

Oliver van den Berg, BEWEGUNG NURR & Robert Sokol, Wolfgang Stiller, Surrend and Christine Weber

Invited by Franziska Leuthäuser and Alekos Hofstetter

January 28 to February 26, 2011

Opening on Thursday, 27th January, 2011, 7 pm to 9 pm

*"There is no pure immediacy of culture: Wherever it permits itself to be consumed arbitrarily by a public as consumer goods it manipulates people."*¹

The instruments of SOFT POWER, (a term coined by Joseph S. Nye to describe co-optive power in contrast to hard power such as military actions), are versatile. Generally SOFT POWER stands for the ability to shape what others want, while hard power is the ability to change what others do.²

In the exhibition at Galerie Kvant, SOFT POWER is presented primarily as an active agent, - an application that is dialogue-oriented. The exhibition introduces five artistic positions that allow advertising for their own values and political structures, provide guidance, and do not exclude redounding to scale.

Long-term investments in the stability of interstate or international relations and passive instruments of politics, economics, culture and sport belong to SOFT POWER. The ability to change what others want is available for states and international organizations as well as for organizations of civil society, international corporations and institutions in the cultural field.

SOFT POWER is cultural power, however culture per se is only a potential source of power.³ Theoretically, any organization, country and culture can develop SOFT POWER. As opposed to hard power, SOFT POWER is context-based. In order to transfer the potential power into real power, the owners' resources have to be converted by using capital, political institutions, social capital and social structures.⁴ Whether these resources become real power depends on the affinity of the target audience. SOFT POWER focuses on attraction and is subject to the biases of others. An important proportion of the power lies not in the hands of those who possess the resources, but in the response and the reaction of those who receive them.

The establishment of 300 Confucius Institutes in more than 90 countries where not only Mandarin is taught, but also the doctrine of duty, diligence and loyalty - the basic principles of Chinese society - must be seen as an active attempt by the Chinese state to use SOFT POWER for nation branding. The Berlin exhibition negotiates possibilities to escape, ignore, manipulate or destroy such efforts of interference by others. Subject matters of image building, manipulation and propaganda are presented, commented and reversed. The applied instruments become new resources for SOFT POWER and declare the option to beat the addressee at his own game.

¹ Adorno, W. Theodor, „Kultur und Verwaltung“, in: Soziologische Schriften I, Frankfurt/M, 1972, p. 144.

² See: Nye, Joseph, „Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics“, New York 2004.

³ See: Fan, Ying, „SOFT POWER: POWER OF ATTRACTION OR CONFUSION? - Place Branding and Public Diplomacy“, London 2008, URL: <http://bura.brunel.ac.uk/handle/2438/1594> (Date: January 9, 2011).

⁴ Treverton, G. F. and Jones, S. G., „Conference Proceedings – Measuring national power“, Santa Monica 2005, p. 5f.

Hard Power Soft Power

Ability to change others' position by force or inducement - Ability to shape the preferences of others by attraction

Military and economic power - Cultural Power

Coercion, force - Co-option, influence

Absolute - Relative, context based

Tangible, easy to measure, predictable to certain degree - Intangible, hard to measure, unpredictable

Ownership specified - Unspecified, multiple sources

Controlled by State or organisations - Mostly non-state actors, uncontrollable

External, action, push - Internal, reaction/response, pull

Direct, short term, immediate effect - Indirect, long term, delayed effect

Manifested in foreign policies - Communicated via nation branding

Table ⁵