and achieve win-win development for all. In the process of promoting the change of the global governance system and rationalization of the international order, China has proposed a major initiative to promote the building of a community of human destiny, playing the role of a responsible power, and occupying the international discourse from the moral high ground.

5.   Conclusion

Improving national cultural soft power is a major task of great strategic and cultural significance, which needs to be integrated into the mainstream ideology of indoctrination and transformed into the conscious value consensus of the people. The essence of ideological and political education lies in the "inculcation of mainstream ideology", and the innovative development of ideological and political education and the improvement of national cultural soft power constitute a virtuous interaction of mutual promotion and synergistic development.

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