



China`s Soft Power Construction in Southeast Asia Since the 21st Century



THESIS by

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SUMMARY

With the sustained and rapid development of China's economy, China's hard power has been rapidly improved, and the world has given China more attention. However, with the development of the world economy, hard power is no longer the only criterion for measuring the size of a country's overall national strength. The role of soft power in national development is increasingly prominent.

The soft power theory was proposed by Joseph Nye in the 1990s. The core content of the theory is to emphasize on the attraction, appeal and influence of a country's culture, values and political system. Soft power is relative to hard power and is the ability to achieve the desired goal by attracting other countries rather than forcing.

Under the development and support of China's hard power, China has begun to focus on cultivating and building its own national soft power in order to reach the world level influence corresponding to its hard power. For this reason, China has raise the soft power construction to the national strategic level in the report of the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. On the other hand, the improvement of China's overall national strength has made its influence range wider, especially in Southeast Asia, showing unprecedentedly strong soft power.

Due to the particularity and complexity of Southeast Asia in international relations, China has its own unique advantages in the process of constructing the soft power in Southeast Asia, such as rich cultural resources, extensive scale of cultural and academic exchanges, and the radiation of traditional Confucianism culture. But at the same time, looking from some international data and surveys it shows that China's soft power construction growth in Southeast Asia countries and regions is limited and has an unbalanced level compared to its coast, these highlighted many shortcomings and problems from various aspects. For example, the promotion of national culture is insufficient, the single communication method and excessive purpose and political overtone in the exchanging process.

Therefore, the objective of this thesis is to correctly understand China's advantages and shortcomings in constructing national soft power in Southeast Asia through analysis of cases and data, and to make some suggestions and inspiration for China's role in rationally exerting soft power in Southeast Asia countries.

Regarding the choice of case, according to the Pew Global Survey and other data, this thesis will use the favorable rate toward China as the criteria for selecting cases, including Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam. Through group comparison, conclusions from different sides will be obtained. The first set of comparisons will be carried out between Indonesia and Laos. These are the two Southeast Asian countries with the highest favorable rate toward China, in this part the thesis will find some advantages of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asia. The second group, as a comparison, will select the country with the least goodwill to China in Southeast Asia, which is Vietnam, and compare it with the former group, in order to find China's shortcomings of soft power construction in the region.

1. The Introduction

The concept of soft power was proposed by the American scholar Joseph Nye in the early 1990s. Once this concept was put forward, it attracted the attention of scholars on a global scale, and its international influence was far-reaching. Along with the deepening of the globalization process and the further development of world economic integration, the possibility of relying on one country's own hard power advantage to draw resources is far less than in the past. In the comprehensive national strength competition of different countries, hard power is of course still the most important factor in international relations, but the status of soft power continues rise, and the trend of the country shifting from focusing on hard power construction to focusing on soft power construction is unstoppable. The concept of soft power proposed by Joseph Nye is the product based on this international environment.

Here are some key concepts of Joseph Nye's soft power theory, and also, it will be systematically demonstrate in the later pages. In his work, Joseph Nye pointed that "soft power is the ability of a country to use its appeal rather than force to achieve its goals. It enables other countries to follow the preferences and interests of the country." Defining one's own preferences and interests is different from the hard power that relies mainly on military power. Soft power is to accept and recognize certain codes of conduct, values, and institutional arrangements through induction and persuasion. (Joseph Nye, 1990) The core view is to rely on "self." The intangible, non-material forces of culture, ideology and values, and foreign policy help to realize the national interests of the country. (Joseph Nye, 1990)

Regarding to the sources of soft power, Joseph Nye believes that the soft power of one country comes mainly from three aspects: **culture**, which is the capability to attracting others, playing a role in places that are attractive to others; **political values**, when national internal affairs and diplomacy adhere to these political values, both at home and abroad play a role in practice; **foreign policy**, when others believe that these policies have legitimacy and moral authority. (Joseph Nye, 2005)

With the reform and opening up from 1978, China's economy developed rapidly, and the construction of soft power is a realistic need for the development of contemporary China. As early as the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, President Hu Jintao clearly stated in the government report that it is necessary to

strengthen China's soft power construction and upgrade the construction of soft power to the strategic level of the country, reflecting the government's great importance to the construction of soft power in the new era. (Report at the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, 2007) Soft power is a component of a country's comprehensive national strength and external influence. It is also an indispensable part of China's increasingly influential international cooperation process and participation in the establishment of an international system to further establish the image of a responsible big country. It also has an important impetus on enhancing China's international influence and international status.

After the Cold War, the world has changed in a different way. As a pole of multi-polarization in the Asia-Pacific region, ASEAN is particularly important. Focusing on economic construction, vigorously developing the economy and improving the country's overall national strength are China's top priorities. China's realization of this ambitious goal requires a peaceful and stable surrounding environment. As a traditional Chinese neighbor, Southeast Asia needs to live in harmony with it and actively act as a responsible country in the region. Moreover, the foreign policy that China has promoted since 1949 has paid particular attention to neighboring diplomacy. Since the Southeast Asian financial crisis in 1997, China's soft power diplomacy in the region has gradually achieved results, including economic assistance and security for Southeast Asia. Cooperation, cultural exchanges, political party exchanges, etc. However, due to some certain history reasons between ASEAN's history and China, as well as the involvement of major powers outside the region, ASEAN countries are afraid of the excessive penetration of China's soft power. In particular, with the South China Sea issue, the territorial dispute between China and neighboring countries in Southeast Asia has become increasingly prominent. To avoid major frictions, it is important to revisit the construction of China's soft power in the ASEAN region.

Taking this as a starting point, the thesis will use Joseph Nye's soft power theory as a theoretical tool, and use case studies and comparative study methods to analyze the problem. In order to draw conclusions more intuitively, based on 2017 Pew Global Research Report's data, this paper uses the value of favorable toward China from Southeast Asia countries as a criteria to screen cases and evaluates China's soft power construction standards in Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam. In the chapters of analysis and discussion, I will systematically compare and

analyze the soft power construction situations in these countries, and obtain the advantages and shortcomings of China`s soft power construction in 21st century in these representative Southeast Asian countries by using the agreement comparison and differentiation Comparing Method. And, given all I have been concerned about as above, I formulate the research questions as:

“What are the advantages and shortcomings of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asia ? ”

2. Literature Review

2.1 The development of "soft power" theory and the status of foreign research

Before the concept of "soft power" emerged, the state's strength mainly refers to military and other hard power. Classical realism theory has always emphasized "hard power". Hans Morgenthau said in his work that "the fate of the state and civilization is often determined by the difference in war technology."(Hans Morgenthau, 2006) Kenneth waltz stressed that "In terms of international politics, force is not only the last resort, but also the primary and common means."(Kenneth waltz, 1992) John Mearsheimer also believes that "the goal of the state is to maximize power, and military power is the decisive factor in the power of the state."(John Mearsheimer, 2003)

In 1990, Joseph Nye completed the pioneering work of soft power theory - "Bond to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power." In the same year, he published "The Changing Nature of World Power." and "Soft Power", clearly proposing and systematically discusses the concept and theory of "Soft Power". Although Joseph Nye is the first person to explicitly propose and systematically expound the "soft power" theory in the field of international political research, soft power is not a brand new concept in the classic and from the traditional political theory and international relations theory can also find the prototype of "soft power".

In addition to Joseph Nye`s work, many scholars have also elaborated their own construction and understanding of soft power theory from different angles. Robert Keohhan put forward the theory of institutional hegemony in the question of "What does the United States do after hegemony?" and believes that the international system is one of the main sources of national soft power. System hegemony should be an important component of the country's soft power. Samuel Huntington's work "The Clash of Civilizations and the Reconstruction of the World Order" and Alexander Wendt's "Social Theory of International Politics" all involve soft power theory. At the same time, many scholars also interpret, explore and develop on the basis of Joseph Nye's theory. For example, American scholar Louis Klarevas believes that soft power has three manifestations: normative, authoritative and practical. He also believes that in international affairs, the role of soft power is mainly reflected in the following aspects: "First, the simple use of hard power often fails to achieve the results of everyone's

expectations and even counterproductive. Second, while using soft power, as long as Additional use of a limited amount of hard power can achieve unexpected results; third, relative to the use of hard power, the use of soft power can win more returns with less effort; fourth, due to globalization And the information technology revolution has changed the nature of the relationship between traditional sovereign states, so that soft power has more room for display in international affairs, showing a vigorous vitality.”(Louis Klarevas, 2006)

Robert Dahl promoted soft power to moral status, arguing that soft power is one of the forms of influence, and rationality is more persuasive than coercion. (Robert Dahl, 2006) American scholar Nicholas Ovie believes that influence other than military is soft power, which includes the influence of the economy and other soft power. American geopolitical scientist Nicholas Beckman has turned his research on soft power toward the United States. He believes that national homogeneity, social integration, political stability, and national morale are the soft powers of the country. These factors will be Comprehensive strength constitutes an impact. (Nicholas Beckman, 2007) Robert Kucher believes that "legality is the core element of soft power" is a unique perspective with rich enlightenment, but the concept of legitimacy itself needs further clarification. (Robert Kucher, 2009) Canadian scholar Matthew Fraser stood on the Western side and systematically and uniquely analyzed the US's soft power as a strategic resource in international affairs and how the United States improved and applied cultural soft power, emphasizing that pop culture is imperceptible. It plays an important role in promoting values and lifestyles. (Matthew Fraser, 2006)

2.2 Summary of domestic research

Chinese scholars' focus on soft power theory began in the 1990s. The academic achievements of China's research on soft power can be roughly divided into the following four categories: one is the introduction, translation and commentary on the theory of soft power; the other is the study of soft power from a certain aspect such as national image and cultural communication; The study of soft power in developed countries, especially the discussion and research on the soft power of the United States; the fourth is to explore the source of China's soft power resources, the use of soft power and the research and approval of China's soft power.

In the 21st century, soft power research has set off a boom in China, and the translations of Joseph Nye's articles and monographs are endless. The relatively more systematic discussion is Gong Tieying's "Systematic Analysis of Soft Power", which extracts three essence of soft powers including "institutional power, identity rights, assimilation power", and through the "human level, national level, international level" The three levels of analysis to build the basic theoretical framework of soft power.

In the early discussions about soft power in China, most scholars focused on defining and discriminating the concept of soft power. Wang Huning pointed out: "The sporadic forces of national morale, economic system, political system, science and technology, and ideology are manifested as soft power."(Wang, 1993) Zhu Feng defines soft power as: "A country can follow or persuade others by attracting other countries."(Zhu, 2002) Yan Xuetong points out that the country's soft power "is not a material resource itself, but a country's ability to use material power resources."(Yan, 2006)Su Changhe defines the country's soft power as: "in the country in mutual interaction, the relationship between domination and dependence, influence and influence of each other due to various factors such as communication, knowledge and information," is a kind of relationship power between the subject and the object." (Su, 2007)Pang Zhongying believes that soft power it is just a definition of Nye's based on American experience. It has obvious limitations. It is more appropriate to use "moral power" and "moral reputation". (Pang, 2006) Obviously, the definition of soft power by domestic scholars is based on the theoretical framework of soft power proposed by Nye, and on this basis, they have proposed different understandings.

2.3 Review of studies on China's Soft Power in Southeast Asia.

Foreign scholars have discussed a lot about the impact of China's soft power in Southeast Asia. American scholar Joshua Kuriantzick believes that China has demonstrated its soft power in Southeast Asia through foreign aid and economic investment, with a view to expanding China's influence on Southeast Asia. He systematically summed up the efforts made by China over the past decades to enhance its appeal and influence, and concluded that there are two main ways in which China implements soft power: education and cultural exports. Therefore, he suggested that the United States should pay attention to China's increasing soft power in Southeast Asia. (Joshua Kuriantzick, 2006) Danish scholar Johannes Schmidt published the article

"China's Soft Power Diplomacy in Southeast Asia" in 2008, and carried out the interests and strategic decisions of China's soft power diplomacy in ASEAN countries in the context of globalization. (Johannes Schmidt, 2006) From the perspective of politics, economy and culture, the author analyzes the strategic decision-making and interests of China's soft power diplomacy in Southeast Asia under the background of globalization, points out China's progress toward Southeast Asian diplomacy, and also expounds some of the constraints China faces. Eric Chu Cheow pointed out that thanks to the outstanding performance in the Southeast Asian financial crisis, the great achievements of all-round cooperation with the ASEAN region in politics and economy since the beginning of the 21st century and the strong cultural communication, the soft power in Southeast Asia The rising trend has in some ways surpassed the influence of the United States on Southeast Asia.(Eric Teo Chu Cheow, 2009) LeHong Hiep, points that although China's influence in Southeast Asia has risen sharply in recent years, and Vietnam is deeply influenced by Chinese culture. But China still has obstacles in promoting soft power in Vietnam. (LeHong Hiep, 2012)

Renato Cruz De Castro explores China's military modernization and foreign peaceful rise policy is intended to pursue restraint and balance the influence of the United States in Southeast Asia. The hard power represented by the weapons modernization plan is limited. The United States should not only focus on China's hard power. The soft power diplomacy that is in line with its interests in Southeast Asia may have a more strategic advantage in weakening the influence of the United States in Southeast Asia. (Renato Cruz De Castro, 2007) David Schambaugh in his work argues that Asia-China regional relations are a pair of contradictions that include cooperation and competition. The rise of China in Asia (and the world) has had a major impact on US foreign policy. The multiple roles that China now plays in Asia have been reflected in the diplomatic, military, cultural, economic, and multilateral relationships in various regions, and analyzed the impact of China's role changes in Asia on US interests from seven different aspects. (David Schambaugh, 2008)

In 2008, the reports submitted by the Congressional Research Service, "China's Soft Power in Southeast Asia," pointed out that China is applying "soft power" to Southeast Asia, including development assistance, overseas investment and trade, tourism and technology culture. The influence of exchanges, diplomatic initiatives, etc., China's

growing influence in Southeast Asia and other regions is attributed to the use of “soft power.” The report proposes two policy options for the US government: “One is to objectively accept China's rising influence. At the same time, strengthen exchanges and cooperation with ASEAN countries to maintain the influence of the United States; second, bet on both sides to balance and offset China's influence.” In March 2009, the Center for Strategic and International Studies publishes report "China's Soft Power and Its Impact on the United States". The report believes that China's use of soft power in Southeast Asia is successful. "Long-term and strategic high-level attention, bold policies and skilled daily relationship management are China has brought success in Southeast Asia. In international relations, Southeast Asian countries Avoiding the choice between China and the United States at all costs, but taking advantage of the contradictions among the major powers, and striving to let China, the United States, and other major powers such as Japan, India, and Australia participate together to maximize their interests and give full play to their policies. Flexibility".

Chinese scholars have also achieved some phased results in this field. Chen Xianxuan believes that China's influence in Southeast Asia has increased year by year in recent years. This change in power is not achieved by deterrence and intimidation, but by the improvement of China's soft power in the region, and the improvement of China's soft power. It is conducive to close the relationship between China and ASEAN and guarantees the common security of China and Southeast Asia. (Chen, 2006) Zhang Xizhen pointed out that the public opinion and academic circles in the United States have already alerted China's rising influence in Southeast Asia. He believes that the United States does not have to worry too much because the ASEAN countries have always had doubts and concerns about China, the long-term estrangement between the Chinese ethnic group and the Southeast Asian aborigines, and the limitations of the "Chinese model". China cannot surpass or even surpass in the short term. Excluding the influence of the United States in Southeast Asia. (Zhang, 2009) Huang Jun believes that it is necessary to fully understand and give play to the key role of the country's foreign soft power, and through the successful use of soft power to eliminate various obstacles to exchanges and cooperation between the two sides, continuously improve the level of regional cooperation between China and ASEAN, and build a "more affinity." International cooperation core value system, and actively participate in the construction of East Asian regional mechanisms." (Huang, 2009) Zhang Yuquan analyzes and

analyzes the newly proposed diplomatic concepts of the "harmonious world" and the "democratic alliance", which illustrate the actions taken by Southeast Asian countries to recognize China's goal of "harmonious world". Gradually eliminate the "China threat theory" concerns. Although the influence of the United States in Southeast Asia has declined relatively, it still plays a pivotal role. (Zhang, 2010) Huang Hong in his work points that, first of all, the warming up of economic and trade relations does not necessarily lead to the recognition of China's soft power by the people of Southeast Asian countries or does not necessarily enhance the image of China in the eyes of the people of Southeast Asian countries. The rapid growth of China's economic influence in Southeast Asia has not been transformed into soft power as a soft power resource to a certain extent. Secondly, the Western cultural values represented by the United States still occupy the mainstream communication space of Southeast Asian countries. Third, the people of Southeast Asian countries still have certain doubts and incomprehension about China's role and behavior in international politics and in Southeast Asia.

3. Methodology

The following sections mainly describe the research methods utilized in this project in order to solve the problem formulation pointed out in the introduction –*What are the shortcomings and advantages of China's soft power construction to Southeast Asia in 21st century? And what are the inspirations for China in the future?*

The research methods include comparative case approach and comparative study method. Furthermore, this sections illustrate the purpose, structure and data sources of this project based on the problem formulation.

3.1 Case study research method

Case study research, through reports of past studies, allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues. Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships. (Zaidah et al., 2007)

The case study method is a more traditional method. This research method is characterized by studying only one international event or the diplomatic behavior of a country at a certain time. Case study can draw conclusions about the particularity of an international event, and can also draw conclusions with universal significance. The conclusion of the analysis depends mainly on the researcher's research objectives. The case study method focuses on the details of the specific event and the various factors associated with the event at the time. (Robert Yin, 2012)

There are two main advantages of this research method.

First, this method could bring more comprehensive acknowledge about the particularity of events in international relations. The use of case study is to concentrate all research forces on one research object, so that this research object can make a relatively deep and comprehensive understanding. This method is used in the study of a country's foreign relations and helps to fully understand the characteristics of the country's diplomatic behavior. (Yan, 2001)

Second, the relevant low research bill and cost. Mostly, using case studies is more time-saving and cost-saving than studying multiple events. (Yan, 2001) This is important especially for personal research. Because in most cases, a researcher's analysis time, funding, and knowledge structure are limited. Case study methods increase the likelihood that researchers will make full use of research resources and obtain research results.

Based on the content of 2017 PEW Global Attitudes Project, this thesis selects three Southeast Asia countries with the highest and lowest favorable rate toward China, including Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam. The analysis is mainly using the framework and concepts of Joseph Nye's soft power theory as theoretical tool, to analyze China's soft power construction in these countries from different channels and perspectives.

3.2 Comparative study method

The thesis will use comparative study method to analyze the cases of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asia. The method proposed for the following research is called comparative studies and is one of basic methods which let to establish and formulate general propositions and conclusions (Arend 1971). In simple words the comparison means 'study of similarities and differences' (Lane and Ersson 1994, p.11). Cases chosen for the analysis are compared according to defined parameters which let to study the same aspects of each case (Lane and Ersson, 1994). The number of analyzed cases should be minimum two, but more cases and variables, more accurate result could be given and more possible theory, based on the analysis, can be proposed (Land and Ersson, 1994).

Comparative study is a method of conducting comparative studies of two or more events. (Sun, 2001) This approach finds the differences and similarities of two or more international events and then analyzes the reasons for these differences or commonalities. It can be seen that the method of comparative analysis mainly achieves two research purposes: one is to distinguish the similarities and differences between two different international events, and the other is to derive specific conclusions or general laws. (Yan, 2001)

Regarding different situations and conditions of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asia countries, this thesis studies compared the differences between it. From

the comparison, it can be seen that the similar factors exist in countries with better soft power construction condition from China, such as similar cultural backgrounds, active cultural exchange activities, frequent and high-quality academic exchange programs, and traditional cultural output represented by Confucius Institutes. In contrast, in the case of Vietnam, the thesis finds that the above promotion methods are not satisfactory, and the factors affecting them are sharp, such as historical factors, strong political overtones and the existing influences by other out coming countries, etc.

3.3 The goal of the thesis

Since the reform and opening up, China`s economy has experienced explosive growth. Entering the 21st century, under the background of China's rapid military and economic strength, soft power can not only better serve the realization of China's national interests in the international political environment, but also eliminate the rapid increase of China's national strength and bring it to other countries. Uncertainty.

As a pole of multi-polarization in the Asia-Pacific region, Southeast Asia is particularly important. In order to achieve the goal of economic development, China needs a peaceful and stable surrounding environment. As a traditional neighbor for China, from the perspective of the international environment and the realistic perspective of safeguarding China's long-term interests in Southeast Asia. China is also paying attention to the construction of soft power in Southeast Asia. The study of these issues is still have practical significance.

In recent years, China`s relations with Southeast Asian countries have become closer, and China`s influence in Southeast Asia has also grown. This change is not achieved by intimidation and deterrence, but by China's growing soft power. Taking Southeast Asia as the stage, China promotes soft power construction in the local area through channels such as foreign aid, diplomacy, foreign trade and investment, mechanism construction, free trade zone construction, non-traditional security cooperation, education, exchange of international students, and promotion of Chinese culture.

At the same time, studying from the opinion polls of Southeast Asian countries in recent years, China`s soft power construction in Southeast Asian countries still has problems. The people of Southeast Asian countries still have certain doubts and incomprehension

image about China's role and behavior in international politics as well as in Southeast Asia, and for some historical reasons, China's rapid economic growth in Southeast Asia is to some extent not fully converted to soft power. This poses a challenge to China's soft power construction. Therefore, the goal of this thesis is to compare and analyze China's soft power construction condition in representative Southeast Asian countries, and draw the advantages and more important shortcomings of China on this issue, and hope to seek for some inspiration and advice for China's soft power construction in Southeast Asia in the future.

3.4 The choice of data

The data in this thesis is mainly choose from statistics of various official websites and statistics and research on relevant countries. Regarding the choice of cases, in order to make a more intuitive comparison, this thesis will set the value of the favorable of China as a measure or criteria of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the data source is mainly based on the Pew 2017 Global Attitudes Project, select the Southeast Asia countries' survey of China's goodwill, and compare the three countries with the highest degree of goodwill and the least good feelings as analysis cases.

Among the Southeast Asian countries that have been evaluated, the countries with the highest and lowest favorable rate to China are Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam. Therefore, this thesis will choose these three countries as the cases for comparative analysis. About Indonesia and Laos, by analyzing and comparing China's soft power construction channels in these two representative countries, using Joseph Nye's soft power theory as a tool, this thesis will conclude the advantages and success way of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asia. Through the analysis of Vietnam, the country with the least favorable rate of China, and compare it with the successful experiences of Indonesia and Laos, and conclude China's shortcomings and faced inadequacies in soft power construction in Southeast Asia.

The specific data on China's soft power construction in the above countries are mainly from the official statistical websites, such as the National Hanban Network, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, the Southeast Asian Research Network, etc.; national TV stations, such as China Radio and Television

Network, Vietnam Vnexpress Net, Indonesian National Television, Laos International Television, etc.

3.5 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into the following chapters. In the First chapter of introduction, I will briefly summarize the context and research background of the issue, introduce the key concepts of Joseph Nye`s soft power theory, and introduce the problem formulation of this thesis. The second chapter is a literature review. I will review and summarize the current research situation on the research questions. It is divided into two parts, one is the brief review of the studies on the soft power theory, and the other is the summary of China and foreign studies on China's soft power construction in Southeast Asian countries. The third chapter is methodology, which mainly includes the choice of research methods, the research objectives of this thesis, the introduction of article structure, data collection and the limitations. The fourth chapter is the theory, which will introduce in detail the development of the soft power theory and the specific theoretical content. In the fifth chapter, I will analyzes and compares the selected cases. The sixth chapter is for discussion. It will refine and process the analysis of the previous content, and use the method of agreement comparison and differentiation comparison, to analyze the advantages and shortcomings of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asian, and some inspirations in the future. The seventh chapter is the conclusion, which will briefly and systematically summarize the above results and answer the questions raised by the problem formulation. Finally, the reference.

3.6 The limitation

This thesis also have limitation when looking for information.

First, the constraint of the language using. In this thesis, I will compare and analysis 3 different countries from Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam. The inability to use these three languages led the thesis to be unable to access local first-hand materials when looking for relevant data, as well as to be unable to observe and quote some opinions of local people through social networks, but to find English literature and translate related articles to get access to the information. This limitation has caused certain difficulties for the research to a certain extent and made some information and data not new enough.

Second, some data about China's soft power construction in the local state may be confidential or for other reasons hard to get, resulting in data or information not being available, or not being updated in a timely manner. This is also a limitation in writing process.

4. Theory

In this part, I will introduce the theoretical tool of this thesis, the brief development, characteristics, content and role of Joseph Nye's soft power theory.

4.1 The development and connotation of the theory of soft power

First of all, I will briefly introduce the background of the theory of soft power. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, one of the most striking events in international relations was the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Cold War ends. Joseph Nye believes that with the end of the Cold War, the international community has gradually changed from a hard power confrontation during the Cold War to a great change in international relations by economic and cultural factors, that is, "a change in the nature of power." (Joseph S. Nye, 1990) Moreover, he pointed out that the five major trends in today's world distract state power: economic interdependence, transnational actors, the use and development of technology, nationalism in fragile states, and changing political issues. (Joseph S. Nye, 1990) So he divided power into "Hard Power" and "Soft Power." The so-called "hard power" refers to the command power that is based on the traditional power resources such as the military and the economy, based on compulsory and temptation. The "soft power" is the willingness of other countries to follow or recognize the situation of a world political goal that a particular country expects to achieve, and the form of this situation is the "second power," which is also called Co-optive Power, which succeeds in one country. The state accepts and even directly targets its intended goal. "It contrasts with the hard power or command strength that commands others to act according to their will." (Joseph S. Nye, 2005) Joseph Nye believes that soft power "is usually derived from resources such as the attraction of ideology and culture, and the ability to participate in the development of international mechanisms". (Joseph S. Nye, 1990) He believes that the United States has an absolute advantage in terms of "soft power" such as economics and military, and has absolute advantages in terms of "soft power" such as values, cultural communication and national quality. The US national strength has not declined.

In his subsequent work, Joseph Nye continued to develop the "soft power" theory. In his work, he said: "Power can be subdivided into resource power and behavioral power. Resource power refers to the ability to obtain desired results by possessing power resources. Behavioral power refers to the ability to obtain desired results. Behavioral

power can be specifically divided into soft power and hard power."(Robert Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, 1998) "Soft power is not implemented by coercion but by attraction, affecting others' ability to do what you want him to do, and to achieve the desired goal. Soft power comes from culture, thought, or influences other countries through setting the ability to prefer institutions, standards or agendas." (Joseph S. Nye, 2000)

Joseph Nye published his work in 2002 and supplemented the concept of soft power. He emphasized: "In today's international politics, a sovereign state has achieved its desired diplomatic purpose, perhaps because other countries advocate the values of this country, and hope that they can also develop into the openness and prosperity of this country. I want to follow it as a learning role model. From this perspective, it is equally important to attract other countries and formulate rules of procedure in international relations compared to using economic and military means to coerce other countries to change their positions. I call this power soft." (Joseph S. Nye, 2002)

According to Nye's theory of soft power, hard power is the ability to influence others through seduction or threat, while soft power is the ability to influence others' preferences through attraction. (Joseph S. Nye, 2002) In the era of globalization and informatization, countries that may gain soft power need to have the following conditions: (1) the mainstream culture and values of a country are closer to the universal global rules; (2) the multi-channel communication method; (3) country's domestic and international performance helps to enhance its national reputation and image. (Joseph S. Nye, 2002)

In 2006, he proposed "An attractive culture, values that are recognized and followed internationally and domestically, moral prestige and considered a legitimate foreign policy, those three parts formed resources of national soft power.", "It is wrong to rely solely on hard power or soft power." (Joseph S. Nye, 2006)

In 2008, Joseph Nye published his work, *The Power to Lead*, and argued that "the effective combination of hard power and soft power is an influential leader. It is called 'smart power', but the proportion of hard power and soft power in this case needs to be determined by specific circumstances." (Joseph S. Nye, 2008)

In 2009, Joseph Nye collaborated with Chinese scholar Wang Jisi to further clarify the three main sources of national "soft power", which consists of three major factors: culture (in many ways attractive to others), political values (in compliance with internal

and external affairs and Practice these concepts), foreign policy (justified and morally authoritative). (Joseph S. Nye, 2009)

In 2011, Joseph Nye published the book, *The Future of Power*, which discusses two main manifestations of changes in world power in the 21st century: "One is the transfer of power, which means that the power is transferred by a region or country. To another region or country, for example, China, South Korea, Japan, India, and Singapore in the current Asian region are developing rapidly. The trend of shifting from the West to the East is the main performance of the current world power transfer. The other is the dispersion of strength. That is to say, the strength spreads between various sovereign states and non-state actors, mainly because more and more power actors are on the international political stage and play an increasingly important role and influence." (Joseph Nye, 2011)

4.2 The source of soft power

Culture. Culture is "the sum of a series of values and practices that create meaning for society". "It is a social behavior model of group communication of knowledge and values." (Joseph Nye, 2012) Joseph Nye divides culture into three levels. Some aspects of human culture are universal, some it is national, while others are unique to social classes or small groups. If a country's culture has universal values and its policies are accepted by other peoples, and because of its attractiveness and trust, the country's chances of achieving it will increase. This is the role of cultural soft power. Usually the narrow values and the populist culture are weak in their ability to generate soft power. In Nye's view, the utility of power resources depends on the environment, and pop culture can be a source of soft power. But the soft power behavior cannot be equated with the cultural resources that make soft power, thus confusing cultural resources and implementing attractive behavior. For the quantitative criteria of cultural soft power, Joseph Nye focused on the export of TV movies, the total sales of music and books, the number of international students and the number of overseas tourists.

Political values. In the article "Think Again: Soft Power", Joseph Nye clearly stated that "the political values that are followed both domestically and internationally are one of the resources that constitute soft power." (Joseph Nye, 2006) If values are consistent with their way of doing things and the values they advocate, and can be if other

countries recognize it, then the legitimacy of its policies will be strengthened, which in turn will be conducive to the realization of foreign policy objectives. If the values implemented are inconsistent with words and deeds or adopt double standards, they will cause damage to soft power. (Joseph Nye, 1992) Joseph Nye pointed out: "The ability to establish a set of rules and institutions that are advantageous in leading international political activities is an important source of power." (Joseph Nye, 1992) Therefore, if a country wants to influence the agenda of world politics, it needs to establish and lead international norms. And the international system, so that it can influence others' understanding and preference for the interests of the country, and thus have soft power. It can be said that the ability to control international organizations, the number of participating international organizations, and the ability to formulate international rules are all reflections of institutional power.

Foreign policy. The government's internal and external policies are also another source of soft power. The attraction or soft power of a country also comes from policies that are considered legitimate and accommodate the interests of others. In Nye's view, a foreign policy that is considered legitimate and enjoys moral authority is one of the sources of soft power. (Joseph Nye, 2006) A country's hypocrisy, arrogance, indifference, or internal and foreign policy based on narrow national interests will damage soft power. The values advocated by a government in domestic, international, and foreign policies can influence the preferences of other countries, and government actions can also have the influence of attracting or rejecting others. Therefore, whether a country's internal and external policies can have soft power lies in whether such policies are legal and moral.

The degree of participation in multilateral mechanisms, foreign aid and external security have become indicators of whether a country's foreign policy has generated soft power. The main indicator of domestic policy to measure whether a country has soft power is to attract the number of immigrants.

4.3 The characteristics of soft power

Different from the tangible and measurable nature of hard power, soft power is more inclined to be a relatively intangible factor because it is a form of strength relative to hard power.

Abstraction. At the beginning, Joseph Nye defined the concept of soft power with relatively intangible factors, used culture, political value and foreign policy as the three sources of soft power. Although those factors are all objective, they are extremely abstract, and most of them cannot directly perform accurate quantitative analysis. "In the rigorous theoretical analysis, this concept is broad and cannot be accurately defined. Theory can be seen as being associated with all the factual results, and has a certain degree of causality, but it has no way to talk about its causal relationship, which is equivalent to nothing." (Su, 2006) Therefore, this has become a fatal injury to the academic theory of soft power theory.

Subjectivity. The main form of soft power is attraction and recognition. It is precisely because of this particularity of soft power that the existence of soft power and its size can only be directly perceived by individuals or the public. Because of individual differences, in addition to the strength of the soft power subject itself, soft power also depends on the degree of acceptance of the target country. Whether soft power can work can play a big role, the key depends on the specific reality of specific objects.

Diversity. The diversity of soft power is mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, the diversification of sources of soft power, soft power itself is an open and relatively broad concept, and its source of strength can be divided into multiple channels. Second, the diversity of soft power owners is different from the single owner of hard power, the sovereign state. The owner of soft power can be a state, a company, a multinational corporation, a non-governmental organization, or even an individual.

Flexibility. The use of soft power has its own unique flexibility. The media, including newspapers and magazines, radio, television, and the Internet, are the main carriers of soft power transmission. These carriers can enable audiences to obtain or disseminate information immediately. With the rapid development and increasing popularity of the Internet, the possibility of the government or a group monopolizing or manipulating information is getting smaller, and the difficulty is also increasing. This also provides more flexible and convenient conditions for the spread of soft power. The spread of soft power is almost independent of the restraint of time and geography.

4.4 Function of soft power

According to Nye's theory, the function of soft power is mainly reflected in the fact

that “a country can use soft power and assimilation power to create an environment in which other countries can imitate the country’s ways to consider increased development and determine their own interests”. (Liu, 2016) That is, soft power has the role of safeguarding national interests, including providing and guaranteeing the legitimacy of the existence of the regime, enhancing the appeal of the ruling authorities, strengthening the stability of the operation of the regime, improving the reputation of the country's image, and safeguarding the country's security interests.

The rational and effective use of soft power can indeed enhance a nation's influence and appeal, shape a good national image. A country can skillfully use soft power to contacts and exchanges with other countries in a peaceful, extensive and in-depth way, and let the international community and other countries understand the country's cultural traditions, values society and institutions, etc., increase mutual understanding and mutual trust, and cultivate common interests; or actively participate in international organizations, participate in the creation of an international system, influence the international political and economic agenda, and create a good national image.

On the other hand, the role and function of soft power should also be viewed dialectically. Too much emphasis on soft power may adversely hinder the country's progress, which means that soft power has a negative function at some point. (Hu, 2009) The reason why the soft power has a negative function is because the soft power has the distinctive characteristics of subjectivity. The size of the soft power depends on the soft power resources of a country and its application methods. More importantly, it depends on the target country`s attitude. The attitude towards the construction from one country is affirmation or denial, acceptance or non-acceptance, those different attitude it holds is likely to make very different results. Even if the target country holds a positive attitude, it still needs to specifically analyze. In other words, when the target country has a negative attitude toward the implementing country, the stronger the soft power of the implementing country is, the implementing country will get the weaker soft power consequences. This negative function is actually when the target country shows some resentment or even resistance to the application country's soft power resources. The more implementation country emphasizes on its soft power, then the soft power in the target country is even smaller. At this point, emphasis on the use of soft power will affect implementing countries` realization of the national interests or strategic goals.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, I will demonstrate the analysis part of the thesis, mainly about the analysis and comparative study of the selected cases using Joseph Nye's soft power theory. In order to examine and study the advantages and disadvantages of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asian countries and the views on China's image, this thesis mainly analyzes and choose cases based on the data of the Pew Global Survey.

The comparison will be divided into two groups. By comparison, I will try to find some main advantages and shortcomings of China's soft power in Southeast Asia. Regarding the choice of case, according to the Pew Global Survey and other data, for the sake of space and professional difficulty, I will take the favorable rate toward China as the standard for selecting cases. The first set of comparisons will be set for comparing the two countries that have the best highest favorable rate toward China in Southeast Asia. The second group, as a comparison, the thesis will select the country with the least goodwill to China in Southeast Asia, and compare it with the advantages conclude in the first group, in order to analyze the shortcomings of China's soft power construction in the Southeast Asia.

5.1 Case study between Indonesia and Laos

5.1.1 Case of Indonesia

In this part, I will analyze the case of China's soft power construction in Indonesia. Indonesia, with its large population, is an important force that cannot be ignored in Southeast Asia. It is also the country with the highest favorable rate towards China in the region. Therefore, it is of great significance to analyze China's soft power construction in Indonesia. The main analytical perspectives of this section include a brief review of the bilateral relations between the two countries and the main channels and means for China to build soft power in Indonesia.

5.1.1.1 The overall status of bilateral relations between China and Indonesia

The overall status of bilateral relations between China and Indonesia. I will make a brief review of the bilateral relations between China and Indonesia from the three major areas

of politics, economy and culture. At the political level, the bilateral relationship between China and Indonesia has experienced a tortuous development. At the beginning of the founding of the PRC, Indonesia was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with China. However, in 1965, the "September 30 incident" occurred in Indonesia, and the two countries interrupted diplomatic relations on October 30, 1967. Since then, the diplomatic relations between the two countries have been interrupted for more than 20 years, and it was not until 1990 that they were reinstated. After that, bilateral diplomatic relations continued to develop. In 2004, Indonesia suffered a severe tsunami, China provided a large amount of assistance and won widespread recognition from the Indonesian public. By 2005, China and Indonesia established a strategic partnership. In 2013, the two countries upgraded bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

In addition, apart from bilateral relations, since Indonesia is a member of ASEAN, the relationship between China and ASEAN will also affect the bilateral relationship between China and Indonesia. On the whole, China and ASEAN have carried out a series of successful cooperation under the framework of 10+1 and 10+3. Beyond that China first joined the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea with ASEAN. In the year of 2003, the "Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity" was established. On the whole, the relationship between China and Indonesia has improved significantly since the 21st century.

At the economic level, China and Indonesia also have close cooperation in the economic and trade field. Due to different stages of economic development, China and Indonesia have strong economic complementarities. The economic, trade and investment cooperation has continued to expand. In 2014, China-Indonesia bilateral trade volume reached 48.2 billion US dollars, more than a quarter of Indonesia's foreign trade value, and surpassed Japan, China became Indonesia's largest trading partner.(Han, 2017) In addition, in 2010, China and ASEAN built the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, which is the world's most populous free trade zone. Therefore, the development of China's economy is an opportunity for Southeast Asian countries to outweigh the challenges. (John Ravenhall, 2006)

In the cultural field, more and more Chinese tourists choose Indonesia as a destination

country. In 2012, more than 600,000 mainland Chinese tourists visited Indonesia, and China became one of the largest foreign tourists in Indonesia. In addition, educational exchanges between China and Indonesia have become increasingly close. At present, there are more than 200 exchange programs in the two countries each year. The number of Indonesian students studying in China ranks sixth in the total number of international students in China.

5.1.1.2 China's soft power construction status in Indonesia

The thesis choose the favorable rate data from global surveys as a criterion for evaluating China's soft power construction in relevant country. Therefore, I will also analyze and sort out the development of Indonesia's goodwill towards China and the important influence of the relationship between the two countries on the soft power construction.

Figure 1. Percent of Indonesia responding Favorable of China

SURVEY	PERCENTAGE RESPONDING FAVOURABLE
2005	73%
2006	62%
2007	65%
2008	58%
2009	59%
2010	58%
2011	67%
2012	
2013	70%
2014	66%
2015	63%
2016	
2017	55%

Source: Pew`s Global Values Survey 2017

Regarding the development trend of China's national image in Indonesia. Pews data

from 2005 to 2017 (Figure 1), shows that the Indonesian public has a good impression on China in the past 10 years, and although it has been ups and downs, it has shown a basically stable trend. In 2005, the percentage of goodwill to China was 73%, then declined, reaching a minimum of 58% in 2008 and 2010, and then rebounded. In 2013, it reached a 70% new high, and then fell back.

Combining the data and the facts of bilateral relations between the two countries during these periods, it can be found that the changes in bilateral relations have a greater impact on China's favorable rate, and the relationship between countries is an important factor and condition affecting the construction of soft power. The relationship between Indonesia and China in the 21st century is relatively stable, so the public's goodwill towards China is basically stable. At the same time, China and Indonesia established a strategic partnership in 2005. In 2013, the two countries upgraded bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership. Correspondingly, the Indonesian public's goodwill towards China has been high in the past two years, 73% in 2005 and 70% in 2013, both higher than other years.

5.1.1.3 China's main channel for soft power construction in Indonesia.

China's soft power construction in Indonesia is mainly in several aspects and channels. **First, in education exchanges aspect.** Educational exchange plays a fundamental role in humanities communication. Since 2010, China has intensified its education and opening up level, and actively expanded educational exchanges and cooperation in multiple levels and in a wide range of fields. Indonesia has also proposed a medium- and long-term goal for education development. International cooperation is seen as an effective way to train high-quality talents and improve the quality of education. Under this background, the educational exchange focusing on university cooperation as the main body and language teaching exchange has made great achievements between the two countries.

There are more than 3,000 colleges and universities in Indonesia, among them more than 50 famous institutions including Indonesian universities have established cooperative relations with China's universities. Through this channel, more than 10 China colleges that set Indonesian language majors has send hundreds of students to Indonesia for further study each year. The "3+1" joint training model is relatively

mature, and some colleges and universities have begun to explore the “2+2” joint education mode. The Indonesian government awards about 20-30 scholarships to Chinese students each year, and the number of Chinese government scholarships for Indonesian students has continued to increase in recent years, reaching 197 in 2017. According to statistics, in 2015, the total number of international students in Indonesia reached 14,000, ranking 7th among countries with international students in China. The Indonesian students in China are mainly major in Chinese, medical and science related. The shortcoming for this channel is that the cooperation between two sides is mainly concentrated at the undergraduate level. The cooperation and training of master's and doctoral students has not yet started. The academic exchanges and scientific research cooperation of universities need to be strengthened.

China's support for Indonesian`s Chinese language teaching has become an important achievement in educational cooperation. It is mainly reflected in the six Confucius Institutes, two Confucius Classrooms and more than 40 teaching points jointly organized by universities in Jakarta, Pontianak, Makassar, Surabaya, Malang and Bandung. In the official definition of China, the Confucius Institute is a "non-profit educational institution established by Sino-foreign cooperation." Its purpose is to adapt to the needs of people from all over the world (regions) for learning Chinese. Enhancing the understanding to China`s language and culture, developing friendly relations between China and foreign countries, and promoting the development of multiculturalism in the world. Furthermore, the dispatch of Chinese teacher volunteers every year has helped Indonesia to alleviate the shortage of Chinese teachers. It trained a large number of primary and secondary school teachers in Indonesia and promoted the development of Chinese majors in related universities. At present, there are 25 universities and institutions in Indonesia that offer Chinese majors. Together with the Confucius Institute, they have played an important role in understanding Chinese culture for Indonesian society and promoting China's soft power construction.

Second, cultural exchanges. The cultural exchanges between China and Indonesia are mostly present in the form of cultural performances. The cultural and artistic exchanges range from martial arts and acrobatic performances to modern symphonies and ballets, from individual works exhibitions to large-scale painting and calligraphy exhibitions. Large-scale performances are often arranged in major anniversaries and festivals celebrated with the two countries. The situation in Indonesia is the opposite. Most of

the performances of literary and art groups to China are invited to participate in important art events, such as the Asian Arts Festival. In 2013, the India-China Friendship Association planned and successfully hosted for the 10,000-person Angkor played in Beijing which has recorded in the Guinness World Record, but such large-scale events are very rare. The main obstacle for Indonesian art groups to perform in China is the lack of financial support, the potential value has not been fully explored.

Cultural industry cooperation is another important way for China to promote its soft power, mainly include film and TV series cooperation. It has roughly three forms: one is to spread a batch of Chinese classics and the latest film and television products to Indonesia through the open event, such as "Chinese Film Week" and "Chinese Film Exhibition". Second, the radio and television channels landed. In 2010, China Radio International cooperated with Alsinda Radio in Indonesia, after that, in May 2015, China International Television Corporation and Indonesian Aynet Media Co., Ltd. were commercialized and localized cooperation mode, launch Hi-Indo! Channel, and broadcasts Chinese film and television programs to Indonesian audiences. The third is to use the market-oriented mechanism to cooperate in commercial films making. The cooperation intentions of the film and television between the two countries have already existed.

Tourism. With the deepening of China's reform and opening up, the sustained growth of China's economy and the rapid increase in national income levels, China's tourism industry has been unprecedented changes. China and Indonesia signed the Memorandum of Understanding on China-Indonesia Tourism Cooperation in 2013, laying a new foundation for further promoting tourism cooperation between the two countries. Tourism is the most active area for cooperation with Indonesian. China's huge population base and considerable tourism source has significant attractive to Indonesia, since the tourism industry is one of the pillars of its economy. The Indonesian tourism authorities have promoted customized services for Chinese tourists in many aspects, including the development of Chinese-language websites, the increase in the number of Chinese tour guides, the opening of more take-off flights, and the implementation of visa-free policies for Chinese tourists from 2015 onwards. With the help of the China side, Indonesia has held several tourism promotion conferences each year in China, which has enhanced the Chinese people's awareness of Indonesia's tourism resources. For Chinese tourists, the Indonesian landscape represented by Bali Island is an ideal

tourist destination when travel abroad. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism, in 2010, China's Indonesian tourists reached 470,000, surpassing Japan for the first time. In 2016, the number of mainland Chinese tourists to Indonesia in surged to 1.4 million.

5.1.2 Case of Laos

5.1.2.1 Review of the overall bilateral relationship between China and Laos.

The relationship between China and Laos dates back to the early 2nd century AD when the country sent envoy to China. On April 25, 1961, the two countries officially established diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level. From the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, influenced by the Cold War mentality, Laos adopted a "one-sided" policy toward the Soviet Union and Vietnam. During this period, Sino-Lao relations developed slowly. It was not until 1988 that China and Laos exchanged ambassadors that the two countries normalized relations and the relationship between the two countries entered a new stage of rapid improvement and development. As a result, the exchanges between the two countries have increased rapidly, political mutual trust has been strengthened, and economic cooperation has become closer. Since the beginning of the 21st century, China-Laos relations have continued to develop in depth. In 2000, two countries issued a joint statement and decided to develop China and Laos into a "long-term stable, good-neighborly and trustworthy and comprehensive cooperative relationship." In November 2006, Chinese President Hu Jintao visit to Laos and decided to further deepen the traditional friendship and comprehensive cooperation between the two parties. In 2009, the relationship between China and Laos was upgraded to a strategic partnership.

Economic cooperation is growing. The amount of investment in Laos has remained at a high level all year round. The investment fields include water conservancy and hydropower, minerals, building materials, hotel catering, telecommunications and many others. And the investment have gradually began to pay attention to the service industry, radio television and education in Laos. According to the Lao Ministry of Planning and Investment, China's total investment in Laos has risen from more than US\$80 million in 2015 to over US\$1 billion in 2016, an increase of about 10 times. By the end of 2016, China had directly invested 5.4 billion U.S. dollars to Laos and has become the largest source of foreign investment in Laos.

Science and education exchanges and cooperation has been enhanced. In 1990, China and Laos began to start students exchange program. At present, many universities, like Beijing Foreign Studies University, have established Laotian majors and send overseas students to Laos every year. While sending students to each other, China also provides scholarships for studying in Laos. In November 2017, Premier Li Keqiang stressed at the 20th China-ASEAN Leaders' Meeting that the implementation of the "China-ASEAN Talent Development Plan" and will provide a large number of Chinese government scholarships, training places, and ASEAN science and technology to the ASEAN countries. (Xinhua Net, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2017-11/14/c_1121950086.htm.)

5.1.2.2 China's main channels for soft power construction in Laos.

Student exchange programs between two countries. China and Laos began to exchange students in 1990. First, the Chinese sent out international students to Laos. The range of international students dispatched by Chinese universities includes not only undergraduate institutions, but also technical schools and military academies. In addition, Chinese universities have also set up universities and colleges directly in Laos. For example, Suzhou University has set up its branch university in Laos, recruiting local students to teach undergraduate courses, offering short-term Chinese language training classes and conducting Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) tests. Second, Laos also sent students to China. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education of China, there are fewer than 300 Lao people studying in China in 2000. (Statistics of International Students Studying in China in 2000) As of the end of 2016, there were nearly 10,000 Laos students came to China, reaching 9907. (2016 China's Statistics on International Students in China) With the promotion of the “Belt and Road” initiatives, Laos has become one of the fastest growing countries for students to China. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education and other relevant departments, Laos’s students have maintained the top 20 source countries of Chinese foreign students and rose to the 12th place in 2018, and in that year Laos became the number one country in ASEAN to receive the Chinese government scholarship. (2016 China's Statistics on International Students in China) The exchange between two countries has promoted the exchange of knowledge and also more conducive to promoting the understanding and appreciation of the Laos elites to China. It has a greater impact on China's soft power construction in Laos.

Cultural exchange represented by the Confucius Institute. China has also expanded its cultural influence and built soft power through the Confucius Institute in Laos. According to the statistics of Hanban, as of the end of 2018, China has established Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in 140 countries and regions around the world. Among them, Laos has built one Confucius Institute and one Confucius Classroom. The Confucius Institute in Laos is hosted by the Lao National University and is located in Vientiane, the capital of Laos. It was put into use on March 23, 2010. Since the founding of the college, many Chinese cultural projects have been launched. The Confucius Classroom in Laos was established on December 21, 2016. It was hosted by the Laos National Radio and co-founded by China Radio International. It relies on the radio stations of China and Laos to cover Chinese language and Chinese culture throughout Laos via a variety of platforms such as radio, mobile terminals, internet and television. However, due to the late start-up time, it did not reflect the cultural communication function. In addition, there are also Chinese schools and language education institutions such as the Biandu Public School and the Panda Chinese Training Institute.

The growing number of tourists has improved the image of China in local people. The size of Chinese citizens visiting abroad for the first time in 2014 exceeded 100 million, and the number has remained above 100 million for the later years. With the continuous development of China-Laos relations, the number of Chinese tourists to Laos is also increasing. China has now developed into the third largest source of foreign tourists in Laos, after Thailand and Vietnam. The number of tourists in Laos has increased from 199,000 in 2012 to 751,900 in 2017, an increase of nearly four times. According to statistics, in recent years, the generation of Chinese tourists in Laos are mainly ranged from young to middle-aged. The population aged 19-29 accounts for 52%, followed by the group of 30-39 years old, accounting for 21%. That means most of the Chinese tourists go to Laos are highly educated, and some of them are trained in Laos` language and know about local customs. Therefore, that left a good impression on the Laos` locals. But at the same time, many uncivilized tourism phenomena still exist, which will bring pressure and challenges to China's national image and the construction of soft power in Laos. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the propaganda and regulation of civilized travel at the tourist level.

Media communication. The news media is an important channel for China`s cultural

soft power construction in Laos. China on the one hand needs its domestic media to report and disseminate Chinese culture. On the other hand, it also needs foreign news media to cooperate with to present China's history and culture in local language and mode of thinking. At present, the representative cases of China's soft power construction in Laos' in the media field mainly includes China's domestic mainstream news media and its international news media branches, as well as the Laos local mainstream news media.

China Radio International (CRI) founded in 1941, it is an important platform for news and cultural communication in Laos. Its official website has a Laos-language version, which uses Laotian to push daily Chinese domestic news, as well as news from Asia and around the world. CRI also cooperates with the Confucius Institute in Laos and has a Chinese learning platform on its website. In addition, the CRI Laos channel branch has also held charitable donations which has further expand its local influence.

In 2015, China successfully helped Laos launch the Laos No. 1 Broadcast Communication Satellite to help it to improve communication conditions. At present, most of Laos's area can receive about 130 sets of satellite TV programs, including 55 sets of Chinese TV channels, such as CCTV International Channel and local satellite TV channels such as Beijing TV, Hunan TV and Jiangsu TV. The landing of Chinese TV channels has made a large number of Chinese film and television programs broadcast in Laos and has increased the understanding of the Laos people on Chinese culture and values, which is a great enhance for china's soft power construction.

5.2 Case of Vietnam

Vietnam holds a high status in Southeast Asia and is also an important neighbor of China. Since 2005, China has become Vietnam's largest trading partner. In 2010, the bilateral trade volume between the two countries reached US\$300.94 billion. Also in 2010, the number of Vietnamese students studying in China reached 130,000, which is the fifth largest source country of international students in China. However, despite this, the relationship between China and Vietnam still has large fluctuations. In the Pew's 2017 survey, Vietnam is the country with the lowest level of favor for China among all the countries surveyed. Therefore, in this section, Vietnam will be selected as a case to

analysis on China's soft power construction, and mainly focus on the negative aspects. In the next chapter of discussion, I will analyze some relevant reasons and the shortcomings of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asian countries.

The spread of Chinese media.

In terms of radio and television, China Central Television (CCTV) has established cooperation projects with Vietnam TV stations years ago and achieved certain achievements. Since the beginning of 1995, Vietnam TV (VTV) has set up an exclusive section to teach Chinese. In the 21st century, the Chinese government is more actively used the influential ability of TV dramas and movies and make it as a cultural product that can effectively bring "China to Southeast Asia". China's State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television(SARFT) has signed a number of cooperation agreements with Vietnam's state television to create favorable conditions for Chinese film and TV series to enter into Vietnam market.

The number of Chinese TV dramas broadcasted by TV stations and channels in Vietnam has grown rapidly in recent years. Compared with other nation`s TV series, the Chinese TV dramas take a higher proportion in Vietnamese TV stations.

According to statistic data, in 2009, Vietnam broadcasted a total of 348 sets of Chinese TV series throughout the central to local TV channels. In 2010, a total of 304 TV series were released; in 2011, a total of 369 Chinese TV dramas were broadcasted by 15 radio and television stations in Vietnam. According to the Vietnam National TV (VTV)`s schedule, the Chinese TV dramas have a fairly high playing time at the station, the proportion accounted is higher than Korean TV dramas. In 2011, a total of 40 Chinese TV dramas were broadcast on four channels of Vietnam`s national television. From February 2013 to November 2013, six channels of Vietnam National TV has broadcast 33 Chinese TV series. As of April 2014, Vietnam has broadcasted 182 Chinese TV series from the central to various local TV stations. But due to the conflict situation of maritime has increased between two countries in recent years, causing the rise of Vietnamese nationalism and the number of Chinese TV dramas broadcast in Vietnam has begun to decreased.

In terms of newspapers and magazines, Xinhua Press, the almost most important publicity and public opinion institution in China, has signed agreement with Vietnam's state-owned media and has set up a branch in Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam, to become one of the largest foreign news agencies in Vietnam.

In addition to film and television, China's online games are gradually deepening into the Vietnamese market and become a new way to influence Vietnamese youth. There are now 22 online game companies in the Vietnamese market that have been issued licenses by relevant Vietnamese authorities, providing 93 different games, most of these agents issue games from China. Since most of China's online games are based on the traditional Chinese culture, the Vietnamese youth are constantly being influenced by Chinese culture in the game, which could enhance the influence of China's soft power in Vietnam.

Confucius Institute in Vietnam.

Another important way for China to build soft power in Vietnam is to establish Confucius Institute. In December 2014, the first Confucius Institute in Vietnam was completed at Hanoi University and it has also established partnerships with more than 50 universities in China.

The Confucius Institute is important for China to promote Chinese culture and the implement of soft power abroad. The Confucius Institute Charter clearly stipulates that the Confucius Institute is a non-profit educational institution whose purpose is to enhance the understanding of Chinese people's language and culture, develop friendly relations between China and foreign countries, promote the development of multiculturalism in the world, and contribute to building a harmonious world.

Vietnam is the last country to establish Confucius Institutes among the countries that directly affected by China, 10 years later than South Korea. In 2004, the first Confucius Institutes established in Seoul, South Korea. There are now 23 Confucius Institutes and 13 Confucius Classrooms in Korea; 9 years later than Japan, and there are 15 Confucius Institutes and 8 Confucius Classrooms in Japan. The reason causing the delay is that

there have been conflict between the two countries on the sea and island issues in recent years. But in any case, the Confucius Institute, the representative body of Chinese language and culture communication, was established in Hanoi, indicating that China still attaches great importance to its cultural and diplomatic relations with Vietnam. This is a turning point in the spread of Chinese education and culture in Vietnam. China hopes that the Confucius Institute, as an ambassador of Chinese culture, can vigorously promote the Chinese cultural soft power and the Chinese national image to Vietnamese society and Vietnamese people. It is one of the Chinese government's external propaganda organizations.

Scientific research and education cooperation

In terms of educational cooperation, in recent years, the Chinese Ministry of Education has hold many conferences with Vietnamese Ministry of Education and signed many agreements on educational cooperation and exchanges. The Hanban, the Confucius Institute and the Chinese Embassy in Vietnam jointly hosted the “Chinese Bridge Chinese Competition” in Vietnam

For many years, China has provided priority scholarships to international students from countries in the Mekong region, among them a large number of Vietnam students have been priority admitted by China`s universities. The total number of Vietnamese students who receive scholarships to study in China is about 100 or more each year. In 2016, the Chinese government provided 47 full scholarships for Vietnamese citizens to study in China. Vietnam also provides a certain amount of scholarships for the China side every year and exchange Chinese students to study in Vietnam. According to statistics, more than 30 universities in Vietnam have conducted close exchanges and cooperation relationship with more than China 40 universities. In addition, through different channels, many young Vietnamese choose to study in China at their own expense. Many of them have excellent academic performance and have been awarded scholarships by Chinese universities to stay in China. According to statistics, from 2000 to 2004, Vietnamese students studying in China increased by 90%. By 2016, nearly 13,000 Vietnamese students have gone to China to study. In addition, Chinese is already the

second choice of language for Vietnamese students. Many universities have set Chinese department or Chinese research center. More and more Vietnamese schools and Chinese schools have developed cooperation in Chinese language training.

6 Discussion

6.1 the advantages and achievements of China's soft power construction in southeast Asia.

In this section, the thesis will discuss the findings from the former chapter which is comparison between Indonesia and Laos, and summarize some of China's comparative advantages in building soft power for Southeast Asian countries. It mainly includes the following aspects:

First of all, from cultural perspective. China's rich cultural resources have brought important influence to the improvement of its cultural soft power. The traditional culture of China is centered on Confucianism. In the deep layer concept of Chinese culture, the brand of Confucianism can be found everywhere. Influenced by historical factors, Confucian culture has an extremely important influence in today's Southeast Asia. The establishment and development of Southeast Asian countries was deeply influenced by Confucianism, it also played a significant role in bringing countries relations closer and resolving international disputes.

China is the birthplace of Confucianism. In the process of developing cultural diplomacy in Southeast Asia, Confucianism is often used as the core implementation, and the reformed Confucianism to win the support from the local people. As we can see from above, there are two main channels for China to use Confucian culture in the process of building soft power: the first is to establish Confucius Institutes, such as success cases in Laos and Indonesia, to spread and promote Confucianism, trying to “export” Chinese traditions to these Southeast Asian countries. By December 2018, China had established 548 Confucius Institutes and 1,193 Confucius Classrooms in 154 countries and regions around the world. Among them, 126 Confucius Institutes were established in 34 countries (regions) in Asia, and 114 Confucius Classrooms were established in 22 countries in Asia.

Figure 2. The amount of Confucius Institute and Confucius Institute at the end of 2018

	Global		Asia	
	Country/region	Amount	Country/region	Amount
Confucius Institute	147	548	43	59
Confucius Classroom	83	1193	22	114

Source: Hanban: http://www.hanban.org/confuciousinstitutes/node_10961.htm

The second is to reform the traditional Confucianism, advocate peace, cooperation and win-win concepts abroad. Based on that idea, China has signed a series of cooperation treaties with Southeast Asian countries, those act could help the increase the level of recognition and understanding of China`s culture and value for the local people to a certain extent.

However, at present, China lacks a specific interpretation of this concept of harmony. Makes it difficult to be truly accepted by more countries in the process of implementation, the impact and effect on the promotion of soft power is not obvious and limited.

From the perspective of foreign policy. China's multilateral foreign policy can effectively gain the goodwill from Southeast Asian countries. At the beginning stages, when the Chinese government developed relations with Southeast Asian countries, it focused more on bilateral cooperation. Then the situation shifted to multilateralism at the end of 20th century. Into the 21st century, multilateralism has become the most important mode in China's relations with Southeast Asian countries. This kind of multilateralism foreign policy has also make a lot of achievements, like participating in the ASEAN Regional Forum, becoming comprehensive dialogue partner of ASEAN, the "10+1" meeting and the signing of the "**Southeast Asia Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation**". China`s adherence to the principle of multilateralism has effectively promoted the overall improvement of mutual relations in its contacts with Southeast Asia countries.

Another outstanding achievement in building soft power is that China's frequent high-level educational exchange with Southeast Asian countries have played a major role in

this context. As of 2011, the number of international students visiting between China and Southeast Asia countries has reached 100,000. Among them, more than 30,000 international students study in China, and nearly 70,000 Chinese students go abroad to Southeast Asia countries. The local government also provides a considerable number of public scholarships for international students. However, compared with the economic and political exchanges and developments between two sides, there is still much room for improvement in the exchanges of education. The Chinese government has invested considerable attention in the cultural exchanges promoted by the all levels of government departments. In particular, the government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, as the initiator, has carried out many different types of cultural exchange activities with Southeast Asia countries almost every year, laying a good foundation for strengthening cultural exchanges between two sides. It can be seen from the case analysis of cultural exchanges in Laos and Indonesia, and this trend will continue to deepen.

Another point that has not been mentioned in the analysis but has an important position in the construction of China's soft power, is the abundant amount of overseas Chinese resources in Southeast Asia countries. According to statistical surveys, currently there are about 34.386 million overseas Chinese in Southeast Asian countries, accounting for 73.4% of the total number of overseas Chinese. After the 1980s, there were at least 2.5 million new Chinese immigrants moving to Southeast Asia. The data shows that Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia are the top three countries with the largest number of Chinese overseas both in Southeast Asia and around the world.

As a special force, overseas Chinese play a pivotal role in promoting and construction of China's soft power in Southeast Asia. Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia have a high sense of national identity with China, and have a deeper understanding of China's current policies, culture, economic systems, and diplomatic policy. They can accurately understand China's current national status, and could clearly introduce and promote China's contemporary development and policies to local people, which is conducive to promoting bilateral and multilateral relations. Thus, it has invisibly enhanced the soft

power of China in the countries where overseas Chinese are located.

6.2 the shortcomings of China`s soft power construction in southeast Asia.

From the above analysis of China's soft power construction in Vietnam, it can be seen that China's construction channels and methods in Vietnam are similar to those of more successful cases in Indonesia and Laos, which basically concentrated in cultural exchanges, higher education exchange and using local media platforms and other channels. And the difference is that Chinese pop culture such as TV series, online novels and online games have a very large audience in Vietnam. But what are the causes and shortcomings have made China's soft power construction to be constrained in Vietnam, and its favorable rate towards China remain a relatively low level, this section will discuss on this in order to summarize some insufficient and shortcomings of China's soft power construction in Southeast Asian countries.

First, The impact of historical issues.

Vietnam has a long history of exchanges with China. Among them, a thousand year of the “Northern Period” leaves unforgettable shadow in the Vietnamese peoples` mind. Even though in the East Asian cultural circle, Vietnam and China maintained tributary relations, but the purpose of each feudal dynasty was only to maintain friendly relations with the China and avoid war. At that time, the Vietnamese has built strong national cultural independence. This has makes the Vietnamese people have a kind of precaution against China and has a high degree of vigilance against China. This mentality still exists today, and causing the wrong recognition on China.

Second, the cultural propaganda of soft power construction has a profound political overtones.

Judging from the current situation, most of the cultural diplomacy and cooperation in Vietnam are implemented based on China`s official channel, that is, a government-led and intentional channel. The survey results also responded to the facts that China's soft power development in Vietnam is not balanced, and some indicators even lag far behind the cultural soft power of the United States and Japan. The government has overemphasized the spread of foreign culture and the promotion of national image. Excessive propaganda tools have profound political overtones and lack of modern cultural symbols. Such excessive political propaganda could easily provok public

suspicion and vigilant. The Confucius Institute established by China in Vietnam is a typical example. As mentioned above, the Confucius Institute is a direct agency running and manage by the Ministry of Education of China. The Chinese government controls the operation of the Confucius Institute through the Hanban. From the perspective of the Vietnamese people, the Confucius Institute is not purely a Chinese language teaching institution. It is also a political propaganda body of the Chinese government. In addition, since the establishment of the Confucius Institute at Hanoi University, there has not been too much and obvious language teaching or scientific research activities, which has further provoked doubts from the Vietnamese people. The same reason can also be used as a reference for China's soft power construction in other countries in Southeast Asia. Soft power, especially cultural soft power should originally start from its own internal appeal. It is easy to make others countries feel worried and antipathy of its political propaganda tools, and the results is often counterproductive.

Third, the construction of soft power has been strongly influenced by Western culture and Japanese and Korean cultures, resulting in local people's low recognition of China's soft power construction.

As the representative case, in Vietnam`s side, Western culture is also considered a “latecomer”. However, many results show that in Vietnam, even though China does not lag behind in cultural and image propaganda, its gap with the United States and even Japan and South Korea is significant, leading to a lower overall perception and recognition.

Most of the soft power of American culture originated from the reputation of excellent education level, the world's top entertainment industry, the American pop music culture and their NGOs. Obviously, China's current cultural industry has not yet reached the level as the United States. In addition, in recent years, as Japan and South Korea have put more attention in cultural cooperation and investing in Vietnam, the influence of Japanese culture has also increased, and the Korean cultural wave (Hallyu) has become stronger.

Therefore, the lack of innovation is a significant problem and insufficient faced by China, which makes it lose its competitive advantage under the Confucianism cultural background in Vietnam. Therefore, it is strongly impacted and shocked by the soft power from Western, Japanese and Korean culture. In particular is, in the Vietnamese

cognition, Chinese traditional culture such as history, folklore, calligraphy, martial arts, painting are often deeply and extensively publicized, but obviously lack of sufficient propagate on Chinese pop culture and other practical issues. This is also an issue that the Chinese government urgently needs to solve through the implementation of the cultural soft power in Vietnam, also in Southeast Asia countries.

7. Conclusion

In the above chapters, by using Joseph Nye's soft power theory as a tool, after analyzing the representative cases of soft power construction in Southeast Asian countries, it can be seen that China's soft power construction in Southeast Asia has achieved certain achievements, summed up in the following aspects:

First, China has rich cultural resources and has a long history of exchanges with Southeast Asia. Chinese culture has an influence in Southeast Asia. Hundreds of years ago, Chinese scholars traveled to Southeast Asian countries and carried out many cultural records and disseminations. Chinese culture represented by Confucianism was continuously spread. With the local life and development of overseas Chinese, Chinese culture has gained wider development.

At the same time, after entering the 21st century, China has been more active in promoting cultural and academic exchanges with Southeast Asian countries, and has further expanded the influence of China's soft power. According to Joseph Nye's theory of soft power, culture has the ability to attract and assimilate, that is, to apply its own thinking, values, etc. to others, so that it has the same concept as itself. This assimilation of culture contributes to the realization of the country's diplomatic goals. (Nye, 2005)

As can be seen from the analysis and discussion above, China actively promotes cultural exchanges and academic exchange programs with Southeast Asian countries. For example, the spread of Chinese culture, represented by the Confucius Institute, promotes the exchange of scholarships and academic exchanges between countries.

Second, the rapid growth of China's hard power. It provides a rich source of transformation for China's soft power and lays a material foundation for the rapid rise of China's soft power in Southeast Asia. At present, China has become the second largest economy in the world, and has exerted positive impact on the global economic market.

Base on that, the growth of China's hard power has created greater appeal to other countries, especially those in Southeast Asia. At the same time, China is also an important part of the global consumer market and is increasingly becoming a major component of the consumer market in Southeast Asia. Due to the close trade relations between China and Southeast Asian countries, China has provided paid or unpaid financial assistance, credit and cheap consumer goods to the Southeast Asian countries base on the Belt and Road Initiatives. This has led to economic growth and fiscal revenue growth in Southeast Asian countries.

Third, the spread and exchange of modern entertainment products. Film and television entertainment products can effectively reflect a country's cultural concepts, values and cultural soft power. And entertainment products industry has gradually become a new, universal and extensive way for countries to carry out cultural diplomacy and image building. In recent years, with the continuous exchanges between China and Southeast Asia, a large number of Chinese film and television music works have been introduced to Southeast Asian countries. These film and television music works export Chinese culture and values to the people of the local countries. The "natural" nature unique to film and television music works is not possessed by hard power. He can effectively avoid the pressure of hard power to other countries and the resulting sense of rejection. It is also an effective channels to enhance the soft power of China.

Forth, the improvement of regional cooperation mechanisms with Southeast Asian countries. In 2003, China joined the "Southeast Asia Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation" as a foreign country and established a strategic partnership with ASEAN for peace and prosperity. In 2010, the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area was fully established, which created a broad platform for the further development of China-ASEAN trade relations.

In addition, China actively promote cooperation mechanisms such as the Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Cooperation (GMS), the ASEAN-Mekong River Basin

Development Cooperation (AMBDC), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), and the Lancang-Mekong River Basin. These have provided favorable guarantee and promotion for China's construction of soft power in Southeast Asia.

On the other hand, through the analysis of the Vietnam case, it can be seen that although the growth of China's investment and input of the soft power construction in Southeast Asian has a rapid increasing, the growth of soft power is limited and has not achieved the desired results. Through the analysis in the previous chapter, I would summarize the following shortcomings.

First, China's political and economic development model needs to be improved.

The successful development of one country could bring considerable appeal to other countries, they hope to make their country develop rapidly by imitating the experience of a successful country. This is actually one of the resources available to a country for cultural diplomacy and an important source of national soft power. China is a fast-developing country and has achieved remarkable results. However, China's current actual development has not made such resources fully utilized.

In economic field, there are still many problems in China's economic development. China has become the world's second largest economy. However, China's development is still in the stage of extensive development of “high energy consumption” and “high pollution”. With the global emphasis on environmental protection and resource protection, many countries will undoubtedly worry about that China's development model will do harm to their local environment, and that could bring negative impact to China's expansion of soft power.

In politic field, China's political system reform is still relatively backward. The imperfection of the political system has seriously affected China's further development in recent years. Among the data released by various international organizations such as Transparency International, China lags far behind developed countries in terms of the Corruption Perceptions Index. Although such data may be questionable, it more reflects the real problems in China. In fact, such negative images affect China's international reputation.

Second, improper use of Chinese cultural resources.

China's domestic inheritance and development of traditional culture is lagging behind. Although China has always been proud of the long history of traditional culture, in fact, the inheritance and development of traditional culture with Confucianism as its core is not easy. In addition to that, since the reform and opening up, the influx of Western culture has made traditional culture further lose its influence in China. The younger generation is becoming less aware of traditional culture.

The insufficient domestic research on China's traditional culture. China has renewed its research on traditional culture in recent years, but the essence of these cultures is clearly at a relatively early stage. If a country wants to influence other countries through its traditional culture, it is necessary to further enhance the universal concept of its traditional culture. If only promote it from the perspective of China but consider the feelings of the receiving country, it will be difficult to get enough recognition.

China has not found a suitable way in the process of spreading traditional culture to the world. China's previous cultural diplomacy still stays at the surface level, such as promoting Chinese and showing China's food and literature to the world. It can only improve the relative lower levels of soft power.

Third, China is lack of effective foreign cultural communication channels.

China clearly has major deficiencies in the construction of a system for foreign cultural communication.

As previously analyzed, China's foreign cultural communication has a strong purpose and political overtone. The final effect of the communication is to let the other countries accept the content of the communication. If the others cannot accept it, then communication is a failure. However, China has always shown a tendency of quick success and instant benefit in the process of foreign cultural communication. This kind of tendency to be too purposeful can easily lead to China ignoring other countries feelings, leading to the resentment and questioning from the local people to the soft power construction. In addition, the form of Chinese foreign cultural communication is relatively simple. One of the fundamental reasons for this is that China's cultural industry lacks innovation and still remain in low level of development. Very few of Chinese literature and film and television works can generate huge impact on the world. Leading other countries lack the fully cognition of China's development and reforming.

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