

Egyptian revolt and soft power relevancy in the Middle East

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Abstract

Purpose:- The purpose of this paper is to analyze the analytical and practical relevancy of soft power as well as the challenges limiting its applicability with special reference to the Middle Eastern context before and after the Arab revolts in general and the Egyptian revolt in particular.

Design:- The paper first highlights the prevailing different definitions of soft power(SP) to clarify its meaning(s) and basic dimensions. Afterwards, the paper discusses concept relevancy in the Middle East pointing out three basic challenges of embedded norms, analytical perspectives, and effectiveness. Within the analysis of each challenge, effects and significances of the Egyptian revolt are briefly discussed highlighting some soft power related issues and questions that have been raised by the recent developments. The paper concludes with a summarization of basic findings and implications regarding soft power analysis in general and its theoretical and practical applicability in the ME in particular.

Findings:- The initial findings show that Egyptian revolt has generally increased soft power relevancy and revealed its complexities at the same time. The developments and outcomes of current transitional processes in the Egypt and Arab region will further clarify soft power relevancy. The utilization of soft power in analyzing internal domestic level interactions extends concept scope and relevancy.

Practical implications:- The paper highlights soft power complexity and multidimensional nature either with regard to its resources or mechanisms. Egyptian revolt illustrates prospects for manipulative and integrative possibilities of utilizing soft power for peace and development or conflict and oppression.

Originality/Value:- In the final analysis, the paper offers an insight into prospects of analyzing and promoting soft power theoretical and practical relevance on both external and domestic levels.

Table of contents/ Outline

Abstract.....	1
Introduction	3
Soft power definition(s) and relevancy	4
Middle Eastern context and the Egyptian revolt.....	7
1-Challenges of embedded values	8
2-Challenges of perspectives	12
3-Challenges of effectiveness	15
A-Cultural Proximity:.....	16
B- Nature of issues:	18
C- Power diffusion and public participation:	20
Conclusion	21
References.....	23

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Introduction

This paper aims to analyze the theoretical and practical relevancy of soft power as well as the challenges limiting its applicability. In addition to discussing and reframing soft power debates from relevancy perspective, a special reference is made to the Middle Eastern context as a case study before and after the Arab revolts in general and the Egyptian revolt in particular ¹.

Relevancy has different meanings and is determined in relation to given goals². In this paper, relevancy has both theoretical and practical dimensions. Theoretically, concept relevancy can be generally defined as the increasing likelihood of accomplishing the analytical purposes of

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¹ Though they are not identical, the paper uses the terms "revolts" and "revolutions" interchangeably for simplification purposes. Middle East , as utilized in this paper, refers to the geographical region containing Arab countries, Turkey, and Iran. Focusing on the Middle East does not necessarily imply any supposed uniqueness of this region. Without denying regional peculiarities, the aim is more of a primary analysis of soft power applicability and the challenges it faces in a specified area as a case study. The selection of this case can be justified by its world strategic importance as well as the significance of recent changes caused by Arab revolts since 2011.

² The paper adopts a basic and simplistic definition of relevancy without being confined to the standard notion of direct instrumental policy utilization. The latter is usually termed "policy relevancy" focusing on relations between academics and practitioners or policy makers. As a concept widely used in many fields, relevancy has a variety of definitions asserting its multidimensional nature. More complex definitions and dimensions can help further illuminate the sophisticated nature of soft power relevancy debates. However, this far exceeds the scope and limitations of this paper. For more details on the relevancy, see: (Magdic 1973; Rouchota et al. 1998; Grünfeld 1989; Lepgold and Nincic 2001;Eriksson and Norman 2011). Relevancy theory can also help advance the analysis of soft power mechanisms as it is directly related to framing and managing the "paradox of plenty" and "scarcity of attention" caused by information explosion (Nye 2011,103). David Aaker's suggested 'brand relevance model' is a partial illustrative example. See: (Aaker, 2011).

description, explanation, and/or evaluation. Practically, relevance is understood more in terms of concept linkages to social concerns and interests (such as equality, social justice, peace, and development, etc...) and existence of quite clear implications for practice (Hjorlan and Christensen, 2002, 962-964).

As the definition of any concept determines its nature and scope, it directly affects its relevancy for different contexts. Therefore, the paper will first highlight the prevailing diverse soft power definitions to clarify its meaning(s) and basic dimensions. Afterwards, the paper analyzes soft power relevancy in the Middle East pointing out three basic challenges of embedded norms, analytical perspectives, and effectiveness. Within the discussion of each challenge, initial analysis of Egyptian revolt effects is provided. The paper concludes with summarization of basic findings and implications regarding soft power analysis in general and its theoretical and practical applicability in the ME in particular.

Soft power definition(s) and relevancy

Soft power is a highly contended concept in both public and academic debates. The contestedness of power in general and the relatively short history of the concept, accompanied with its wide spread uses, led to quite ambiguous and debatable nature of soft power definition(s). This nature necessitates preliminary clarification as it directly affects concept applicability and relevancy. Competing definitions can lead to biased hasty judgments of irrelevancy (or relevancy) due to using the same terms in other conceptual meanings than intended by other researchers.

Different dimensions of soft power definitions can be situated on a continuum ranging from pop culture attractiveness to all forms of power but war. In its narrowest minimum definition, soft power means the attractiveness of movies, TV series, novels, music, sports, clothing fashions, food chains and other symbols of public or pop culture. This is not just a superficial public perception of soft power but it appears on the academic level as well. The historian Niall Ferguson limits soft power definition to influencing world affairs through “non-traditional forces such as cultural and commercial goods”. Accordingly, he negatively evaluates its significance and relevancy as being overly soft. He further points out that the spread of ideas and goods can have contradictory consequences where fascination overlaps with envy, hatred and resistance simultaneously (Ferguson 2003, 18-22). Interestingly enough, Ferguson embraces the relevancy of “diplomatic power” and “moral appeals” as significant forms of power in international politics. He clearly does not identify these “relevant” aspects as related to soft power. This unmistakably shows how definitions directly affect relevancy evaluation.

On the other side of the continuum, the broadest possible definition of soft power refers to all forms of power but war as the ultimate form of actualized material coercion. This over-stretches concept borders to contain highly debatable forms of military deterrence and coercive threats as

well as military protection and cooperation. Other broad definitions omit the conflictive and cooperative military forms all together but still assert economic sanctions or at least economic incentives as soft power components (Brookes 2006; Kurlantzick 2007,6). These definitions are comparatively less debatable but the Harvard political scientist Joseph S.Nye Jr. does not accredit them. Sanctions clearly intend to coerce and they are consequently forms of hard power. In Nye's words, "there is nothing soft about sanctions if you are on the receiving end" (Nye 2006). Although economic incentives may seem more attractive to their targets, but implicit or explicit threats of cutting them down make incentives potential negative sanctions (Nye 2011, 12).

As the concept coiner in his seminal foreign policy article titled "soft power", Nye usually acts as the final authority and arbiter in defining and delimiting the concept in his many writings (See for instance: Nye 1990; 2004;2006;2011). Putting aside the debatable nature of this authority, Nye's rejection of overstretching his concept is understandable. Although adding most of the military and economic forms of power might seem appealing as this misleadingly implies increasing concept relevancy, the opposite tends to be more accurate. If the concept includes nearly all forms of power, it will turn into a redundant concept that lacks inherent utility and requires other concepts to elaborate it. Nye is definitely aware that turning soft power into a catch-all concept will end it catching nothing.

In his writings, Nye uses various wordings and expressions to define soft power within the process of elaborating his ideas. This might be confusing but the crux of his definition is quite consistent. Nye's definition of soft power has evolved gradually -in terms of clarity- to endorse two basic criteria:

1-Behavioral co-optive softness: Nye states that "fully defined, soft power is the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda [regarded as legitimate by the target], persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes" (Nye 2011,20-21)

2- Resources softness: According to Nye, soft power ability rests mainly on three basic resources of attractive culture, credible political values, and legitimate foreign policies having moral authority. Auras of economic success and military invincibility or righteousness can be considered additional soft power assets (Nye 2011, 84-87).

Combining the two criteria, Nye's definition can be summarized as "affecting others depending more on soft intangible resources of culture, political values, and legitimate foreign policies through soft co-optive mechanisms of framing, persuasion and attraction to achieve the preferred outcomes". This definition supposedly fends off the 'vehicle fallacy' where power resources are over highlighted while power behaviors, interactions, and outcomes are marginalized. By identifying power softness as a matter of degree, Nye's definition also escapes entrapment in rigid dichotomies of hard power versus soft power. In addition, he tries to right-

size the concept avoiding ‘insignificance irrelevancy’ of downsizing the concept and ‘unresearchability irrelevance’ of overstretching it.

A suggested modified definition can be “affecting others’ perceptions, preferences and behaviors depending more on co-optive or manipulative use of framing and attraction mechanisms and their related mostly intangible resources”. This modified definition is more inclusive and less value loaded in a way that boosts concept analytical relevance and meets Nye’s own criteria. Soft power resources identified by Nye are mainly attraction resources. The suggested modification enables including other institutional, organizational, informational and communicational resources required for practicing framing and related mechanisms of agenda setting and persuasion. This is increasingly important for enhancing concept relevancy within the age of information technology as Nye himself has repeatedly asserted.

The modified definition is also more value neutral. Nye asserts soft power neutrality as a descriptive analytical concept rather than a normative one. However, Nye partially violates this neutrality when he indicates that soft power is more normatively positive considering its tools and behaviors when compared with hard power(Nye 2011,81). Soft power can be used for good or bad purposes and can be wielded as power with others or over them(Nye, 88-90). As a descriptive concept, soft power should not hide but rather analyze and evaluate how these integrative and manipulative aspects do exist on levels of intentions or intended goals, mechanisms or means, and outcomes³.

Another suggested definitional addition is including the internal or defensive dimensions of soft power⁴. Positively or externally defined, power means the ability to cause changes. The internal or defensive dimension means the ability to resist changes intended by others indicating autonomy and less vulnerability (Griffiths et al. 2008,258). Analyzing these internal soft power dimensions for both users and targets can extend the analytical capacities of the concept. It

³ This trilogy (of intentions, means, and outcomes) has been implicitly suggested by Nye as possible criteria for evaluating soft power ethically or normatively (Nye 2011,225). Still, these criteria need much more development to identify how to analyze intentions (or their declared indicators), when and how to evaluate outcomes(and consequences that are not intended or declared), and how to include both wielders’ as well as targets’ perceptions and evaluations of these criterional dimensions.

⁴ Internal dimensions of resistance, autonomy, soft power originality (versus soft power intermediation) are highly marginalized in ‘direct’ soft power literature. However, these dimensions can be traced in related studies focusing on resisting dependency and hegemony among other issues (For instances of different applications, see: Stahler-Sholk 2007; Fleming and Spicer 2008;Williams 2008; Guilfoyle 2005). Integrating these contributions within internal dimension of soft power analysis can further develop the concept and provide targets with new “defensive” perspectives.

becomes more inclusive of traditional non material power measurement indicators (related to morale, fighting spirit, legitimacy of the political system and its policies, etc...) ⁵.

In addition, internal dimensions can provide more precise normative evaluation. They spotlight receivers' roles in soft power interactions. Without exaggerations leading to over-blaming the victims, the negative normative effects of soft power are not exclusively under the control of soft power wielder. Compared to other forms of power, soft power depends more on targets' receptions and perceptions. Being attracted to a models of political authoritarianism when they are economically successful has more to do with receiver's perceptions rather than wielder's actions. Failing to realize and resist manipulative soft power strategies reveals lack of "internal" soft power of distinction and resistance. By the same token, internal aspects understood as immunity against change can explain why soft power wielder becomes less sensitive towards targets' demands and interests focusing more on unidirectional indoctrination and tactical changes rather than genuine interactive communication and strategic changes (Mouawad 2010).

Apparently, the suggested definition increases the analytical relevancy of soft power as a more inclusive and value neutral concept in terms of parties, mechanisms, and goals. However, definition alone does not totally solve the debates surrounding the utilization of soft power in the Middle Eastern context.

Middle Eastern context and the Egyptian revolt

In his originative book "Soft power: The means to success in world politics", Nye dictates fifth of his 'soft power wielding' chapter to discuss what he subtitles as "the special case of the Middle East" (Nye 2004, 99-125). Many implications rises from Nye singularizing the case of the Middle East without any similar reference to any other regions. Despite focusing mainly on US status and policies in the region, Nye's analysis provides helpful insights that can develop a broader and more general discussion of soft power relevancy in the region.

⁵ While vulnerability indicators in failed states index can be helpful, additional measurements can revolve around evaluation of existing internal soft resources and state strategies to promote them. This can be measured by levels of citizens' satisfaction and positive evaluation of state's culture, political institutions, foreign policies, economic performance and military in terms of efficiency and success as well as justness and righteousness. Some soft power and nation branding indices have partially comprised internal dimensions mainly focusing on citizens' evaluations of their state's images, statuses and foreign policies. This internal dimension is significant even from the perspective of positively wielding soft power to affect others. Anholt(2007) simply justifies the importance of enlisting self-image as a basic indicator of reputation and attractiveness by stating that: "If you don't believe in your own brand, it's unlikely that anybody else will"(58). Recent studies of 'domestic public diplomacy' highlight similar internal aspects(Fitzpatrick 2012; Hujigh and Byrne 2012).

Soft power theoretical and practical relevancy faces many interconnected challenges within the Middle Eastern context. The relevancy challenges reflect concept debates of normative evaluation, analytical perspectives, effectiveness, usability and measurement⁶. Due to space constraints, only the first three challenges will be discussed with elementary reconsideration of how they have been affected by the Egyptian revolt.

1-Challenges of embedded values

The nature of values embedded within soft power has been a highly debatable issue between concept opponents and adherents in general. This issue requires quite a detailed analysis as it directly affects concept relevancy in general and in Middle East in particular. It constitutes a “normative challenge” hindering adopting the concept in the Middle East. Due to their extended sufferings from different forms of imperialism and colonialism in their traditional and “neo” versions, Middle Eastern countries and peoples seem to be highly cautious and sensitive concerning any threats or practices of direct or indirect external domination.

Generally speaking, three basic trends can be delineated in this regard as follows:

1-On one hand, Many soft power proponents assert its positive relevancy to peace and development on both domestic and world levels. A special reference is usually made to promoting more peaceful and smooth soft power transitions and adoption of soft balancing strategies among different actors (Nye 2011, 89-90; 112-205; Gallaroti 2010; He and Feng 2010; Baptista 2012; Brooks and Wohlforth 2005; Pape 2005; Paul 2005). This helps lessening tendencies of militarization, aggression and unilateralism as well as provides more spheres and resources for cooperation and development. More optimistic estimations can assert potential soft power roles in spreading good governance values and practices all over the world.

2-On the other hand, soft power opponents usually highlight its hegemonic nature given the origins of the concept and how Nye coined it to assert the continuity of American supremacy against pessimistic estimations of American decline (Nye 1990). More generally, some scholars even assert that soft power can embed its own type of coercion described as “rhetorical coercion” or “discursive entrapment”. This coercion is not based on threats of direct material damage but of threats and actual actions intended to distort other parties’ identities and interests in a way depriving them of respect through framing and shaming mechanisms (Mattern 2007,107-119). In

⁶ Usability is quite different than effectiveness as soft power can be considered effective but not usable due to different reasons as difficulties of coordination among variant soft power actors or constraints imposed on communication. Measurement challenges stem from subjective biased assessments by politicians and analysts as well. Measurement accuracy is also handicapped by more objective obstacles such as absence of regular periodical and precisely-tailored soft power surveys and indices that can accurately measure its different dimensions and levels. Both challenges are general but clearly apparent in the ME (Mouawad 2012).

all cases, soft power practices negatively affect any genuine forms of welfare and development. It is a sort of disguised or masked control based on ideational and psychological coercion and manipulation reaching its peak in forms of “mind colonization”(Ngũgĩ 1986). Any mistakenly perceived positive soft power effects are in fact manifestations of dependency and inequality.

3-A third, more balanced, stance partially accepts both trends as revealing the dual nature of soft power as decrypted in the suggested definition in the first part. Soft power, just as any other concept or idea, is open to different forms of dishonest and symbolic utilization regardless of its inherent analytical and normative nature (Eriksson and Norman 2011, 420-423). This depends on both power wielders and targets. As Stephen Lukes clarifies, power of formulating preferences can be practiced rationally (respecting target’s free choices) or irrationally (based on indoctrination and manipulative mechanisms). Relatedly, soft power can be used for both zero-sum games (in a disempowering way as power over others) and for positive sum interactions (in an empowering way as integrative and cooperative power with others) (Nye 2011, 87-90; Lukes 2007,94-97). Besides, target’s internal immunity against manipulative forms of soft power helps determine its nature and evaluation.

Focusing on the Middle Eastern understandings and uses of soft power can help further elaborate these debates and their associated challenges. Although widely used in Arabic newspapers and public discourses, there is a relative scarcity of Arabic academic writings explicitly and directly discussing soft power⁷. Among these writings, some academic studies directly utilize the concept to study specific case studies in quite simplified ways (see for instance: Bakir 2011). Much more limited writings scrutinize the concept itself. Among them, the rejecting critical stance is highly apparent. The title of the article written by the Moroccan scholar Yahya El Yahyaoui (which can be translated as: “Soft power; Or of the new morphing manifestations of authoritarian control”) is an indicative example. It goes without saying that he criticizes soft power as a tool developed specifically to complete the American imperial project by co-opting others or at least reducing their resistance to American values and interests. Consequently, he asserts its nature as a mechanism directed against the genuine and civilizational interests of the targeted peoples aiming to assure their full submission to the preferences of soft

⁷ Searching for the exact Arabic terms of “soft power القوة الناعمة Al qowa al na’ema” or “benign power القوة الرخوة Al qowa al rakhwa” in google search engine returned more than 635 thousand results. However, searches in google scholar and google books (in titles field) returned only 11 and 3 results respectively. The numbers drop more if we exclude the Arabic translations of Nye’s books about “soft power”, “the paradox of American power” and “governance in a globalizing world”. The searching indexes of Cairo university, American university in Cairo, Bibliotheca Alexandrine, Saudi Umm Al Qura university, library of congress, and WorlCat give similar limited results. These results provide significant indicators but they should be cautiously interpreted due to limitedness of electronic indexing of Arabic publications in general (Searches were carried by author in the specified searching indexes on June 15th, 2013).

power actors, reduce their resistance and hence lessen costs of control. Any form of development related to soft power will be manipulated to deepen dependency and guarantee the interests of the dominant or central parties against peripheries (El Yahyaoui 2009).

Still, widening the scope of analysis to include more discourses using soft power reveals a noteworthy tendency. The normative evaluation of soft power seems to be highly impacted by keying out the actors who use it. While external, mainly western, soft power practices stir many reservations, Egyptian academic and journalistic writings mourning the decline of Egyptian traditional soft power seem to be less sensitive to any “manipulative” dimensions and values possibly embedded in the concept. The same judgment goes for their Turkish counterparts celebrating the rise of Turkish soft power (Examples can be found in: Rubin 2010).

Going beyond concept literal wordage to its meanings, soft power as ideational power of framing and attraction can be traced more extensively in modern and historic Arabic literature. Examples of positive forms of soft power practices can be found in traditions of Al-Da’waa (best translated as “call” or “invitation” mainly used with Islamic or religious meanings). The concept itself reveals positive value loads as it is based on persuasive attractive strategies depending on wisdom, fair preaching and decent yet strong argument⁸. Huge volumes of literature have been dedicated to thoroughly study the different dimensions of “Al Da’waa” and its traditions from different perspectives⁹.

Many other writings thoroughly discuss manipulative and negative aspects of soft power usually accompanying wars and invasions. Even the internal or defensive dimensions of soft power (referring to targets’ immunity or vulnerability) are encompassed in such writings. This can be found in Malek Bennabi’s (1905–1973) highly debatable notion of natural and indoctrinated “colonization susceptibility or readiness for being colonized ”(Bennabi 1992).

⁸ These are the basic mechanisms stated in Quraan(Muslim’s Holy book) :”Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching [also translated as : good exemplary counsel] , and argue with them in a way that is better...” (Surah An-Nahl, 125). As nearly all religions seek to co-opt new followers and supporters, ideal forms of ‘soft power-like’ concepts and mechanisms can be traced. This appears clearly in Islamic traditions of Da’waa as in Christian missionaries. This notion is related to what Haynes (2012) calls ‘religious soft power’ that “enables us to move beyond Nye’s original formulation focused primarily on the US government’s (secular) soft power, to begin to think about religious transnational networks as competitive and rival purveyors of religious soft power”(13-14). Haynes refers to transnational religious actors lacking traditional hard power attributes to advance their interests but still able to wield their soft power to disseminate and develop certain ideas, values and norms encouraging affiliates and others to act in certain ways, aiming to cause religious and political change, and consequently impacting international security and order (4-15).

⁹ Using google books to search for the exact term of “Al da’waa الدعوة الإسلامية Al-da’waa “ in title returns about 4680 results with highly relevant results. While some discuss historical dimensions of al da’waa, many refer to more analytical issues from modern perspectives as “mechanisms of dawaa”, “dawaa and diplomacy”, “dawaa and international communication” and so forth.

Centuries before, Ibn Khaldun(1332-1406) analyzed tendencies of *”the vanquished to always seek to imitate their victors in their dress, insignia, belief, and other customs and usages as men are always inclined to attribute perfection to those who have defeated and subjugated them”*(Issawi 1950, 53).

Arab revolts revived many soft power related dimensions from such civilizational perspectives. Ideally, the successes of Islamists led some academics and newly elected Islamic officials to express their aspirations for activating civilizational roles including both defensive and positive mechanisms. Defensive mechanisms of cure and immunity are more related to enhancing internal dimensions of soft power to protect, restore, consolidate and rebuild original civilizational identities . Positive dimensions are more related to activating the world wide civilizational roles of Islamic countries and ‘Ummah’(Muslim nation or global Muslim community) leading ideally to revive “Da’waa” traditions (Mustafa 2011).These civilizational dimensions appear repeatedly in the 2011 electoral program of Muslim Brother’s Freedom and Justice party(FJP). For instance, under the title of “cultural and media leadership”, the first introductory paragraph states that:

“Culture of a society is based on its moral identity, to which the people belong. Islamic culture is the main factor in shaping the human mind and conscience in Egypt, which enables intelligent interaction with the various other cultures, without exclusion or contempt, and without melting into those other cultures”. (FJP election program 2011, 37).

Within the “national security and foreign policy section”, and under the title of “national security protection”, the program stresses protecting “cultural values” among other more ‘hard’ security assets and interests. Afterwards, it states the mission of:

“Contributing to shaping the international cultural framework with our cultural and civilizational heritage and resources, strengthening relations with emerging non-colonial powers, and establishing balanced, mutual relations with traditional and major powers...” (FJP election program 2011,36).

During public discussions of how to maximize the utilization of Egyptian soft power after the revolution, some islamists asserted the necessity of abiding by the notion of “principled” soft power that avoids any unethical means or strategies. This raised internal debate about the priorities of soft power utilization and the dialectical relationship between interests and ethical values (Egypt Foreign Policy Forum 2013).

Rhetoric does not always turn into actions and gaps between role conceptions and performance constitute a highly probable phenomenon. However, such discourses are still indicative of increasing potential prospects for soft power relevancy from the perspectives of

regional states. At the same time, they can imply increasing challenges for external soft powers targeting the region.

2-Challenges of perspectives

Challenges of perspective raise the question of whether soft power is only relevant for outsiders' interests or for regional actors interests as well. Adopting perspectives of specific actor(s) greatly delimits policies and research agendas. For instance, Nye's analysis of Middle Eastern 'specialty' came heavily constrained by the American perspective contrary to the supposedly general nature of analysis. Instead of analyzing challenges of applying soft power in the Middle East in general, Nye introduces his analysis by stating that "the Middle East presents a particular challenge for American soft power and public diplomacy" (Nye 2004,118). Accordingly, he identifies the first source of this region's specialty in being the birth home of terrorists convicted of attacking the U.S. on September 11,2001!. Such narrowly defined perspective affects how Nye lists basic difficulties and challenges confronting American utilization of soft power to promote democracy in the region and protect its interests¹⁰.

More contradictions stem from Nye's assertion that soft power has communicational and interactional nature. This necessitates putting into consideration the perspectives of targeted (or rather partner) actors. Consistently, he calls for revising some US policies in substance and style to make it more considerate of others' priorities and sensitivities. Still, these calls become more cosmetic than substantial due to his later exclusion of possibilities of modifying what he describes as "fundamental American interests [that] cannot and should not be changed"(Nye 2004, 144). In the absence of objective criteria for singling out such interests, soft power becomes increasingly prone to unidirectional wielder-centered tendencies.

Such subjective wielder-centered approaches have direct implications for concept applicability. Identifying 'whose perspective(s)' affects basic dimensions of soft power analysis. The wielder's perspective concentrates more on active projection and utilization of soft power resources compared to the more protective and defensive targets' perspectives. Still, holding ME

¹⁰ According to Nye, some of these difficulties stem from the region itself as having exceptionally low levels of political, economic and social modernization. Other difficulties are caused by inconsistencies in US policies embracing pro-freedom rhetoric while prioritizing stability basically through supporting authoritarian regimes in contradictory ways that discredit American image (Nye 118-124). Nye marginalizes and quite subjectively reframes other basic sources of anti-American sentiments identified in many studies and surveys such as aggressiveness of US policies(he simply criticize US invasion of Iraq as unsuitable use of hard power for good intentions of democracy promotion) and biased unwavering support for Israel(which he mentions as one of American regional interests and a part of U.S. approach to foster regional stability by backing Israel as "one of the rare democracies[in the region]" (Nye 2004, 118-119).

just as a targeted arena for external soft powers greatly suppresses concept relevancy for ME parties limiting it to the internal defensive dimensions. While the consequences of Arab revolts are expected to boost these defensive dimensions from civilizational perspective (as previously mentioned), the Egyptian revolt illustrated increasing possibilities and novel potentials for utilizing the concept on both domestic and external levels either during the initial revolutionary waves (or upsurges) or in the following transitional phases.

At the domestic level, the revolts evoked concept relevancy to the extent of being labeled “soft power revolutions” (Harb 2011). This is understandable considering their principally initial non-violent nature and their high dependence on attracting, framing, networking, and mobilizing mechanisms provided by new media and virtual social networks (Cottle 2011; Khondker 2011; Rane and Salem 2012). Other soft characteristics and resources include the soft power of numbers (materialized in demonstrations safeguarding critical mass size condition), and the power of diverse yet harmonious composition engaging revolutionaries of different ages (soft power of youth), genders (soft power of women), religious and ideological beliefs (soft power of vertical tolerance), educational and socio-economic backgrounds (soft power of horizontal tolerance) (Bellin 2012; Oliver and Marwell 2006). All these revolutionary quantitative and qualitative soft attributes (of number, composition and mechanisms) highly constrained regime’s hard coercive options¹¹.

While revolutionary interactions can be basically framed as revolutionaries’ soft power against the hard power of security coercive apparatuses, many regime-related soft power dimensions have been present as well. On one hand, erosion of old regimes soft power on both external and domestic levels has provided a viable approach for explaining and even predicting the revolts (Raouf 2010; Warner 2012). On the other hand, authoritarian leaders and regimes tried to utilize hard power measures along with their remaining soft power mechanisms. This included using institutional, legal, religious assets as well as more traditional state-owned media channels. In addition, autocratic regimes tried to activate their presence on the internet and other new media platforms via their representatives and supporters (usually labeled “ruling party

¹¹ One of the highly interesting yet neglected internal dimensions stirred by Arab revolts is the roles of bystanders and ‘obliged’ participants who neither directly supported the regime nor the revolutionaries. Still, some of them were obliged to fill vacuums caused by state of turmoil and (temporary) absence of governmental security and organizational roles. This opened the space for different non-official yet highly legitimate and binding roles ranging from voluntary traffic control to local neighborhood guardianship and security networks. Such experiences raise questions about informal sources of soft power and obedience as well as their implications for state and society soft power in general. For instance, while guardianship networks consolidated social capital and cooperation among neighbors all over the country, they simultaneously reflected deep inherent divides and cleavages among social and economic classes as well as eroded citizens’ trust in the government and state apparatuses in general. Such contradictory implications and consequences require a more detailed analysis as internal dimensions of soft power.

virtual or internet militias”). The old regimes’ aims were to protect their own soft stock and shame revolutionaries via negative framing. The ‘hard regime’ versus ‘soft revolutionary’ wars have been accompanied by fierce symbolic wars during revolutionary upsurges as well as the following transitional periods. The continuous symbolic confrontations over media, images, graffiti, mobilization abilities are all indicative examples in this regard. On a more general level, a theoretical question can be raised of why soft power revolutions succeeded in some cases while they faced violent suppression turning them in hard bloody revolutions in other cases or phases?

The rise of islamist parties during the transitional period call attention to other understudied aspects of soft power interactions such as **“religious soft power”**. As Haynes(2012) and Rubin(2010) point out, religion can constitute a significant form of soft power. The growing roles of diverse Arab islamist parties after revolts necessitate more detailed analysis of religion and religious actors’ soft powers and how they can be utilized for identification and mobilization either serving purposes of enmity and conflict or peace and development on both domestic and international levels (Gopin 2002; Haynes 2007; Saleh 2012).

At the external level, Arab revolts have witnessed increasing soft roles of regional as well as international actors with future potentials for growth. The rising soft roles of Turkey (as an attractive reform model) and Qatar (as a highly capable framing actor) clearly illustrated various regional soft mechanisms. These roles asserted the expandability of soft power practices beyond great powers to include middle powers and small states respectively.

Such expansion is more enhanced by the demonstrative effects of the revolutionary states and their tendencies to promote soft power and public diplomacy activities in their foreign relations. This has been apparent in Egypt where the post 25th January phase witnessed calls for reviving Egyptian soft power as an iconic model of peaceful revolution and reform. This was manifested by a series of public envoys visits. Besides having the young revolutionary representatives invited to many countries and organization in what can be considered as chances for “mutual public diplomacy” at best, many “Egyptian public diplomacy envoys and missions” have been organized in the first months of the transitional period after toppling Mubarak. The visits and declared objectives of these missions were highly ambitious and diverse as seen in their visits to Iran (to normalize mutual relations and boost cooperation), African countries of Ethiopia, Uganda, and Sudan (focusing mainly on deescalating tensions over Nile’s water security issues), and then American and European capitals (with the declared goal of downsizing Egyptian debts). Similar envoys visited Gaza to reassert Egyptian support for the Palestinian cause. Such initiatives have been generally welcomed by officials, political parties, and Academics as helping restore Egyptian status. However, some analysts warned against their lack of institutionalization and over-reliance on volunteerism and enthusiasm. Such features coupled with current Egyptian hard power limitations can lead to a haphazard , less genuinely effective and short lived propaganda-like public diplomacy rather than a more viable one (Abutalib 2011, Hanafi 2011, Al-Zayatti 2011). Similar mixed evaluations accompanied the discussion of Egyptian soft power alternatives soon after Ethiopian declaration of speeding up its building of Grand Renaissance Dam (Warner et al. 2013). Nevertheless, this does not defy the increasing presence of soft power on the revolutionary states’ foreign policy agendas.

At the international level, initial analysis can point out larger room and potentials for USA , EU and other international and regional actors to wield their soft and normative powers as issues of democratization and reform become more prioritized during transitional periods. However, such deductions should be reconsidered cautiously as normative and effectiveness challenges add more constraints and complexities. Relatedly, EU and USA can face extra challenges because of having their credibility and images tainted due to their long-standing relationships with Arab autocratic rulers. Even during the revolutionary moments, these parties adopted highly debatable stances reflecting fluctuating balancing acts between values and interests (Behr 2012; Hollis 2012; Morey et al. 2012).

To conclude, Arab revolts have expanded the list of potential soft power actors beyond ‘soft power super powers’(borrowing the idiom of McConnell and Watanabe(2008)). Besides traditional and new regional soft powers, intermestic and even domestic actors have asserted their credibility as capable soft actors. This highly demonstrates and extends concept practical relevancy as well as broaden its research agenda and analytical relevancy.

3-Challenges of effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which soft power practices can attain their objectives in specific contexts. Challenges of values and perspectives do raise the possibilities of making soft power exclusively relevant for super and major powers against the region and its peoples. However, debating soft power effectiveness in the Middle East poses more general challenge threatening concept relevancy for all parties. If soft power is considered ineffective or impossible to manage in a specific context, then it becomes of very limited relevancy for both practical and analytical purposes.

While Nye does not clearly identify a list of soft power effectiveness determinants, many basic factors can be deducted from his and other scholars’ contributions. Besides Actors’ resources, visions and skills (that have been indirectly analyzed within value and perspective challenges), there are other determinants focusing more on context and recipients’ attributes. Three of these determinants can be highlighted as follows¹² :

¹² Depending on communication and marketing theories, Kroeig and others suggest three necessary effectiveness determinants or conditions: communication availability to the intended targets in a functioning marketplace of ideas, actor’s skills and abilities to change targets’ attitudes on specified political issues, and finally targets’ ability to affect decision making process so that new attitudes can influence political outcomes (Kroeig et al. 2010) . Simple rephrasing of these determinants can nullify Nye’s criticism of exclusively focusing on the two step model of influencing publics then elites and neglecting possibilities of direct soft influence over elites (high soft power) (Nye 2011,97). A more comprehensive list of determinants can include: actor- related determinants (availability of soft and hard resources backing them, conversion vision and skills, foreign policy independence and model genuineness, low involvement in hard coercive practices), recipient-related factors (ability to affect political outcomes), context and issue related factors (milieu and long-term issues as more suitable than possession and urgent issues, cultural proximity, lower levels of large scale protracted coercive interactions, fewer soft power competitors and

A-Cultural Proximity:

Sharing similar or highly common and proximate cultures (among wielders and receivers) helps consolidate soft power effectiveness. Although Nye rejects the notion of “unbridgeable cultural divides”, he acknowledges that cultural differences and disagreements complicate soft power practice and restrain its general effectiveness (Nye 2011, 84-85). Cultural proximity directly affects two out of the three conditions deemed necessary by Kroenig and others for effective state use of soft power (Kroenig et al. 2010, 412-417). Cultural barriers negatively affect communications with the intended targets as well as the ability to persuade them to change their attitudes regarding the specified issues.

The initial consideration of this determinant implies that all external actors are impeded by cultural hinders in their Middle Eastern soft power pursuit. As almost all regional actors (except for Israel) share many cultural similarities, they are in a more favorable position for mutually exerting soft power. Regional actors still differ in degrees of cultural proximity because of internal diversities within the region. Iran and Turkey (as well as the Kurds) apparently face more challenges due to language barriers. Even among the Arab countries, the distinctiveness of some subcultural features can raise communicational challenges.

However, the limiting effects of cultural divides are not totally inescapable. Cultural proximity acts more as a facilitating factor rather than a necessary pre-requisite. Nye implicitly suggests at least three mechanisms for overcoming these limitations via universal values, cultural intermediates and assimilated elites:

- The first mechanism utilizes the complex multilayered nature of culture. While some cultural aspects are national or even subnational, there are common ‘universal’ aspects that can be always utilized by soft power users. These universal aspects are quite increasing due to the patterning effects of globalization and informational revolution.
- The second mechanism depends on practicing soft power indirectly via a third party helping with ‘cultural intermediation’ (Nye 2011, 84-85). This can partially explain the importance of Turkish role as a reform model for Muslim countries as it partially acts as a cultural intermediate for the EU and U.S.A. By the same token, Syria had played a significant role as a cultural (or more specifically: linguistic) intermediate for Turkey in the Arab region through dubbing Turkish soap operas.
- The two previously mentioned mechanisms partially utilize and produce increasing cultural assimilation. However, a more direct assimilation mechanism can engage immigrants and foreignly educated elites as representatives or spokesmen for soft power wielder (Nye 2004, 122).

adversaries). Due to space limits, only three basic determinants are analyzed given that they are highly related to Nye’s analysis of Middle Eastern ‘specialty’ from (American) soft power perspective.

Without denying their importance, these mechanisms do not entirely nullify the constraining effects of cultural differences. Hence, the cultural challenge for soft power relevancy keeps its noteworthiness. An initial assessment of Arab revolutions can indicate signs of increasing embracement of global values, institutions and innovations bringing down myths of Arab and Islamic negative cultural ‘exceptionalism’. Such global values of freedom, justice, equality and development could have created common backgrounds enabling Egypt , and other Arab countries, to participate more actively in soft power interactions. Some signs of utilizing such values appeared during the visits of Egyptian public envoys to African countries, where slogans of mutual cooperation for development were raised.

However, the awakening of Islamic religious identities and increasing cultural polarization that associated Arab spring tend to complicate rather than facilitate soft power practice. As mentioned before, revolutions and the rise of political Islamic parties led to increasing assertions on cultural uniqueness and rejecting what is perceived as ‘threatening’ influences of western cultures. Many signals can be drawn from over protective tendencies to increase state control over the internet and mass media in Egypt and Tunisia. The current declared purposes are quite limited but potential future expansions of such ‘protective’ measures can pose great challenges on availability of communication channels. Another marginal yet warning signal was raised by demands of an Egyptian Salafi member of parliamentary educational committee to limit English teaching programs and review American English language assistance agreements to preserve Egyptian national identity¹³. While some of these tendencies seem marginal and lack substantial number of supporters, other related trends can be highly debatable and dividing.

An indicative example of such cultural and ideological barriers appeared during Turkish PM Erdogan’s visit to Egypt. While he was highly welcomed and celebrated as representing a successful anti-secular Islamic model, he was highly criticized after his embracement of the secular nature of the Turkish experience. The external western actors are expected to face relatively more challenges especially when the “westernized” aspects of regional cultural mediators and fellow Muslim models as Turkey stir debates imposing the need to ‘readjust’ their models to fit Islamists’ Arab spring (Erdem 2012).

¹³ More interestingly, the response of the head of the parliamentary education committee (Dr. Shabaan Abd El-Aleem, also a salafi from al nouri party) tried to defend such assistance programs and agreement by asserting that they focus on transferring “English skills not culture or literature”. For a video of the parliamentary incident, see:

Mohammed Al Messeri, “PM Mohammed Al Kordy Rejects English Education”, *Youtube web*, uploaded on Feb 27, 2012, retrieved November 1, 2012, from: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKtiE9le7H0 (in Arabic).

Two basic strategies can be sought within such context:

- The first strategy targets specific strategic elites or audiences either because of their weight in decision making process or for having higher commonalities with them. In this regard, ideological proximity among increasingly Islamic elites in the region can facilitate learning and diffusion processes and hence soft power interactions. Still, this strategy is challenged by internal variations among these elites as well as strong opposition of non islamists. In addition, it poses bigger challenges for external non islamist actors seeking influence.

- The second strategy is a “catch all strategy” where actor needs to have multifaceted images to convince highly polarized audiences. For instance, Turkey can benefit from Egyptian Islamists viewing JDP experience as a step by step victory of Turkish Islamists against (deep) state secular apparatus. Additional benefits can stem from non islamist Egyptian parties asserting different image of Turkish secular framework and institutions adjusting the tendencies of Islamic forces towards more openness and tolerance. Still, this strategy has its risks of losing credibility and decreasing soft power efficiency. The many and contradictory images of the Turkish model by different political forces in Egypt can hinder its actual transferability due to model ambiguity.

The limitations of these two strategies or scenarios reveal increasing cultural and ideological challenges facing soft power in the region. Escalating polarization and even fragmentation of elitist and public attitudes highly sophisticate identifying and efficiently communicating “strategic publics” that can help soft power actors achieve their goals and interests (Fitzpatrick 2012).

B- Nature of issues:

According to Nye, soft power is supposedly more suitable for milieu goals than specific possession goals. Milieu goals consist of broader and less tangible goals that usually aim to change and re-engineer structural and contextual conditions over a relatively long period of time, such as goals of promoting free markets, democracy and human rights. On the other hand, possession goals are more specific and usually have tangible objectives as territory control, access to resources, trade agreements, etc. Soft power is less relevant to such possession issues though it can help create a more enabling environment for achieving them on the long-run(Nye 2011,83-84).

This categorization raises many questions about soft power effectiveness in the ME where the dominant issues have been largely and traditionally of a hard conflictual nature. The Arab Israeli conflict, the invasion of Iraq and its consequences, the disputes over Iranian nuclear program are all examples of highly securitized ‘hard’ issues. Applying Nye’s criterion, soft power will only have limited complementary relevancy in the majority of regional issues.

Arab revolts have created a more favorable atmosphere by turning the ME into a more suitable domain for soft power practices due to the increasing prominence of democratization and reform issues. This applies to extra-regional and regional actors as well as revolutionary states and their domestic parties who seek soft mechanisms to ‘export’ their revolutions.

While the aforementioned analysis partially asserts soft power regional relevancy within Nye’s limiting criterion, reconsidering Nye’s categorization itself can broaden soft power regional agenda. Regional interactions as well as insights of the Egyptian revolt help provide two basic reservations on Nye’s issue criterion:

The first reservation calls for revising Nye’s ‘generality’ and “long term” assumptions. These two features are more related to attraction mechanisms. They are less limiting with regard to media framing mechanisms. Turkish attractive model power seemed highly ineffective for “soft intervention” amid the upheavals of revolutionary interactions in Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. In comparison, the framing soft power of Qatar was more visible, usable and intensifiable. Connectedly, framing powers backed by hard military, economic and institutional resources are expected to surmount time and domain limitations if applied intensively. This is related to what some scholars describe as “tacit mediation” where fears of mediator’s coercive hard involvement guarantee his interests and boost his soft or even non- intervention strategies (Ulacher 2007). Again, this can partially explain the significance of both EU’s and US soft and tacit interventions highly apparent during the last days of the Egyptian revolution.

The second reservation has more to do with the “obligatory” uses of soft power. Nye’s categorization ideally assumes decision makers having multiple choices and options for utilizing either soft or hard mechanisms. However, states can find themselves more obliged to depend more on using (or even overusing) soft power in obviously urgent issues threatening vital concrete interests. These obligations can stem from the nature of the issue itself (imposing constraints on use of hard power as in water issues) or lacking suitable hard capabilities (the case of most revolutionary states especially after revolutions) or both¹⁴. This can partially explain the surge of formal and informal public diplomacy initiatives carried out by Egyptian officials, political parties, non- governmental organizations, public figures and activists shortly after the revolution.

¹⁴ The suggested reservations can solve the apparent contradiction between Nye’s limits on soft power related issues and other scholars’ expansion of soft power domain to include vital strategic interest and interactions such as water security issues(Zeitoun et al. 2011) .

While growing adoption of soft power rhetoric¹⁵ and increasing public diplomacy activities seem to highlight soft power importance and relevancy, the actual effectiveness of soft mechanisms is still to be evaluated.

C- Power diffusion and public participation:

Nye asserts that the more democratic the recipient is, the more costly soft power marginalization becomes. Though being highly criticized as overstating the effects of public opinion on decision makers especially in foreign policy realms, Nye's analysis of public opinion effects tends to be highly flexible and pragmatic rather than idealistic. He does not suppose direct public opinion role in formulating foreign policies but rather indicates its indirect role in creating enabling or disabling environments that affect elites and policy makers(Nye 2011,94-96)¹⁶.

If 'the recipient's democratic nature' is taken literally as a necessary precondition for soft power effectiveness, then concept applicability in the mostly undemocratic ME drops significantly except for one or two countries. Even the effects of Arab revolts cannot be overstressed in this regard as the revolutionary states still have complicated transitional processes to pass without necessarily clear-cut predefined democratic outcomes. Contrary to initial optimistic estimations and expectations, many analyses have turned to (re-)adopt more pessimistic, or at least cautious, stances concerning the future of revolutionary regimes or systems. These negative evaluations were caused by complexities created by political roles of the military and militias coupled with the rise of Islamists parties some of which openly adopt anti-democratic discourses (Bellin 2012, 139-144; Sarquís 2012; Khashan 2012, Salami and Pearson 2012). Nye's discussion of ME specialty in 2004 has indicated similar risks embedded in adopting mere electoral notions of democracy that will most likely lead to an only one time elections bringing Islamists to assume authority (Nye 2004, 118-120).

Do these undemocratic characteristics and challenges leave soft power totally irrelevant in the ME? Not necessarily. Nye's and others analyses help derive at least two possible reasons for maintaining concept ME relevancy especially after the Arab revolts:

¹⁵ For instance, the foreign policy 'program' of Egyptian "El-Nour" party (one of the most prominent salafi parties that came second in the parliamentary elections after Muslim Brother's FJP) criticizes Mubarak's regime for neglecting public diplomacy and agitating feelings of hatred and enmity against peoples of other countries within diversion strategies. Accordingly, the program calls for promoting communication and cooperation with other peoples and citizens on the non-governmental level as a new mission exceeding traditional notions of foreign policy("Al Nour" Party program 2011).

¹⁶ Nye usually refers to the case of US failure during Iraqi war preparations to get Turkish parliament's approval for deploying American forces on the Turkish territory. Such failure was basically due to underestimation of the limiting effects of Turkish public protests especially on a the democratically elected parliament

First, The “democratic nature” condition largely applies on “low soft power” or what Nye calls “indirect effects model” in which wielder affects strategic publics that can in turn limit or enable policy makers and elites. This condition is less applicable, and might even turn counterproductive, in “high” soft power practices that directly tries to utilize soft power resources and mechanisms to co-opt targeted leaders and decision makers (Nye 2011, 94-97). Such mechanisms can range from appealing and attracting mechanisms to framing and agenda setting tacitly backed by coercive hard measures. Success of such direct soft power practices becomes more probable when decision making processes and structures are highly centralized and when public pressures are limited or manageable. These conditions boost direct soft power relevancy in the Middle East more than any other region because of its democratic deficit. Even after Arab revolts, this assessment largely applies due to persistence of authoritarian regimes outside the Arab revolts zone as well as the continuity of many authoritarian and hierarchical features in the neo-regimes of revolutionary states themselves.

The second reservation is the fact that publics can still constitute a disabling environment limiting decision makers’ options even in authoritarian regimes. A broader reconsideration of Nye’s condition requires less focus on ‘system democratic level’ and more concentration on ‘public mobilization abilities’. Though the democratic outcomes of Arab revolts are highly contested, it is less debatable that they manifested an unprecedented levels of social mobilization (Bellin 2012,135-136). This mobilization greatly strengthens the limiting and enabling effects of street politics. But as street politics in revolutionary states turn wider and more intensifiable in their genuine and utilized roles, they become highly complex and fluctuating. These revolutionary complexities make identifying targeted “strategic publics” and wielding soft power more difficult yet not impossible¹⁷.

Conclusion

Analysis of soft power relevancy and its challenges in the Middle East raises both regional case-specific implications as well as general theoretical ones. Regionally, optimistic elementary analysis inspired by the apparent “soft” nature of the Egyptian revolution can imply increasing

¹⁷ For instance, the divides among different Islamist and civil blocs on both elitist and street politics levels in Egypt (as well as Tunisia) can be handled through a multi-dimensional approach utilizing different soft power mechanisms. Direct high or elitist soft power mechanisms can be used to affect Muslim Brother’s leaders and utilize their highly centralized mobilization ability. The Salafi leaders and supporters can be affected indirectly through their ideational and material connections with Muslim Brothers and Saudi Arabia (the latter acting as a cultural religious intermediate in this context). This mixture of high, low and proxy soft power can be enhanced by balanced framing and attraction mechanisms to keep the civil(non-islamist) parties within the soft influence scope without openly agitating Islamist supporters. Many of these dimensions can be discerned in US soft approach in handling many crises that erupted in Egypt after the 25th January revolution.

relevancy of soft power in its integrative forms. Accordingly, prospects of enhancing peaceful and cooperative soft power interactions can be expected on domestic, regional, and international levels. Still, it might be too early to evaluate soft power relevancy within current state of flux and turmoil. Much will depend on the duration and outcomes of transitional periods, levels of Islamic movements' electoral and governmental successes, as well as regional developments especially with regard to the Arab Israeli conflict and the crisis of the Iranian nuclear program. Detailed analysis of the possible effects of these factors (and many others) is beyond the scope of this paper. However, an initial general assessment can signal elevating soft power relevancy associated with rising challenges due to increasing qualitative and quantitative complexities of soft power issues, actors, networks and consequently interactions.

On the more abstract theoretical level, relevancy debates highlight the necessities of revising soft power as an open expandable analytical and policy relevant concept. Analysis diagnosed the problems of adding hard economic and military resources and mechanisms as horizontal expansions leads the concept to stretch more thin and less relevant. Alternatively, the paper calls for vertical expansions in terms of concept depth. More generally, the paper indicates at least three basic paths in this regard:

The first is calling for a more open acknowledgement of the dual nature of soft power and a better inclusion of manipulative and integrative strategies and mechanisms. Relatedly, soft power definition and analysis should not over-concentrate on attraction resources and more openly include framing resources.

The second is considering Middle Eastern' contributions on "Al- Dawaa" traditions and hegemony resistance from civilizational perspectives. This can enrich discussions and debates of soft power relevancy.

The third path is reckoning the internal and domestic dimensions of soft power analysis. Soft power by definition is of an intermestic nature as apparent in its resources, actors, and usability for internal legitimacy purposes. Additional internal dimensions incorporate the defensive or protective facets of soft power reflecting self-confidence, immunity and invulnerability against others' manipulative soft strategies. The increasing roles of 'intermestic' non- governmental actors and even ordinary citizens within public and "peer-to-peer" diplomacies spot more lights on additional internal soft power dimensions (la Porte 2012; Attias 2012).

Recent developments in the Middle East highlight other internal expansion possibilities. As the borders between internal and external domains are getting more blurry, soft power becomes more applicable on domestic interactions especially those involving external dimensions or 'intermestic' actors. This requires further analysis of potentials for integrating soft power in comparative politics and how it can add new dimensions to related concepts such as legitimacy and social capital.

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