

# Research on the Values of National Fitness Project under the Perspective of Cultural Soft Power

Tang Binjun

School of Marxism, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China

tbj811@126.com

**Key words:** Cultural soft power, National Fitness project, National spirit.

**Abstract:** In the new era, cultural soft power is becoming an important factor in the competition of comprehensive national strength. It is very important to broaden the research perspective of cultural soft power. This paper tries to analyse the cultural implication and education implication of the National Fitness project, elaborating its values in spreading Chinese culture, shaping China's image, promoting the all-round development of citizens and inheriting the national spirit. Therefore, we can develop the research of cultural soft power.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of "soft power" was proposed by Joseph Nye, an American scholar. It is mainly opposite to the previous national development strategy that relies on hard power such as military, science and technology, which reflects the important role of culture, values and foreign policy for national development.[1] Since then, the concept of soft power has been widely respected in the political and academic levels. A series of related theories of soft power have been derived, including the relationship between soft power and national strength, the main contents and indicators of soft power, and the development path of soft power. China's soft power researches focused on exploring its cultural connotation as cultural soft power. However, there are still some vacancies on the study of cultural soft power: Firstly, treating cultural soft power as a whole concept, so that limited the cognition of it in the abstract level; Secondly, the research perspectives are limited into the macro level so that lack of effective feedback in the new era and new environment.

Therefore, this paper takes National Fitness as the starting point, trying to take this representative national initiative in the new era as the research object, and discussing the role and effect of its development on the construction of cultural soft power.

## 2. National Fitness project

Health is necessary for promoting people's all-round development and it is helpful for countries' economic and social development. The realization of citizen's health and longevity are important symbols of national prosperity and rejuvenation. Since the initial slogan of "Developing sports and strengthening people's physical health" has come up, China has long attached importance to sports, especially mass sports. In 1995, the state council promulgated the outline of the National Fitness project, which focused on the development of mass sports with macro-strategic significance. The state council authorized 8th August as the "National Fitness day" since 2009. In 2011, the state council issued "National Fitness plan (2011-2015)" and pointed out "National Fitness works for people's health and happiness. It is an important symbol of nation's comprehensive strength and civilization. It is an important content of socialist spiritual civilization construction as well as an important part of building a moderately prosperous society." [2] The National Fitness plan (2016-2020) issued by the state council in 2016 further pointed out that "National health is an important embodiment of the country's comprehensive strength as well as an important symbol of economic and social development and progress." [3]

The national level clearly reflected the importance of health to people and country. The significance of National Fitness is not only reflected in the health level, but also in its cultural

implication and educational significance. For this reason, its proposal and implementation will play a positive role in the construction of cultural soft power.

### **3. The cultural implication of National Fitness project**

#### **3.1 Carrying the genes of Chinese excellent traditional culture**

Sports can be seen as a popular culture, which can be globally participated by the public. Sports have become an ideal carrier to carry and spread culture. Strengthening the protection and development of traditional sports is essential for the inheritance and promotion of traditional culture in China. National Fitness project provides a platform for the promotion of mass sports activities as well as an opportunity for the inheritance of Chinese traditional sports and traditional culture under them.

First of all, National Fitness calls on the general public to actively participate in sports, which ensures the enthusiasm of the participants in sports activities. Some measures such as Gym classes in schools and constructions of leisure squares in villages encourage each stage of the general public to actively participate in sports activities, which can spread sports culture and provide the social foundation of Chinese culture.

Moreover, National Fitness project has top-down institutional guarantee, which provides conditions for the public to participate in sports in a convenient way.

It can be seen that the implementation of National Fitness project not only bears the effective inheritance of traditional culture, but also makes relevant norms for the orderly implementation of traditional culture in the new era and new conditions, thus laying a good social foundation and mass foundation for the promotion of Chinese culture.

#### **3.2 Improving China`s national image**

Since the founding of the nation state, competitions in national strength has been increasingly fierce. Although there are different definitions and specific indicators about national strength, the role of national image as a part of soft power has been widely recognized. The establishment of national image is inseparable from the improvement of citizen`s quality. National Fitness project has a positive effect on the improvement of citizen`s cultural and physical quality, so as to shape and spread China`s image in the new era.

First of all, National Fitness project is directly related to physical fitness. It is actively proposed that citizens' participation in sports and leisure activities can guarantee their basic exercise time and provide guarantee in time and place. In the process of playing sports, it is beneficial for individuals to become good citizens with strong physique and mind in rules, so as to lay a mass foundation for improving the whole citizens` quality and forming a good national image.

Secondly, with the continuous improvement of China's economic strength and international influence, it is of great importance for us to build a more comprehensive image of great power. The strategic goal of a sports power is undoubtedly useful for further establishing a better China's image.

### **4. Educational sense of National Fitness project**

#### **4.1 Promoting the all-round development of individuals**

Theories of Marxism pointed out the conditions, means and ways of the all-round development of human beings under the analysis of the real people and the real production relations. The all-round development of human beings refers to the full, free and harmonious development of physical strength and intelligence. In the field of education, it refers to the complete development of the educated, which can be split into many elements, so that need to cultivate the complete development of the educated in morality, intelligence, physique and beauty. The comprehensive development of the individual plays a fundamental role in the overall improvement of citizen`s quality so as to realize the comprehensive development of the Chinese nation.

First of all, the National Fitness project advocates popular fitness knowledge, promoting the fitness effect and new ideas, which is helpful for the physical and mental health of individual to adapt to society. To participate in sports is good for personal development and individual's team cooperation ability. Also, it can create a good atmosphere for public opinion. We should give full play to the role of physical fitness in shaping a healthy lifestyle and establish a good social practice in which everyone can be called on to strive for contribution and share happiness.

Secondly, teenagers and the disabled are the key targets in the process of National Fitness project's promotion. School sports is a necessary way to strengthen the comprehensive development of teenagers. Strengthening school physical education is an important way to implement quality education and promote the all-round development of students. It is of great significance to promote the modernization of education, building a healthy China and a strong country in human resources and realize the Chinese dream of China's great rejuvenation. On the other hand, the importance attached to sports for the disabled will play an important role in improving the situation of the disabled, creating a good social environment and promoting social civilization and progress.

#### **4.2 Inheriting the national spirit**

National spirit is the sum of national consciousness, national psychology, national character and national temperament which were recognized and accepted by most members of a nation on the basis of long-term daily life and social practice. It is an inherent and continuous historical and cultural tradition in national culture. It contains the cultural genes of the nation, and it is the power source of the nation in the new period. In the context of globalization, strengthening education of national spirit is necessary for the protection of national culture, the maintenance of national identity and the enhancement of national comprehensive strength and international competitiveness. On the one hand, we should carry forward and develop China's traditional sports. National Fitness project required extensively carry out educational activities in traditional ethnic sports, holding exhibitions and contests of traditional folk sports, promoting exchanges among ethnic groups and regions as well as expanding the international influence of traditional sports.

On the other hand, as the theme in the National Fitness project, "Healthy China" contains both the state and government level for universal active participation in sports activities and feelings to the call of sports culture. It contains corresponding people engaged in sports, who can feel and learn the sports spirit. This is conducive to the active participation of the public in sports and will be helpful in cultivating the sense of rules and collective consciousness. Also, it can promote citizens' spirit of self-improvement and patriotism.

#### **5. Conclusion**

It is very important to develop cultural soft power and broaden the research horizon of cultural soft power. National Fitness project, as a national strategy in the new era, is not only conducive to the formation of national health and physique, but also closely related to cultural soft power. On the other hand, National Fitness project has educational significance, which has an important impact on the overall development of people and the inheritance of national spirit. Based on National Fitness, this paper preliminarily analyzes the positive effects of National Fitness project under the perspective of cultural soft power. How to find and analyze the carrier of cultural soft power will be the direction of further research.

#### **References**

- [1] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics*, *Public Affairs*, pp. 17-19, 2005.
- [2] The State Council, *National Fitness plan (2011-2015)*, no. 5, 16 March, pp.3, 2011.
- [3] The State Council, *National Fitness plan (2016-2020)*, no. 37, 23 June, pp.5, 2016.