

Software-based Prescriptions of a Novel Global Order for the Foreign Policy of the I.R.I in the Cultural Iran Region

Javad Haghgoo*,

DOR:

Associate Professor Islamic knowledge and Thought Faculty University of Tehran, Tehran, IRAN.

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Abstract

Changes in the structure of the global single-polar system and the transition towards a multi-polar order highlight the new norms of the global order. It is clear that the dominance of the new normative order and the elements of the new structural meaning are primarily considering the decline of US hegemony and its redistribution among new poles. These conditions create more space for the expression of competing cultural ideologies. In such a space, there are ample opportunities for culturally and civilizational rich actors like Iran to emerge. The importance of this issue becomes more apparent when we realize that key players in the new structure, such as China, lack the high capacity to confront Western cultural-hegemonic dominance regarding the absence of modern software. In an era where the main characteristic is "Power Dispersion," some of the material shortcomings of the Islamic Republic of Iran can be remedied to play an effective role in the new era of cultural power vacuum, if attention is paid to its software capacities. Therefore, the main question of this research is formed by examining what software-based priorities for the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the cultural Iran region suggest. In response to this question, with a descriptive-analytical approach by gathering a library of data, highlighting the coordinates of the new global order, and examining the coordinates of the cultural Iran region. The main recommendations of this new situation for the foreign policy of I.R.I in the cultural Iran region are explored. The results indicated that the framework of this software capacity can be explained in three dimensions: culture, values, and foreign policy. This capacity has gained a particular significance in connection with the concept of the Islamic Revolution and the opportunities it has created.

Keywords: Islamic Revolution of Iran, Software-based Recommendations, Novel Global Order, Power Dispersion, Soft Power, Foreign Policy of I.R.I, Cultural Iran Region.

*. Corresponding Author: jhaghgoo@ut.ac.ir

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Introduction

The world is undergoing profound changes today, a transformation that everyone believes in. These conditions prioritize new approaches to shaping the foreign policies of countries and realizing national interests. In such a space, revisiting the software and hardware capacities of countries in the field of foreign policy is fundamental. There is no doubt that ongoing transformations necessitate a redefinition of these capacities more than ever. A cultural-civilizational perspective on Iran suggests that the new era, which according to many international relations scholars will have a multi-polar and multi-axis nature, will bring significant capacities in the realm of soft foreign policy for our country. This issue is particularly evident when focusing on the geography of the cultural Iran region.

The borders of Iran today only encompass the country of Iran as an independent political unit, while these borders were formed solely based on political treaties and cannot encompass the cultural Iran region as a broader set than political Iran. A historical-sociological perspective on many surrounding countries indicates that a significant part of these regions, especially those considered to be the continuation of Iranian border tribes, are placed under an independent unit called cultural Iran, which has specific coordinates, both historically and sociologically. Unfortunately, this issue has often been overlooked by foreign policy makers. A review of the different eras of the foreign policy of I.R.I shows that the predominant attitude towards these regions has been more about security than cultural. This neglect has caused significant damage to the country. The post-Soviet era should be considered one of the prominent examples of "Missed Era." An era that, due to the power vacuum created in significant parts of the cultural region of Iran missed out on many opportunities considering the lack of a comprehensive plan. Opportunities, if seized that could have prevented crises such as what is visible today in the northwestern regions of the country, within the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Considering the recurrence of this power vacuum, which has been evident with the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan, it is essential to redefine the coordinates of the new conditions and revisit the foreign policy capacities of the I.R.I in the cultural Iran region.

Given the importance of this issue, the present study aims to investigate the transition from a unipolar Western-centric system to a multi-polar, multi-centric system in the international system, drawing on Joseph Nye's teachings on soft power and the software requirements of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the transitional period in the cultural Iran region. Accordingly, the main question of this article

is to examine the priorities for the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the cultural Iran region from the perspective of soft power components.

Before answering this question, a look at the latest sources related to this discussion was taken. This review was conducted from the perspective of three main axes: "The Cultural Iran Region," "The Novel Global Order," and "The Foreign Policy of I.R.I." After examining the works such as "Cultural Iran and Civilizational Convergence in Central Asia and the Caucasus" by Ahmad Rashidi and others (2022 AD/1401 SH), "Para diplomatic Regionalism with an Emphasis on Cultural Iran" by Ahmad Saei (2020 AD/1399 SH), "The Theory of Persian Civilization or Cultural Iran" by Ali Mohammadi (2013 AD/1392 SH), and "Explaining the Indigenous and Regional Approach of Cultural Iran in the Process of Globalization" by Abbas Ahmadi (2012 AD/1391 SH), it was found that regarding the lack of attention to two key topics, the new global order and structural changes in the international system leading to the entry into a multi-polar, multi-centric system and the use of Joseph Nye's teachings on soft power and its resources, this article is innovative and has introduced a new discussion.

Accordingly, by utilizing library research, the necessary information was gathered, and then, using a descriptive-analytical method and drawing on Joseph Nye's teachings on soft power, particularly his emphasis on the three components/aspects of "Culture- Beauty," "Fundamental Values- Glory," and "Foreign Policy- Benevolence" as the three main sources/dimensions of soft power, an effort was made to address the foreign policy requirements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the cultural Iran region according to the components of soft power, considering the coordinates of the new global structure.

1.The International System Structure in the Struggle of Unipolar Western-centric and Multi-Polar Multi-centric¹

Many international relations experts believe that with Russia's military intervention in Ukraine in 2022, a change in the international system structure is inevitable. Henry Kissinger referred to this in his book "Diplomacy" in 1994, stating that the cost of US policies against Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union in Ukraine would be paid

1. The multipolar and multiplex system pertains to a state wherein the emergence of newfound powers has led to a shift away from the US-centric and West-centric nature of international relations. Various perspectives regarding the coordinates of this new era have been expounded by scholars of international relations, emphasizing predominantly that the new era will encompass five major poles, which will not be confined solely to Western states.

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(Kissinger, 1994: 827). These US policies were also challenged by Angela Merkel at the Bucharest Summit in 2008, and the German government repeatedly expressed its opposition to Ukraine and Georgia's membership in NATO as a tension-creating issue with Russia (Deutsche Welle, 2022).

Russia attacked on Georgia in 2008, an action that was finalized by the pressure of the United States and France. Russia's support for Georgia's separatists in 2008 was the first military attack by the Russian army after the fall of the Soviet Union, and Robert Keagan referred to this attack as a return to history. European countries, the United States, and their affiliated institutions were unable to respond to Russia's actions (Keagan, 2008). This lack of response from the West and the United States led to a repetition of Russia's policies in 2014 and its attack on Crimea, which many consider as a prelude to Russia's 2022 attack on Ukraine.

The importance of these actions is such that many consider it the beginning of the process of transitioning to a multi-polar system (Ashford, 2022). However, it should not be overlooked that Moscow's policies have emphasized the importance of the NATO alliance and Europe's need for the security umbrella of the United States (NATO and the European Union Show Unity and Resolve in Brussels, 2022), which has led to an increase in militarism in Europe and strengthened the likelihood of a bipolar international system. This has been pursued with seriousness by the United States in the Trump and Biden administrations through sanctions against China.

According to some evidence, Western governments and the United States have realized that the best way to maintain their position in the international system is to establish a bipolar structure in light of the changes that have occurred in the international system. On the other hand, some researchers propose approaches such as regional security clusters to create a multi-polar international system. This theory focuses on the divided members limited to specific regional situations who take the necessary measures to ensure their own security within their sphere of influence. It should be noted that this theory differs from the regionalism approach, which only considers the geographical region.

Regardless of the different arguments presented by each of these two approaches, it should be noted that given the current situation, a sort of competition for dominance in a bipolar or multipolar system is underway. The discussions in this article are raised in the context of a theoretical perspective in a transitional state between the old and new order, which in a way reflects a kind of tension between the parties involved. Despite the fact that we are still in a period of transition and uncertainty, the power

vacuum in many regions, especially in the cultural Iran region, is an inevitable matter that has been evident for a long time.

2. Foreign Policy Priorities According to the Soft Power Components

Power has always been the most important tool for achieving the goals of statesmen. In other words, power is the ability and capacity to accomplish tasks (Afzali et al. 2018 AD/1397 SH: 122; Galbraith, 1994 AD/1371 SH: 8). Accordingly, power can be seen as an actor's ability to use resources and capabilities to influence international events in their favor (Afzali et al. 1397: 138). Traditionally, international relations theory has predominantly focused on the hard power dimension, which has also extended to the field of foreign policy theory. Although this should not be interpreted to mean that the other aspect of power, namely soft power, has been neglected by international relations scholars, the reality is that this dimension of power has often been subsumed under the same meaning as "Hard Power" which is of interest to realists, and less often referred to as an independent and distinct variable.

As a concept widely accepted among international relations scholars, the notion of soft power was first introduced by Joseph Nye, an American theorist, in the Atlantic magazine.² He defined soft power for the first time as the "Ability to obtain what we want through attraction, rather than coercion." In 2001, Nye revisited the issue of soft power in his book "The Paradox of American Power."³

Nye proposed a tripartite classification of power, dividing it into military, economic, and soft power. According to Nye, while military and economic power both has a hard nature, soft power is different in that it relies on the ability to shape the preferences of others. Nye precisely emphasizes that this attractiveness is what leads to influence and compliance of others (Saeidi and Moqaddamfar, 2015 AD/1393 SH: 109; Nye, 2007: 90; Lukes, 2007: 163).

Soft power is conceptually defined in contrast to other forms of power. In fact, the fundamental essence of power, aside from its various aspects, refers to the use of resources to achieve desired results through appropriate strategies. Joseph Nye emphasizes distinctive features of soft power such as the ability to shape the interests of others, the capacity to set priorities, and the power of attraction. While Nye labels soft power as the "Second Face of Power," he understands it in relation to hard power. In Nye's view, hard power can sometimes serve as a means of attraction,

2. Joseph Samuel Nye, "The Misleading Metaphor of Decline", *Atlantic*, March 1990.

3. Joseph Samuel Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*, Oxford University Press, 2003.

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which is the main focus of soft power. For example, "Command Power" and "Myths of Invincibility" alongside a "Strong and Efficient Economy" can be significant sources of attractiveness in the eyes and minds of the public (Nye, 1990: 15-17).

Nye identifies three factors as the main sources of soft power. According to him, culture, values, and foreign policy are the three main sources of a country's soft power. However, Nye does not use any of these three components absolutely and outlines conditions for their effectiveness. In his view, culture is considered a source of soft power if it is attractive to others, values are considered as such if they receive attention both domestically and internationally, and foreign policy is considered a source of soft power if it appears legitimate, influential, and morally authoritative (Nye, 2007: 164; Nye, 2010: 4).

According to Nye, soft power influences the minds and public opinions of actors in a way that changes their priorities and preferences in favor of the desired outcomes of the competing actor. Therefore, soft power sources are intangible and imperceptible. Unlike hard power sources, which are based on coercive behavior, soft power sources govern persuasive behavior (Nye, 1389: 46).

On the other hand, soft power is of the nature of persuasion and attraction. Ultimately, soft power strives for "Similarity and Cooperation." Soft power seeks to create a kind of similarity that, when achieved, results in cooperation to achieve desired outcomes. Nye believes that soft power can lead to the production of power in different forms. The three aspects of "Beauty," "Glory," and "Benevolence" are among the most common forms of this power (Vuving, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 136-140).

However, Nye's emphasis on the persuasive nature of soft power does not mean that there is no form of coercion in its exercise. According to many postmodern thinkers, including Michel Foucault, there is ultimately a form of indirect coercion behind the scenes of soft power.

3. The Realm of Cultural Iran Region

The Iranian nation is one of the few ancient nations that has never experienced an identity crisis and has always been part of a larger culture. Throughout ancient times, Iran extended beyond the Euphrates, the Arabian Peninsula, the Near East, and regions of Africa and Europe. The Iranian civilization encompasses a vast geographical area, stretching from within China to Kashmir and the Pamir Plateau, reaching to present-day Asia, including countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. Iran's current boundaries extend from the Indian Ocean, the Sea of Oman, and the

Persian Gulf to the coastal areas on both sides, reaching from the Caucasus to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

In other words, the Iranian cultural and ethnic influence is not limited to the current geographical borders of Iran or its immediate vicinity, as Iranian cultural elements are present in a much broader area. It is important to note that Iranian culture, as a cohesive unit, has not only always had its own unique cultural and historical institutions but has also been influential in other cultures over the centuries (Ashraf, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 136-137).

Cultural Iran has always faced two sets of obstacles as barriers to the reconstruction of the Iranian civilization: external factors and internal factors. In examining external factors, particular attention should be paid to the role of England and the Soviet Union in weakening the Iranian civilization (Pahlavan, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 117).

Additionally, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has shown its incompatibility with this cultural sphere (ibid, 349). Alongside the colonial actions of major powers, attention should also be focused on anti-civilization movements outside the borders of Iran.

Some intellectual spectrums make every effort to promote the negation of the existence of a common regional civilization in a unique way within the Iranian cultural sphere. Outside the borders of Iran, examples include Pan-Turkism, Pashtunism, Pan-Uzbekism (ibid, 31), Pan-Arabism, Pan-Kurdism, and extremist religious movements. Despite all these threats and risks, it should be noted that the essence of a nation lies in the commonalities among its individuals. In humans, there is something higher than language, and that is willpower. A nation, as a result of deep historical complexity, takes shape as a spiritual family. A nation is not a specific group defined by geographical boundaries; rather, it is more related to the spirit than the body. The spirit of each nation must be sought in its culture (Khubruy-e Pak, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 174-175).

Herder is the first person that considers belonging to society as a basic need for humanity. When he uses the term "National" or "National Spirit," he means national culture (Berlin, 2002 AD/1371 SH: 122). In simple terms, cultural Iran is an area those where Iranian culture is present, and these areas cannot be limited to political borders.

Therefore, the principles of the foreign policy of I.R.I should not be indifferent to this fundamental issue. This issue becomes more important when we know that many nations surrounding our country, which in some way fall under the cultural Iran region, are considered as the descendants of Iranian border tribes. This situation can be seen as both a threat and an opportunity.

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Simultaneously with major political events such as the ongoing changes in the international system, many of Iran's soft power capacities, including the development of cultural diplomacy with important examples such as the Arbaeen pilgrimage, Nowruz, and more, are more capable of becoming active than ever before. This potential is not far from turning into national interests and only requires the acceptance of this opportunity and effective action. The existence of cultural and civilizational roots in this region facilitates the fruition of any targeted action.

4.The Novel Global Structure and the Requirements of the I.R.I Foreign Policy in the Cultural Iran Region According to the Soft Power Components

The modern coordinates of the novel global structure and the resulting power dispersion on one hand, and the unparalleled capacities of the I.R.I foreign policy in the cultural Iran region on the other hand accompanied by recommendations. As stated in theoretical frameworks, the existence of an attractive type of soft power leads to persuasion, leadership, and the obedience of others (Nye, 2007: 90). According to Nye's perspective, the ultimate goal of soft power is "Likeness and Cooperation." According to Nye, this likeness and cooperation can be achieved through three sources of values, culture, and foreign policy. These three sources can potentially become active in the form of "Beauty," "Glory," and "Benevolence." (Vuving, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 136-140) This potential is much more accessible in the new global structure than ever before.

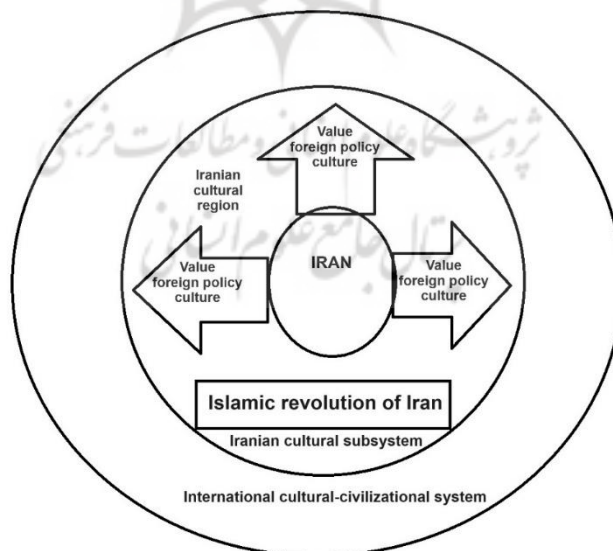


Figure 1: The main channels of foreign policy interaction with the sub-system elements of cultural Iran’s transition (Source: Author)

With the changes in the international system, as detailed in the second part of the article, we are witnessing a dispersion of power in the international system, leading to the creation of a significant power vacuum in the cultural Iran region as one of the sub-systems of the international cultural-civilizational system.⁴

In such conditions, special attention to the three main sources of soft power and its threefold aspect can bring considerable benefits to the national interests and security of the I.R.I. It should be noted that regions of cultural Iran, which are situated along the extensions of the five Iranian ethnic groups plus the Persian ethnic group in neighboring countries, should be prioritized by the foreign policy apparatus in these regions. These regions are traceable in countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Iraq. Furthermore, we have examined our claim through the theoretical framework of Nye in three axes: "Values/Glory," "Foreign Policy/Benevolence," and "Culture/Beauty."

4.1. Political Values and the Glory Arising from Them

The political values of a country can be sources of attraction and power (Mayeli and Moti'I, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 192-193; Asgari, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 6). In other words, a country can create a kind of attraction among nations and other countries by proliferating and promoting its new and different values. It is evident that this can be a source of strength or weakness depending on the destination country.

The importance of the "Values/Glory" component in advancing the soft power goals of countries such as Iran in the novel global structure, where the normative dimension holds greater significance, is clear. This component, however, holds direct importance with the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the values derived from it. In this regard, values such as resistance, which arise from the essence of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, are more significant than other axes.

The role of fundamental values in generating soft power is perceived in Nye's perspective when we review the history of international relations. With the occurrence of the French Revolution, values that advocated for equality, fraternity, and freedom gradually became pervasive in Europe. These values, which previously had little relevance in monarchical political systems, fundamentally changed the relationship between the people and the ruling authorities (king/church). With the proliferation of

4. It should be noted that with the diminishing power of the United States in the world and the region, and Russia's involvement in the Ukraine war, until the presence and consolidation of rival powers such as China, we will witness a power vacuum in these regions. Exactly like the power vacuum that occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

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these new values following the French Revolution, the revolutionary discourse dominated European society and, consequently, the global stage (Naqibzadeh, 2019 AD/1398 SH).

This, however, was met with significant resistance from supporters of the old order. As this phenomenon materialized and subsequent revolutions following the French Revolution occurred, France was able to consolidate its power significantly more than before in Europe and the world. This ideal model became a symbol of magnificence and grandeur for many people in Europe (ibid). Although events such as the liberal revolution in France and the communist revolution in Russia have significant and distinct differences in nature from the Islamic Revolution of Iran, fundamentally, they share similarities in the occurrence of a fundamental change and transformation in societies.

From this perspective, it must be said that the political model that became dominant in Iran as a result of the Islamic Revolution should be considered as a manifestation of the value of magnificence. In recent years, despite all the confrontations, it has been able to establish its place among a significant portion of the people and politicians in the region of Iran culturally. The resistance and perseverance of the Islamic Republic of Iran against great regional and international powers have created a sense of magnificence for Iran, which has become a respected model for many nations in the region, especially the Iranian people residing in the region. Based on reports from Western intelligence agencies (including the United States, England, and France), these people not only have no interest in separating themselves from the central core of Iranian civilization but also seek an opportunity to lean towards Iran's policies.⁵

The continuation of values such as independence, freedom, unity, and territorial integrity, as indicated in various articles of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Article 9 and other principles), alongside superior values such as resistance against any form of domination (Principles 2, 152, and other principles) have created a special place for Iran in the field of foreign policy. If managed wisely, this can increase the soft power of the country in surrounding regions, especially within the cultural Iran region, which, according to various historical and sociological aspects, has a stronger connection to the central core of Iran.

It should be noted that the adoption of a non-commitment strategy in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the insistence on implementing this strategy in all the years after the revolution has played a fundamental role in the continuity of this glory for Iran. It is clear that

5. Although this inclination exists in different degrees within cultural regions of Iran, in some countries, these tendencies are more subdued due to various reasons, which themselves require independent research.

the continuity of this strategy has also incurred costs for the country. An important point in this regard is that depending on the continuity of governments' adherence to different models of this strategy (non-commitment conservatism, revolutionary non-commitment, revisionist non-commitment, and reformist non-commitment), the costs incurred and the resulting magnificence have been different (Dehqani Firoozabadi, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 171-180).

The subject, which can be explained as the five variables that shape the foreign policy of countries, including individual resources, actor-based resources, government resources, national resources, and foreign resources (ibid, 68), needs to be examined separately. It should be noted that the link between politics and religion should be specifically considered in the component of political values. There are numerous pieces of evidence and indications that show that the modern societies' escape from religion and the construction of non-religious political systems have not been able to bring peace and tranquility to human society. In this regard, the fears created by the increasing spread of new technologies, especially in the form of artificial intelligence, should be considered as an example of this issue.

Fear that was mainly regarding the departure of technology from frameworks such as religion and ethics. This is exactly why many leaders of this technology and even international institutions believe that the destructive effects of these technologies can be much more extensive than the destruction caused in the First and Second World Wars. This issue has made some people concerned about the ethical consequences of this technology. In this regard, UNESCO addressed various dimensions of this issue and examined the worrying consequences of artificial intelligence technology from different perspectives in a report published in April 2023 (Unesco.org, 2023). Examples such as this show the attractiveness of the religious-political construction governing Iran in the post-Islamic Revolution era.

4.2. Foreign Policy as a Facilitator and Enhancer of Soft Power in the Cultural Iran Region

Another source of soft power production is Joseph Nye's foreign policy. The reality is that in all the years after the Islamic Revolution, despite some regional governments' opposition, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been accompanied by some form of cooperation from the region's nations, especially Muslim nations.

Meanwhile, support for the Palestinian cause and confrontation with the Zionist regime should be considered one of the main pillars of this claim. However, it should be noted that as much as foreign policy can be a source of soft power production and maximizing the power of countries,

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it also has the capacity to reduce the power of countries. There is no doubt that any benevolent perception of governments' behavior in the field of foreign policy can be a significant source of increasing the soft power of governments in other regions. Therefore, regardless of the intentions of governments and their policies in the field of foreign policy, the most important issue in this regard is the interpretation and perception of governments and neighboring nations of this behavior. There are numerous indications that show that the Islamic Republic of Iran has a relative advantage in terms of cultural soft power at least among the nations of the region.

As mentioned, the targeted support of the Islamic Republic for the people of Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen in recent years has elevated Iran's soft power status in these regions, as interpreted by international scholars, in confronting the Zionist regime and terrorist groups such as ISIS. These conditions draw more attention to the foreign policy stakeholders in this region during the "Structural Transition" era. However, achieving this goal should not be oversimplified. It is natural that governments will take defensive positions against the actions of their rivals. Based on this, the role of nations and the increase in the capabilities of institutions that can have an influential role among the nations of the region is of great importance

In this regard, Iran's compassionate approach towards the issue of migrants, especially Afghan migrants, is also important. According to available statistics, only about one million Afghan migrants entered Iran in the years following the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan in 2021, bringing the total number of these migrants to about five million, including the approximately four million who were already in Iran. However, according to the non-governmental organization ACAPS, only a small number of them are officially present in Iran (acaps.org, 2023).

4.3. Cultural Foundation for Increasing Iran's Soft Power in the Cultural Iran Region

Although the term "Culture," like many other social concepts, has multiple and diverse definitions, in a simple definition, culture can be considered as the way individuals and societies perceive existence, the world, and life. Accordingly, culture can be categorized as a set of meanings that give meaning to a society. In this framework, according to Joseph Nye, when a country's culture encompasses global values, the likelihood of achieving desirable results at low cost increases (Nye, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 52). However, Nye's perspective in the current conditions of the world, where all concepts are undergoing transformation and change, needs explanation and clarification.

In the current era, where we are witnessing noticeable changes in the global order and system, universal and expansive values will also undergo changes. These values will no longer be limited to ambiguous concepts such as "Democracy" or "Human Rights." Among these, the attention of the world to the spiritual element, which has a clear place in the culture of Iranian Muslims and is reflected in the famous Persian poets such as Hafez, Mawlana, Sa'di, and Ferdowsi, is just one example (Haghgoo and Azimzadeh, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 166).

On this basis, at the cultural level, as another component of the soft power production of countries, we can refer to cultural aspects rooted in the Iranian-Islamic geographical civilization. These aspects exist in the ancient beauties of Iranian civilization as well as in Islamic-Shia beauties. These beauties have acquired a different color and scent after the Islamic Revolution, and this unique color and scent make prioritizing these capacities inevitable. There is no doubt that to achieve the soft power of the Islamic Republic of Iran, attention must be paid to both branches of the Iranian-Islamic civilization identity, and a one-sided view of only one of these branches will be futile. However, Iranian religious rituals, under various occasions, ranging from mourning ceremonies of Sayyid al-Shuhada during the months of Muharram and Safar, to specific rituals observed during the months of Rajab, Sha'ban, and especially Ramadan, as well as the annual Arba'een processions, which are linked to the Islamic Revolution and concepts such as "Resistance," play a fundamental role in the actualization of Iran's soft power in parts of the Iranian cultural region. These regions are entirely Muslim, and many are even followers of the Shia school.

In the midst of this, the annual pilgrimage of Arbaeen should be considered as an operational example of the possibility of realizing this capacity. This issue, beyond the Imamiyyah Shia, has managed to create a "Supra-identity" and become a symbol of "Beauty" in the frozen world of modern spirituality. This issue has come under the focus of research at Western universities and research institutions (Haghgoo et al., 2018 AD/1397 SH).

Of course, there is no doubt that capacities of this kind should initially receive attention in cultural Iran regions such as Iraq, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Turkey, which are to some extent considered extensions of Iranian Shia, and subsequently have the potential for replication on a much broader global scale. The reason for this claim can be traced in numerous reports from Western sources. Reports that, with confirmation and endorsement of this event as the largest annual gathering in the world (Mark Piggott, 2014: ibtimes), raise numerous questions about the reason and manner of this annual gathering. This grand event, due to

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strengthening spirituality, sacrifice, anticipation, and the like, has been able to create a non-denominational and non-religious discourse.

Conclusion

The history of international relations indicates that governments' disregard for the prescriptions arising from the transformation in the structure of the international system has incurred significant costs. The occupation of Iran during the First and Second World Wars should be considered as clear evidence of such a claim. Recent developments in the global economy and politics, from the 2008 financial crisis to the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan and, more importantly, Russia's military invasion of Ukraine in 2022, have shown that "Now" international relations are in a transitional period between the old and new structures; a new structure that, according to many scholars of international relations, is being delineated with a multipolar and multilateral configuration.

The important point is that until the new structure takes hold and the voids resulting from the dissolution of the past order are filled, taking appropriate measures in the foreign policy of countries can be beneficial. Some countries, considering their specific cultural and civilizational capacities, have a superior position compared to other competitors. It is clear that the Islamic Republic of Iran has a superior position compared to its regional rivals. This position is more evident from the perspective of soft power components. This manifestation is more visible in the soft power capacities of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the cultural Iran region as one of the subsystems of the international cultural system. These capacities have the potential to become more effective through the three components of fundamental values, foreign policy, and culture. As mentioned, considering these triple capacities based on the energy released from the Islamic Revolution in Iran can achieve the country's national goals and interests in this region more rapidly. This issue requires independent research on its implementation.

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