

Research Article**Theoretical aspects of soft power in Political Thoughts of Imam Ali (pbuh)****Ali Adami¹ and Marzieh Mohammadi Nasab²**¹Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Faculty Member,
Faculty of Law and Political Science, Allameh Tabatabai University²M.S., International Relations, Allameh Tabatabai University**ABSTRACT**

This article studies the theoretical aspects of 'soft power' in Imam Ali's (pbuh) political thought, based on his approach. The theory of 'soft power', introduced by Joseph Nye in early 1990s in liberalism thought, can be interpreted and analyzed based on the principles of secularism, so that the study and analysis of political behavior presented in Nye theory reveals the saliency of propaganda and gossips, which declines the quality of norms and values and leads to mental recession in the behavior of power; however, the theoretical aspects of soft power in Imam Ali's (pbuh) political thought is interpretable in the framework of the 'balance of rights' theory, and this important principle is obviously visible through the study of his behaviors. According to the principles of the analysis, the main question outlined here is based on the following issue: How can the theoretical framework of soft power in Imam Ali's (pbuh) thought be interpreted and analyzed? The hypothesis of this study is as follows: Considering the extent and wide range of factors such as social justice, economic justice, political justice, etc. in Imam Ali's (pbuh) political performance, the theoretical framework of soft power in his thought does have the capability of interpretation and analysis based on the balance of rights index.

Keywords: political values, public opinions, the balance of rights, justice, soft power.

INTRODUCTION

While studying the political performance of Imam Ali, the word "right" is dominant. The word was, in practice, polished and it was popularized despite acute political pressure and limitations and restrictions. In today's world where the theory set forth in search of peace fails, the heart of the theory of "balance of rights" has created waves beyond the time and place which does not experience obsolescence. What is causing lasting legitimacy and attractiveness of Imam Ali's policies in the minds and hearts of people is not propaganda waves in cyber networks but justice waves in "balance of rights". Political events in the perspective of Imam Ali's "balance of rights" theory turn the power in all aspects into a tool for achieving the goals of justice. In other words, power in Imam Ali's thought is only legitimated within the "balance of rights"

framework. This is one of the fundamental principles of cohesion and attractiveness of political power beyond the limits of time and space. Unitary, peace-orientation, justice, democracy, religious democracy, human equality, etc. are elements of soft-power management in Imam Ali's thought. The reflection of these elements is soft-power indicators in society such as attractiveness, legitimacy, acceptability, legitimacy, validity, etc.

1. The position of justice in soft power and its effectiveness

It is well known that durable governments follow justice and have fair relationships with their citizens. Rules which are not based on justice and fairness are not well liked by people and they try different ways to escape such rules and regulations. In order to maintain public

order and social peace, governments need to make legal rules compatible with respected justice among people. Humans seek justice, or at least pretend to no such passion. Laws intend justice. As a result, everybody is equal in the perspective of law. Conflicts, however, arises when seeking justice. Wars also try to show justice (Katouzian, 2005: 67). Nye stated that:

The usual argument for legitimacy shows the importance of soft power. Ethics can also be a real power. Early effect of the war in Iraq was quite negative on Islamic world views. Surveys conducted in Europe also showed that the path passed by the United States in Iraq war ruined the empathy created after September 11th (Nye, 2004: 28-29).

Ethics introduced by Nye as a real power has a doctrinal infrastructure which is the reflection of social justice. Power without morality will implement the law as far as its benefits are not influenced. When benefit-orientation is the center, the political power, as the superior power to fair implementation of laws, will change into monopolization. As a result, it becomes the first contributing factor for imbalanced rights. The reason why the US promotes justice, freedom, democracy, and human rights on the one hand and they have human rights violations on the their agenda, on the other, is associated with the fact that political management is formed in the absence of ethics and moralities. Common universal values in the cyber waves are mental views from the perception of creation`s beautiful realities which have no valuable identity. What enriches values is behavior. What leads to the attractiveness of valuable performances is justice. What makes valuable performances immortal is absolute justice. Nye states that:

Since the attractiveness of soft power is based on common values and justice and he task of others is participating in policies that are compatible with the common values, multilateral consultations, compared to merely unilateral emphasis are more likely to create the soft power (Nye, 2010: 130). Hard and soft powers sometimes strengthen and sometimes weaken each other. Identifying how they

influence each other is important. If we had to select one of them, we would choose military force. The best suggestion, however, is smart power to have both hard and soft powers (Nye, 2011: 24).The verbal stagnation of multilateral consultations in common values will be ineffective in soft power attractiveness. Similarly, unilateral emphasis on values and enhanced performance level of multilateral consultations in common values form the soft power attractiveness and provide the continuity of fair and absolute performances, leading to strengthened columns of soft power attractiveness. Imam Ali`s management directed universal and general values in the process of power`s conversion to social justice so that the it covered enemy`s side. In Battle of Siffin, when the peace treaty was signed between Muawiyah and Imam Ali, some of Imam Ali`s soldiers, who later became the Khawarij, asked him to violate the peace agreement and order to fight Muawiyah. Imam Ali stated:

Shame on you! Do you mean we break the promise after signing the peace treaty? As God stated: if you make a promise, you are not supposed to break the promise? (Ebne Abi Al-Hadid, 1996, V. 1: 352-353 and 1999, V. 2: 237-238)

Culture is a set of principles and actions that enrich the community. There are many symbols of culture. When the culture of a country covers universal values the foundation of its policies form common interest and values, desirable results are likely to happen because such culture links the attractiveness and task (Nye, 2008: 12).

Imperative laws are on top of international law. They are inviolable rules according to the 1969 Convention on the Law of Treaties unless other rules replace. According to the legal personality of international organizations, these entities are responsible for their actions. As indicated by the Association of International Law in its final report regarding "the responsibility of international organizations", these organizations are required to respect for human rights and humanitarian law. Inviolable

character of imperative laws make international organizations including the Security Council follows them. International responsibility of international organizations is not due to the fact that they have violated the laws but because they are basically "illegal"(Musa Zadeh, 2010: 233). "Fulfilling the promise" is accepted and recognized as the first imperative laws by international community. Following this rule reflects political performances as legal and responsible ones. Imam Ali's smart management around 1400 years ago and in the most critical political situation showed "fulfilling the promise" from the political performance window. He used himself to protect this universal principle. The US, however, has forgotten this principle in the 21st century by veto power in Security Council and commitment to the United Nation rules. The US also has violated on-aggression pact, justified prohibition of mass destruction, ignored "ban on war crimes". Such management system which began by prescribing American democracy in order to prohibit mass destruction weapons ended to American freedom and human rights in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo prisons. Nye states that:

If the foreign policies promote worldwide common values such as democracy and human rights, then it can create soft power. After September 11th, Bush's policy change and he spoke about the need to use the power of America to bring democracy to the Middle East. New unilateralism supports a certain attitude to promote American values. They believe that America has good intentions, benevolent hegemony and this must terminate the discussions. They agree that America arrogance is not a problem, yet they believe in America's inescapable power in various forms. America policy is legitimated due to its roots in democracy. It, as a result, leads to progress in democracy and freedom due to its results. Legitimacy, in fact, would compensate the lost legitimacy in unilateralism (Nye, 2010: 127-129).

The price of America's commitment to "duty to preserve and enhance a popular world order" is America's violation of previous commitments of the United Nations. If the popular world order rooted in America's democracy is popular, a common value and has legitimacy, peremptory norms of the UN are universal and common without overthrown legitimacy. America's disloyalty to previous commitments to the United Nations does not leave a guarantee to follow world order commitment. Some words such democracy, freedom, and human rights are not the ultimate goals of the US, but a soft cover on hard, hegemonic break of the norms which are followed in accordance with America's popular world order. Politicians mostly tend to express their policies according to ethical or legal principles and biological necessity and not by the power. This way, they are deceiving themselves about their action. In other words, although politics seeks power in all aspects, ideologies enter an acceptable element for audience psychologically and morally (Morgenthau, 2010: 161).

2. The position of Justice in Imam Ali's thought

Social justice, as a comprehensive concept in policy making of a government and large-scale international system, was first founded by Imam Ali after the failure of the Roman and Iran Empire and the Muslim's conquests in Asia and Africa. In Imam Ali's perspective, social justice is a converging and legitimate principle, covering political, economic, administrative, and organizational aspects. Imam Ali's social justice is unique because of two reasons: first, his vision of social justice is consistent and matched with his faith as a man who was not deviated from justice and conscience. Second, he was the only thinker who had practical ideas. As head of a vast multinational state, he fulfilled social justice theories in the context of Islam (Mulana, 2001: 195). Imam Ali's management introduced and operationalized the "balance of rights" theory in Islamic territory in order to promote social justice in structure. Some of Imam Ali's managerial elements in the structure of the

balance of rights are to match power behavior with social justice ideas. Such elements are particular for political performance limitations. These limitations draw the scope of human equality strategy on equity of rights. The first red line in foreign policy is drawn for enemy. Imam Ali states that:

Never reject the peace proposed by the enemy which can please God. Comfort of combatants and your peace of mind, and country's calmness are provided by peace. Your patience in problems would bring the hope of victory and it is better than breaking the promise which leads to fear in both this world and another world (Nahj Al-Balagheh, 53: 417-419).

Human equity approach, Imam Ali's theory of "balance of rights", draws political performance limitations in relation to enemy. Imam Ali's justice is absolute and comprehensive even if enemy's rights are taken into account. In Imam Ali's thought, aggression and being unfaithful are foreign policy red line and they are not justifiable. The promotion of social justice in the ideology of opposing the injustice and defending the oppressed is fulfilled by peace orientation and fulfilling the promise. Relationships with enemy are within the structure of balanced rights, fair relationships, and establishing security relationships. The first criterion to establish security relationships is peace orientation with enemy. As a result, after accepting an offer of peace, the political tactics the enemy must not be neglected because enemies sometimes take advantage of peace and friendship to attack. Therefore, foresight and political realism of pacifism is essential toward the enemy. Another criterion, while having relationships with enemies, is fulfilling the promise. Obligations signed with the enemy must be preserved in loyalty and integrity. Ruler is advised to shield his lives to protect the promise because none of the divine duty is similar to fulfilling the promise. All the people in the world, with all the differences in opinion, tend to agree with the principle of "fulfilling the promise". Therefore, perfidy and treachery of obligations must not be used as a tool to deceive the enemy. This is mainly because the

God set this promise to provide peace and welfare, and safe shelter for refugees. Therefore, corruption, treachery, and deceit are not allowed in a promise. They are considered ignorance and political myopia. The path of deceit needs to be blocked in agreements. After contemplating and accepting the agreements, excuses must not be used to break the promise. The hardships of agreements need to be respected. Nye states that:

After September 11th, Bush's policy changed and he spoke about the need to use the power of America to bring democracy to the Middle East. Lawrence Kaplan and William Kristol emphasized that when it is turn to deal with authoritarian regimes such as Iraq and North Korea, the United States must seek change, not co-existing, as the first foreign policy goal. Such procedure makes the US committed to preserve and strengthen a popular world order. (Nye, 2010: 128).

Foreign policy change in the status quo means aggressiveness which is the breach of obligations towards the UN. Preserving and strengthening a popular world order through aggressiveness and breaking the promise, which cause instability and insecurity, highlight the decline of America's smart policies. The procedure which commits the US to preserve and strengthen a popular world order is the result of aggressiveness and breaking the promise toward the UN. By replacing aggression instead of pacifism and breaking instead of fulfilling the promise, the US meets unsolvable anarchic atmosphere formula within a popular world order. This is the path passed by the US in the era of information in order to legitimate its foreign policy. The second red line is drawn in authorities' irresponsibility. Human equality of rights creates absolute and pervasive justice which even covers the authorities as well. Imam Ali's justice rejects the idea of the sovereignty of the countries. He practically offered the superior idea of human rights than the sovereignty of the country's 1400 years ago. Imam Ali states that:

Avoid bleeding the innocent. The pride must not deter you from paying blood money to the victim's heirs. (Nahj Al-Balagheh, 53: 419).

In Imam Ali's thought, capital punishment is essential and necessary for even authorities when they have killed an innocent person. The scope of this justice does not leave any space for traditional debate of the sovereignty of nations in organized crimes and genocides. Those who believe in the sovereignty of countries on human rights are great powers who introduce political Islam as the reason of growth and proliferation of terrorism. Political Islam is Imam Ali's government which documented the superiority of human rights on the over eighty of countries with its political performance. Arrogance, selfishness is the third red line in political performance. Imam Ali states that:

You must not be arrogant. Do not trust yourself and you must not enjoy admiration by others. These are the best opportunities for Satan to assail to you, and destroy the righteous good deeds (Nahj Al-Balagheh, 53: 419)

If leaders welcome consultation, it will lead to political performance promotion within the social justice framework. Arrogance, confidence in your goodness and love of praise, gives delegitimize political functions. Dictatorship leads to political stagnation and backwardness and withdrawal from framework of social justice. Nye states that:

National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft warned that "dissatisfied groups can create an arrogant image from the US. If you reach the point that, due to being unpopular, anyone wishing to have hit the United States, then we will be completely paralyzed. In short, it is true that America's greatness caused that this country to be considered despised and admired. Our foreign policy can create a different image of soft power and legitimation (Nye, 2010: 135).

If Nye's concern is arrogance in America's political functions, reduced legitimacy and soft power, Imam Ali's concern us the presence of arrogance in political performance and violation of the authorities. Humility and

avoiding arrogance is strongly advised in Imam Ali's thought as a legal assignment for authorities. Respecting this legal assignment is the guarantee for justice. The results of these political performances give legitimacy to governments and it also promoted the soft power. Magnification of political services and propaganda is the fourth red line in political performances. In the structure of the balance of rights, announced policies are guaranteed by pragmatism. Any violation of announced policies leads to legal responsibility. Imam Ali states that:

You are not supposed to boast people by your services. You are not supposed to enlarge them. You must not break your promise. God stated that: the biggest enmity with God is to promise but not fulfill the promise. (Nahj Al-Balagheh, 53: 419)

Illustration and broadcasting in the form of advertising without practical support as well as enlarged political performances in the structure of balanced rights lead to weakened national spirit to support government's policies, institutionalization of anti-values in society, and lack of legitimacy. This also leads to general antipathy, leading to legal responsibility for authorities. Mylson states that:

General diplomacy can be effective if it follows marketing rules. He believes that the product needs to be adaptable with the promise. Marketing experience teaches us that showing is more important than saying. America's general policy is believed to be noisy worldwide (Mylson and others, 2008: 132-133). The advantage of soft power is that it forms the international security negotiation within the general diplomacy (Cull, 2009: 15). Critically, interactive broadcasting and illustrations are not as strong as political performances. Political performances are the best image to show the objectives of governments, reflecting the legitimacy or lack of legitimacy of governments.

The fifth red line is drawn in relation to mismanagement within the scope of time and place. In the structure of balanced rights,

authorities are required to prioritize and regulate their political performances in accordance with time and place situations in order to maximize the minimum facilities. Lack of optimum use of time leads to lost opportunities and weakened legitimacy. Imam Ali states that:

You must not hurry. You must not be lazy for timely activities. You must not seek militancy for unclear issues. You must try your best for everything on a timely manner (Nahj Al-Balagheh, 53: 421)

Hard and soft power can be complementary. Leadership processes are not unique. Leaders can provide a list of hard and soft power. Most leaders use both methods in different fields at various times (Nye, 2006: 7). The success of political performances requires strategic management to identify time and place performance in accordance with the lowest cost and the maximum productivity. Hurrying in doing something that it not time, being lazy to meet timely tasks, militancy and anger in ambiguous issues and indifference in obvious matters are management shortcomings, leading to failure of political performances. Nye states that:

Modern unilateralism is due to misinterpretation of nature of power in the world of politics and the situation where possession of superior resources produces the desired results (Nye, 2011: 317-318).

Political mismanagement in the US caused politicians to convert unwanted domestic limitations into a tool to create opportunities for its competitors in the international system without paying attention to international system limitations with unilateralism. Computational error in the unipolar moment and strategic mistakes resulted in time and place mismanagement in the America's political performances. This has led to economic loss and weakened soft power so that the results of political behaviors are observable in hatred world public opinion and America's united rivals. Political management of selecting *options on the table* regarding Iran and North Korea has challenged the US. Monopolism and

self-interest is the last and sixth red line drawn in political performance. The philosophy of government in Islam is based on justice. Any violation of authorities from balanced rights and social justice would lead to legal responsibility. Imam Ali states that:

You must not take advantage compared to equal people. You must not ignore your clear and obvious duties (Nahj Al-Balagheh, 53: 421)

The Imam Ali's theory of "balance of rights" rejects any monopolism and self-interest. Authorities are responsible to fair enforcement of the rights of the people. In this perspective, authorities and people are equal. Therefore, monopolism and self-interest destroy their responsibility. Tendency to arrogance and aggression is the potential of authorities which can be controlled by God-centralization. The separation of religion and politics is the outset of authorities' withdrawal from justice and link to authoritarianism and oppression. These paration of religion and politics, which is the software aspect of power in the era of information, leads to conversion of fair policies into peanut politics. Nye states that:

At the end cold war, the world believed in America's unilateral power. Some concluded that the US is powerful enough to determine the fate of other countries and they have to follow the US. Charles Kratamr praised this view as "new unilateralism". Prior to September 11th 2001, Bush presidency created a "Bush policy" in the form of forced democratization and preventive war (Nye, 2011: 317).

The America's use of hard power management, arrogantly prioritized to determine the fate of others in accordance with forced democratization and preventive war before the September 11th, was nothing more than monopolism and self-interest. Such monopolism and self-interest required political conflicts in geopolitical and geostrategic focus in the Middle East. Bush's policy is unfair which does not require any contemplation in his political performances in order to be compared with some concepts such as freedom, democracy, and human rights. Power is rooted

in attractiveness. Ignoring the importance of popularity and attractiveness means transitory nature of the power (Nye, 2007: 115). The dominant policy in international space is the one without morality. As a result, they consider genocide acceptable in connection with the defense against the cross-border enemy. This way, they involve public opinion in domestic and regional conflicts in order to provide the bed for aggression. Such injustice is revealed in veto right by some international and great power. Index of justice and injustice in the tendency or lack of tendency to revolve around the interests of the "selfishness" is supported by them. Such governments warned concerning the human rights. They claimed that accompanying with policies means justice and staying away from them means not respecting human rights. Monopolism and self-interest is followed in the social justice coverage in order to convince the world.

CONCLUSION:

Although theoretical positions are partially fixed and they are not able to respond world's structural changes, they are challenged and criticized at the same time of global developments. Imam Ali's theoretical positions, however, have not been challenged and criticized after 1400 years which was established in Islamic territory concerning the social justice and balanced rights. According to the Imam Ali's theory of "balance of rights", political security and stability is possible by justice. As a result, the fundamental objective of political units needs to be along with the justice in international policy. Since the Islamic government was founded by Imam Ali's management, Islamic globalization in Imam Ali's thought was systematic justice in the structure of balanced rights. The basis of Imam Ali's government and policies was established based on the structure of balanced rights. This is consistent with political performance output. In other words, Imam Ali's theory of "balance of rights" within the political performance framework is equal to a global strategy which considers equality in rights in all aspects of

power within a theoretical balance. According to this, the analysis and interpretation of Imam Ali's power behavior is possible with the balance right index.

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