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Cultural Soft Power of Korea

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Abstract

The Republic of Korea plays one of the leading roles in the global economy and is a dynamically developing country. As one of the key elements of South Korea's success, many researchers in their works note the so-called concept of "soft power". The Republic of Korea has great resources of "soft power" and actively uses them. The concept of "soft power" considered in this paper was first proposed by J. Nayem and now this concept has firmly entered the lexicon of world science. The Republic of Korea turned to the concept of "soft power" about twenty years ago. The strategy of the modern concept of "soft power" of the Republic of Korea is based on the dissemination of traditional cultural values and pop culture. South Korea places a great emphasis on the "soft power" of culture, which helped it shape a positive image and create its South Korean attractive brand on the world stage. In this paper, the "soft power" of the culture of South Korea is considered using the example of cybersports and the phenomenon of "Korean wave" or "hullu".

Keywords: History, Soft power, Korea-Russia relations, Culture.

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1. Introduction

The concept of "soft power" was formed in the early 1990s by the American political scientist, deputy defense of the Clinton's administration, and later became the dean of Kennedy School of Management at Harvard University, Joseph Nye, Jr. The ideas of the American Professor J. Nye allowed to take a fresh look at the interpretation of the concept of "power", provoked scientific debate and stimulated the practical side of international politics. In his works he identifies two types of power: "hard power" and "soft power". He defines "hard power" as "the ability to get others to act in ways that contradict their initial preferences and strategies" [1], and "soft power" on the contrary is "the ability to achieve goals through attraction and persuasion, rather than coercion or fee" [1]. The "soft power" of the state is its ability to "charm" other participants in the world political process, to demonstrate the attractiveness of its own culture (in a context it is attractive to others), political values and foreign policy (if considered legitimate and morally justified) [2]. The main components of "soft power" are culture, political values and foreign policy [3].

Gregor Holik identifies five sections in the structural model of "soft power" [4]:

- 1) Economic Soft Power
- 2) Political Soft Power
- 3) Cultural Soft Power
- 4) Human Capital Soft Power
- 5) Diplomatic Soft Power

The concept and conceptual structure proposed by J. Nye has firmly entered the science of the world community and the study of this concept is becoming increasingly important, both in domestic and in world science. A recent study on "soft power" indicates that "soft power is today a key instrument for many countries to influence the political process in countries of their interest, since the political process allows forming the government and public opinion that will promote the implementation of the national interests of both traditional and new global players" [5].

Kovba D.M. in his work "Theoretical and practical adaptation of the" soft power" concept by the East Asian countries" writes that, thanks to Nye's efforts, and the tempting prospect of using "soft power" as an instrument for achieving political goals, theoretical and practical adaptation of his theory began in many countries of the world. The East Asian countries (China, Japan, South Korea) presented various interpretations of the theory of "soft power", reflecting the distinctive context of each country, their view of the West, by its origins, the theory of "soft power". It also emphasizes that, according to J. Nye, it is important to take into account political values that are the components able to shape the "attractiveness" of the subject of politics [6].

2. Methods

The following methods were used in this paper:

- 1) analysis of scientific literature on the topic under review;
- 2) the method of specific situations (the case method) in the analysis of examples of the manifestation of elements of the concept of "soft power";
- 3) instrumental observation

Also, when writing the paper, such general scientific methods as analysis and synthesis were used in determining the goals, resources and tools of the concept in question, as well as the structural approach.

3. Results and Discussion

The Republic of Korea turned to the concept of "soft power" (Kor. 소프트 파워, 소프트 파워) about twenty years ago. It was then that the Korean nation first seriously considered the importance of cultural technologies and public diplomacy in promoting an attractive image of the country on the world stage. President Kim Yong Sam (Korean, 김용삼, 김용삼) recognized the exceptional importance of the national cultural identity, its popularization abroad in the face of growing globalization and international economic rivalry [3]. Therefore, in 1996-1997, the Ministry of Culture and Sports (Kor. 문화체육관광부) of the Republic of Korea has chosen the following ten cultural symbols to promote the cultural symbols of the Korean national identity:

- 1) National traditional costume - hanbok (Kor. 한복, 한복)
- 2) Korean phonetic writing - Hangeul (Kor. 한글)
- 3) Such dishes of Korean cuisine as kimchi (Kor. 김치) and pulgogi (Kor. 불고기)
- 4) Buddhist temples – Bulguksa (Kor. 불국사) and Seokguram (Kor. 석굴암)
- 5) Korean martial art - Taekwondo (Kor. 태권도, 태권도)
- 6) Korean ginseng tea - koryo insam (Kor. 고려인삼)
- 7) Traditional dance of masks (Kor. 탈춤)
- 8) Confucian sanctuary - Jongmyo (Kor. 종묘)
- 9) Mountain complex and national park - Seoraksan (Kor. 설악산)
- 10) World-famous Korean artists [3].

The modern strategy of "soft power" of South Korea is based not only on the promotion of national culture and traditional cultural values, but also the state of the Republic of Korea is actively engaged in the distribution of products of the pop industry. V.O. Zhidkov in his work "Elements of the South Korean soft power" writes that: "We can not fail to note the country's efforts in exporting its culture - from kimchi to K-pop (Korean pop) [6]. The peculiarity of Korean pop culture is that it combines both elements of traditional Asian culture and Western culture, which allows us to talk about its mixed nature. Thanks to such a unique nature, Korean pop culture is interesting and at the same time such combination is the key to its success. Already starting around the 1990s, Korean culture has been gaining worldwide popularity step by step.

Such a phenomenon as "hallyu" or "Korean wave" (Kor. 한류, 한류) first appeared after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the PRC in 1992. From 1992 to 1997 many Korean movies and TV shows have been shown on Chinese television. Since 1997, the broadcasting of the program "Seoul Music Agency" started in Beijing and the Korean, especially dance, music has become popular among young people. When referring to the success of Korean mass culture in the Korean media,

the term "hullu" or "Korean wave" has been widely used [8]. In 2009, J. Nye characterized this phenomenon as follows: "... in the late 1990's saw the rise of "Hallyu," or "the Korean wave" – the growing popularity of all things Korean, from fashion and film to music and cuisine ... As a result, South Korea is beginning to design a foreign policy that will allow it to play a larger role in the international institutions and networks that will be essential to global governance" [9]. "Korean wave" has also contributed to the building of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and other states. Examples include Korea Foundation (KF; Kor. 한국문화재단), such events as Korean oral speech contest, a series of lectures on Korea, bilateral forums, musical performances of traditional Korean music in a modern way, etc. [10].

Another important part of the "soft power" of South Korea is cybersport. Moreover, Korea is called the cradle of cybersport [11]. The history of cybersport in Korea dates back to the 1990s, when the government of South Korea made a bet on the promotion of technology and the Internet in order to further develop the country's economy. 10 years later, a generation of gamers has grown up here, who exchanged basketball courts and sports grounds for computer clubs. Then the state created a national Korean e-Sports Players Association (KeSPA) - an association of professional computer gamers, established in 2001) [12]. The foundation for this kind of sport in South Korea was laid by the release of StarCraft (an online strategy developed by Blizzard, which talks about the opposition of the three sides: protoss, terrans and zerg) in 1998. In South Korea, the first off-line tournaments were held, which served as an impetus to the popularization of e-sports. Korean providers began to sign players to promote their brands through them, and organize training bases. Traditions have remained, therefore the best representatives, in the majority of e-sports disciplines, are from Korea [12].

In 2006, Korea issued a law on the promotion of the gaming industry. This document specifies the rights and responsibilities of the government: protecting players and the opportunity to create a school where e-sports will be taught. With the help of the law, the state influences the computer games in the country, protecting the copyrights of developers and regulating the relations of organizations and gamers.

South Korea Chung-Ang University (Kor. 중앙대학교), one of the top ten universities in the country, equated e-sports with other traditional sports. Now, along with professional football players, basketball players and other athletes, the sports faculty of the educational institution will train professional gamers. The university management promises to formulate the appropriate normative and methodological base, to find teachers and educational facilities by the next year. It is noteworthy that the educational institution is not private or commercial, but, on the contrary, it is one of the top ten universities in the country [13].

A deep immersion in computer sports allowed politicians to use computer games in their electoral programs and speeches. Mun Zhe Ying (Kor. 문재영), who became president of South Korea, posted on his blog two maps for StarCraft: Brood War, while his opponent Sim San-Chong (cor. 심상철) used Overwatch. A more extravagant event occurred in 2017 - at a meeting of the Korean Olympic Committee, Congressman Dong Sab Lee brought a golden griddle and encouraged his colleagues to play at PUBG [14].

4. Summary

In one of his works on the "soft power" of the Republic of Korea, J. Nye said: "The Republic of Korea has an exceptional potential of "soft power", as it has an extremely successful experience of economic development, modernization and technological breakthrough, as well as a highly developed democratic political system with a deferred mechanism for the peaceful transition of power from party to party,

ensuring universal protection of human rights and freedoms" [3, 9]. The strategy of the modern concept of "soft power" of the Republic of Korea is based on the dissemination of traditional and modern cultural values. For example, the phenomenon considered in this paper as the "Korean wave" and e-sports are very popular in many countries.

5. Conclusions

Concerning the concept of "soft power", studies and disputes are being conducted in the countries of the West and East, as well as in Russia. The Republic of Korea places a great emphasis on culture, which can be explained by the cultural peculiarities of the countries of the Far East. For Asian countries, culture, especially traditional, has a high value due to its uniqueness and great difference from the culture of other countries. Therefore, to date, culture as one of the elements of "soft power" of South Korea is one of the most developed and actively used by the state. Thanks to such a phenomenon as "Korean wave" and e-sports, the Korean lifestyle, Korean fashion, Korean cuisine, etc. became popular. The main achievement was the formation of a positive image and the creation of its South Korean attractive brand on the world stage. The creation of a positive image and attractive brand makes it possible for South Korea to implement its national interests without conflicts, to pursue foreign policy without the threat of using force and confrontation.

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Footnotes

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