

## Study of Cultural Soft Power under the Construction of New Rural Areas

### LA PERSPECTIVE BASEE SUR LA NOUVELLE CONSTRUCTION RURALE DANS LE CADRE DE LA CONSTRUCTION DE CULTURE DE LA PUISSANCE DOUCE

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#### Abstract

Culture is the core element of soft power, and it is also closely related to the construction of new rural areas. To achieve the overall goal of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the developing of country is not only the key point but also the difficult one. This paper firstly gives a brief overview on the concept and meaning of soft power, and then analyzes the importance and necessity of cultural soft power to make a new sustainable development of country. But today the construction of rural cultural soft power is not optimistic, and the four key problems are as follows: the public cultural projects can not meet the demands of new rural construction, and the government show less attention to the cultural construction of rural areas. Besides, the defective management of rural culture and the insufficient quality of the peasants do exist in rural areas. Therefore, addressed the above issues, authors put forward several suggestions. At first, build and improve the new rural cultural soft power system. Furthermore, make the grass-roots government work in the construction of cultural soft power. What's more, increase the cultural resources and enhance the services of rural public culture. Finally, improve the overall quality of the peasants and cultivate new peasants.

**Key Words:** New rural construction; Cultural soft power; Rural cultural construction.

#### Résumé

La culture est l'élément central de la puissance douce, et de la culture et le développement rural sont étroitement liés atteindre l'objectif global du socialisme aux caractéristiques chinoises, en mettant l'accent sur les zones

rurales, les zones rurales est également difficile dans le présent document, le concept. de la puissance douce et pour un bref aperçu du contenu, l'analyse de la puissance culturelle douce de la nouvelle importance du développement durable dans les zones rurales et la nécessité. Mais aujourd'hui, la construction des régions rurales du soft power culturel n'est pas optimiste, il ya un manque de public rural projets culturels ne peuvent pas répondre aux exigences strictes de la construction rurale nouvelle, la construction culturelle des cadres de base en milieu rural à l'attention et le niveau de sensibilisation ne suffit pas, la gestion de la culture en milieu rural doit être renforcée, la qualité globale en milieu rural la science retard scolaire, l'agriculteur n'est pas élevés quatre questions, afin d'aborder les questions ci-dessus pour construire et améliorer la nouvelle rurale système culturel soft power, à renforcer la capacité des ruraux aux services publics culturels, de changer leur façon de penser, faire jouer pleinement la population rurale du gouvernement local qui est de nourrir douce culturelle la construction de centrales de l'ordinaire, d'augmenter les ressources culturelles de la puissance douce pour les zones rurales de la force, d'accélérer la promotion des aspects culturels de la consommation rurale, améliorer la qualité globale des agriculteurs, la formation des nouveaux agriculteurs un total de quatre propositions visant à promouvoir vigoureusement la construction de la culture rurale et la puissance douce.

**Mots-clés:** Nouvelle construction en milieu rural; Culturel de la puissance; la Construction culturelle en milieu rural.

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## 1. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT AND MEANING OF SOFT POWER

The concept of “soft power” originates from political science. It has become a very hot topic in recent years and has appeared frequently in magazines, journals and other media. Theorists have paid more attention to soft power since “culture soft power” was proposed at the Party’s Seventeenth Congress in China. The man first explicitly put forward the concept of “soft power” is Joseph Nye, who is a famous scholar and the president of Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. He believes that soft power is one of the constituent elements of national competitiveness. Compared with tangible hard power, soft power is invisible and derived from political values, culture and foreign policy. The combination of the two is becoming an important part of country’s overall national strength and competitiveness. In short, soft power is the immaterial element of national power.

Besides, soft power is becoming a hot issue in academic studies in China. Yan xuetong considers that soft power is a political mobilization, which has the ability to mobilize and use hard power at home and abroad. Soft power is divided into two parts: political power and cultural power. Researchers from Peking University believe that soft power is the ability to change one’s perception of the reality, and it also can change his or her behaviors to realize dreams. Editor of the Southern Magazine summarizes that soft power mainly refers to an identification of State ideology and values, an attraction of social system and development model, an execution of basic line and the development strategy, and an influence in International Affairs. There are different academic expressions on soft power, but to sum up, soft power can be divided into three parts: appeal force and affection of culture or other ideology, which is the core element of soft power; attraction and influence of Socio-political economy and the development models; the affinity of international image and the control in multilateral diplomacy (HAN & JIANG, 2009).

At present, the United States is a superpower in the world. Thus, when Joseph Nye discusses soft power, he tends to put it in the view of international relations. However, Chinese scholars not only concern about a country’s ability to influence others to reach goals, but also take into account the power which can integrate and mobilize every domestic class. In other words, our scholars put more emphasis on the combination of internal and external sides of soft power (DAI & CHEN, 2006). Soft power is used in many fields. In addition to the national soft power, there are a series of derivative concepts about soft power, such as political soft power, cultural soft power, urban soft power, and corporate soft power.

So, we believe that soft power should be reflected in

both the external and internal parts, and the internal soft power is a fundamental one. Only a good internal soft power can we appeal to influence other countries. We had better put more attention to the domestic part and take the use and construction of soft power into account. However, the current situation of soft power makes all people worried. How to promote China’s soft power of culture, the center of the soft power, is a matter of urgency. As an agricultural big country, China has more than 70% peasants. If we cannot promote the rural cultural soft power, national soft power must inevitably be undermined. Because of this, the article will discuss several issues related to the construction of cultural soft power under the perspective of new rural development.

## 2. THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCES OF CULTURAL SOFT POWER TO THE NEW RURAL CONSTRUCTION

Culture and new rural construction are closely connected. The key and the difficulty to achieve the overall objective of socialism with Chinese characteristics depends on rural areas. Besides, it is impossible to improve the country’s cultural soft power or strengthen the construction of socialistic culture without the development of rural areas. Cultural soft power of rural areas is the driving force of new rural construction and it is also an important element to establish scientific development or achieve a new harmonious countryside. It will be of significance to cultivate new peasants who are educated, skilled, ethical and conscientious, to meet the growing needs of peasants in a high spiritual level, to improve the party’s governing capacity and ruling foundation, to promote rural economic development and social progress, to lead cultural development and prosperity in rural areas, and to further overall developments of material, political and spiritual civilization in rural areas (\_\_\_, 2007).

Therefore, cultural soft power is very important and necessary to the sustainable development in rural areas. Flourishing the cultures, promoting the rural civilization and shaping the rural new images are not only the important contents and inherent requirements of the new rural construction, but also the powerful engines moving forward in the new rural construction. The construction of new socialistic rural areas, which contains productive development, comfortable life, rural civilization, clean village and democratic management, reflects the “four-in-one” development in economy, politics, culture and society. New rural construction should not only be reflected on the economic aspect, but also emphasized on the overall development of the rural civilization. If economy is the hard power of construction in new countryside, there is no doubt that the culture is the soft power. The construction of new rural areas, only having material develops and inadequate spiritual

power, is difficult to go far or to maintain its subsequent development, especially in the case that hard power is also relatively weak in rural areas. By building and developing rural culture, we can active cultural atmosphere, improve the peasants' overall quality, defuse contradictions in rural society, and, all in all, provide spiritual force, ideological guarantee, intelligence support and a nice cultural environment for the construction of new countryside.

### **3. THE CURRENT PREDICAMENTS AND CHALLENGES UNDER THE CONSTRUCTION OF RURAL CULTURE**

With the carried out of the policy of reformation and opening, China has made great achievements in constructing new rural areas. However, compared to the economic and social development, insufficient cultural construction in rural areas is evidently becoming a stumbling stone on the economic development in the near future. Therefore, cultural construction in rural areas is still at the weakening stage.

Firstly, the public cultural projects in rural areas are short of demands and fail to meet the requirements of the new rural construction. There are few public cultural facilities in rural areas, and even the existing ones are in a dilapidated state, which provide the peasants with less entertaining activities. Rural public cultural services and products can not be able to meet the needs of peasants. With a large number of peasants working in city, there are few people to carry forward and develop the rural folk skills, which would result in the loss of cultural heritage. People who are responsible for the rural cultural construction are obviously inadequate. The most important point is that the rural areas receive less financial supports than the urban areas, which leads to the unprosperous situation of the cultural construction in the rural areas (LI, 2010).

Secondly, grass-roots cadres pay insufficient attention and awareness to the construction of rural culture, and there is imbalance between hard and soft power. It is important to develop economy to build the new socialistic countryside, but the investment in culture is also a necessary and vital factor. In recent years, with the support of the state, economic development in the rural areas is prominent, but the phenomenon of insufficient attention to cultural soft power is gradually revealed. Of course, it is partly due to the limited financial investments, but it mainly lies in the inadequate awareness of grass-roots government on cultural soft power construction. Because the cultural work can not have economic benefits in a short period of time and the performance of government officials is mainly based on economic conditions, many government cadres think rural cultural construction little, plan it less, and actually do it least, making the new rural construction cease to advance.

Thirdly, management needs to be strengthened in the areas of rural culture. There are several main problems. Imbalance of economic development exists between the developed and undeveloped areas. Compared to the city dwellers, there is an unreasonable consumption structure of peasant's culture. The cultural consumption concepts of peasants and the management of rural cultural market are poor. Coupled with the long-term coexistence of urban and rural dual structure, talent, capital, technology and other elements gather around the town, resulting in a low-level stage of rural cultural market.

Fourthly, the phenomenon of backward science and education still exists in rural areas; the overall quality of peasants is not high. The comprehensive quality of people is a necessary and important part of soft power. In contrast to Western countries, the average level of China's national education is clearly low and the overall quality of the peasants needs to be further improved. At present, rural education is relatively backward and the level of teachers is too low, which causes a few rural children drop out of school. In the countryside, feudal superstitious thoughts can not be eliminated thoroughly, and it makes a tremendous impact on the construction of rural cultural soft power and even affects the stability and the peace of rural society.

### **4. PATHS AND CHOICES OF SOFT POWER CULTIVATION IN NEW RURAL CONSTRUCTION**

In a word, nowadays most concerns on soft power stay on an international level, and we pay more attention to export-oriented soft power while domestic construction of soft power is usually neglected, especially the construction of rural soft power. It is the domestic level that should be firstly emphasized to enhance China's soft power. The report of the 17th Party Congress clearly points out that it is necessary to arisen a new upsurge of socialistic cultural construction and enhance the national cultural soft power. At present, the rural cultural soft power which is marginalized has become one of the barriers in the construction of new Socialistic rural areas, so the push to the construction of rural cultural soft power is an inevitable choice in the current socialistic new rural construction.

Firstly, we should construct and perfect the new rural cultural soft power system, and then promote service capacity of rural public culture. To strengthen the construction of rural cultural infrastructure, the carrier of rural cultural soft power, the government should be the main body, relying on the town and village, focusing on village and combining the characters of county, town, and village, and create a three-level cultural transmission network to plan and develop a number of cultural facilities and places. Put the policy "three rural areas" into effect.

When sending culture, we should advocate peasants to be the organizers and creators of culture, helping them begin their own cultural activities. In the village, we should set up cultural centers, libraries, science and technology popularization centers, and so on. Various publishers should publish some popular books that peasants can afford, read and use to meet the needs of rural cultural activities (XIE, 2009). Support cultural industry with characteristics of the new rural style. We should emphasize on the promotion of endogenous mechanism of rural cultural soft power development, encourage the inheritable mechanism of farmers' innovation, strengthen the collection and security of projects with traditional folk characteristics, and enhance the level of rural culture. Rural tourism, folk customs, folk dance, local opera, folk painting and a variety of folk arts and crafts can be advocated actively to enrich the spiritual life of peasants. Carry out the combination of "outer" and "inner" in the talent management and introduction mechanism. On one hand, we should encourage and support the cadres to get a higher education or foreign exchange; on the other hand, design some preferential policies to call for college students to work in rural areas to promote the develop of rural cultural soft power.

Secondly, we should change our ideas and give full play to local government in the construction of cultural soft power in rural areas. Grassroots cadres play a very important role in making a rich and strong countryside. In order to construct a new socialistic countryside and enhance the standard of rural cultural soft power, the cadres should really charge themselves with the task of leading rural cultural soft power construction. Pay attention to grasp both hands of cultural construction, and thoroughly carry out the relevant documents, notices and spirit of rural cultural construction. Besides, reform the incentive mechanism for economic hard power of and take cultural soft power construction effectively into the assessment standards, as the target for all levels of local governments, to make full use of grass-roots government in the construction of rural soft power.

Thirdly, we should increase cultural resources towards the rural areas and speed up the cultural consumption of rural residents. The various media lay stress on the basic-level services "Three Rural", and increase publicity efforts on cultural soft power. At the same time, improve the rural residents' consumption view, implement the "high-quality goods" strategy, prosper the rural cultural creation and increase funding for the rural topics in literary and artistic works (MA, et al., 2011). Besides, strengthen the management of cultural market and establish rational incentive promotion mechanism to avoid a poor market

situation.

Fourthly, we should improve the overall quality of peasants and cultivate new peasants. Peasants are the main force for the construction of new countryside and their technical abilities or cultural values will directly affect agricultural production and the construction of new countryside. There are pressing needs to improve the overall quality of the peasants and foster new peasants with created culture, proficient technology, good business, and so on. On the one hand, education is the first requirement and the foundation to promote the culture of the soft power. A vigorous development of education can help peasants improve the cultural pursuit. By deepening the reform of rural education system, creating a good education team, and integrating the existing education resources, we should base on the rural basic education and provide a number of training choices to cultivate new-type peasants. On the other hand, it is necessary to remodel the peasants' core value orientation and set up a rural social value system in a new period. Value concept is the core content of cultural soft power; enhancing the ideological level is the key to cultivate excellent peasants. Continuously strengthen the education of socialistic core value system so that the peasants could have right ideological characters and values. At the same time, advocate healthy society fashion and scientific concepts, eliminate the feudal superstition and bad decadent cultures, purify the atmosphere of rural cultural market, and promote a positive, rich, colorful, and harmonious new rural culture.

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