Smart Power of Iran and Geopolitical Developments of the Contemporary Middle East

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Abstract
Tools and methods that powerful actors employ them in the scene of the world's political theater are diverse and various. Geopolitical monitoring is as a method and trajectory to understanding and gaining influence and hegemony in the world through the geopolitical index and capability. It have been emerged a critical discourses about smart power and it's increasingly importance in the geopolitical competitions in the current geopolitical condition of the world and with the transformations which occurred in the Middle East and changes in the behavioral approaches of powerful actors. Smart power is an intelligent action in the using of the components of hard and soft power and combining of positive elements of them in the way that it takes a strength form of the integration of hard-soft power. Therefore, recognition and apprehension of the geopolitical characteristics of smart power is a mechanism in global political power. Iran as a geopolitical and determining pole in the Middle East has significant aspects of smart power which can reinforce its hegemony in this sensitive region with reliance upon it. This research with the methodology of descriptive – analytical, attempts to answer to this question that what is the most important indices of Iran's smart power and what is the appropriate geopolitical strategies proportional with these indices along with the current developments in the Middle East? The results indicate that the hardware indices and software values and ideas combined with the geopolitical elements such as identity, culture and religion are considered as an effective index of Iran's smart power.
Keywords: Geopolitics, smart power, Iran, Contemporary Middle East

1- Introduction

Power is a concept that has received attention in natural, theology, philosophy, and human sciences; however, in social and political sciences has a special importance and place. Therefore, it can be said that power is one of the fundamental topics in political philosophy. Yet, no certain definition is available that everyone would agree on it. Therefore, the definition of power has always been accompanied with controversy (Rush, 1998: 46). Power refers to the ability of influencing others for changing their behavior and getting what you desire and is one of the most important key factors determining the relations and the position of countries in international relations (Pour Ahmadi, 2010: 23). This concept also is the underlying of geopolitical topics and the geopolitical games in different levels are performed with the instrument of power. However; the constituting components of power in different time periods are always changing. Once vast territory and large population were both the instruments of power and the fundamental goal for obtaining power. Later in another time period having military equipment and a strong naval force was considered as the major factor of power. Yet later on, military force, economic power, political power or in other words what later on is known as hard power have been considered as the major power of countries and coercion and were considered as the manifestation of powerfulness. At another time period also soft power attracted the attention of the political analysts and intellectuals. It is in the context of these topics that reviewing and adopting a new approach of the concepts such as power has found a greater necessity more than ever (Ghorbani Sheikh Neshin et al., 2011: 127). Today, based on various international theories a country that can make use of a combination of hard and soft power; that is uses the components of hard and soft power intelligently is considered to be powerful (Ahmadpour, 2011: 41).

In the present age and with the revolution of communications some transformations have been emerged in the concept of power that the smart power plan indicates to this transformation and change. However, the mere combining of soft and hard power sources doesn't' lead to formation of smart power. In other words, it should be seen that smartness is hidden where in the theory of smart power (Motaharnia, 2010: 10). The focus of the present paper is: in Geopolitical

topics what is the place of smart power? How are the indicators, variables, measures and methods of application of this new dimension of power in geopolitical topics and how Iran, which is a regional power, can use this concept in its geopolitical monitoring of the regions especially in the new context and conditions of the Middle East? For measuring power in the globalized world of today, it is necessary to identify the necessary instruments and strategies of balance of power for a successful policy and it should be considered that in every type of successful strategy the issue of continuity and change should be included (Nye, 2010: 150-151). It is in this context and condition that power has an effective nature and founds the required capability to cope and fight with threats.

The present paper with a descriptive-analytical method seeks to analyze the most important indicators of geopolitical indicators of smart power of Iran and to explain the appropriate strategy with these indicators in today's transformations of the Middle East.

2- Methodology

This research is a qualitative and applicative research. The method used in this paper is descriptive-analytical. Required information has been collected through library resources, including books, magazine articles, newspapers, Internet, etc.

3- Theoretical Framework
3-1 Regional Geopolitics

The fundamental topic of this paper is regarding the smart power indicators; however, since the source of application of this smart power is a regional power, therefore, it is important to first know what is regional geopolitics and its mechanism. Geopolitical Monitoring which are going on in the political environment of the world continuously are performed in different levels and scales and constitute the major part of the global geopolitical monitoring. Another part of this geopolitical monitoring is performed at a smaller level and in the regions. In this level also global powers can have a role; however, comparing to the global level certainly regional powers will have great role. At national level also geopolitical monitoring can be followed. The national level indicates the internal behavior of the countries of a region with regards to their domestic policy. a part of

regional geopolitics usually is allocated to national and global "simultaneous games". For instance, the populations of some countries are loyal to things rather than the regime of their country. In case that the leaders of these countries would lack legitimacy, inevitably they will seek some external source for creating tension, so that they can deter the mind of their people from internal problems and issues of the country and follow their interests with creating a regional geopolitical activity.

In any case, regional geopolitics refers to a part of the geopolitics interactions that are taken place at the level of a geopolitical region. Regional geopolitics includes various actors and complex behaviors that multiple games simultaneously take place at its various levels. The countries of the region have different global, regional and national objectives from every game. The created changes due to the Withdrawal of great powers create new opportunities and limitations for countries in the power distribution of the region (Kupchan, 1998: 40-79). Such as the collapse of Iraq and the creation of opportunity for Iran as a dominant power and inability of Iraq in performing as a balance.

3-2 Smart Power and Regional Geopolitics
Power always has been one of the vital components in geopolitical definitions, analyses and interpretations. Geopolitical interactions results from the power of the political units and seeks to obtain power for them. Power, is the main essence and the flowing spirit in organism of international relations that is both the means and the end which sought in convergence for some and in obtaining military power for other. Power is the flowing spirit in international system organism not only acts the driving force similar to electric current in an electrical circuit but also is the main core constituting the international system and order (Motahar Nia, 1999: 279-80). Therefore, regardless of its level, size and source, it should be applied by the actors in the field of geopolitics and different local, national, regional and global scales are affected by it.

3-3 The Transition to Smart Power and Geopolitics
Inefficiency of hard power and the limitations of soft power have made political theorists to think of some theoretical solutions

regarding the application of power in the complex global environment. The outcome of this mental effort is the birth of a concept known as smart power (Kebriaee Zadeh, 2011). The concept of smart power was first used by Suzanne Nossel which refers to the objective and wise combining of hard and soft power for dealing with threats. She believes that coercive and persuasive resources including military, economic, cultural and ideological capabilities and advantages should be integrated and coordinated in one direction so that as the result of it the continuing advantages of a country can be guaranteed (Nossel, 2004). Smart power is an Intuitive development in the subject and topic of power that mainly it is addressing the governments, political elites, influential groups and governmental organizations (Wilson, 2008: 111). The combined ability and capability of smart power is one of the necessary components of today' global policy. This combined capability is obtained by combining hard and soft powers. Table (1) presents the components and tools of three types of power.

Table (1) the components and tools of three types of power

Type of power	Components	Skills	Tools	Challenges
Hard	Coercion, threat, fear, greed	Organizational capability, political skill	Military action, diplomatic interactions, mental/informative operation	incidence of hate
Soft	Common values, common interests, collective place of Role modeling	Creation of an acceptable and interesting prospect, creation of effective relation, emotional intelligence, organizational skills	Public, cultural/communication diplomacy, national imaging	The feeling of being deceived and lack of credibility of the identity exercising power
Smart	Environmental consciousness, routing, speed and reaction, flexibility, proportion with goals and combined power capitals appropriate for learning/growth	Structural skills	Hard and soft tools with a smart nature, tools sensitive toward change	Lack of one or a number of components

Source; Ashna and Esmaili, 2011: 32

As the above table shows, smart power is a combined power that multiple elements are influential in it. From the geopolitical point of

view it can be said that every country that has more appropriate material and spiritual geographic and non- geographic capacities will be a higher level of ability for creating an efficient smart power. These potentials are the same as geopolitical elements.

4-Findings: Geopolitical Elements of Iran's Smart Power
4-1 Hard Power
4-1-1 Position and Territory

Iran from the point of view of geographical position is located in a place that connects three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa and due to its geographical location Iran has always been the connection point of West and East. Iran due to its special geographical situation is the center of the world (Fuller, 1992: 52). Although after the collapse of the USSR it was said that the geopolitical position of Iran has been faded but after the Events of September 11 Iran regained its importance and its position in Eurasia has increased it geopolitical importance. On the other hand, Iran from the geographical point of view is located in a region that connects two energy points, that is Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea (the Ellipse of Energy) to each other and has increased the importance of Iran from the points of view of geopolitical and Geo-Economic significantly. Iran possesses other geopolitical characteristics also that can act as effective factors in determining the outcome of a struggle between the forces in the Middle East and even the world, as Brzezinski has repeatedly pointed it out (Ezati, 2006: 11). On one hand, considering the occurred transformations in the geopolitical approaches and the increased importance of oil and gas resources in world's equations Iran is located at the focal point of the region and plays a vital role in production and transmission of Oil and Gas. Iran is located at the Center of gravity of Persian Gulf - Caspian Sea strategic energy eclipse (Kemp & Harkavy, 2004: 178) that apart from being an inherent blessing for Iran is a potential that can be easily used buy smart power policy makers.

3-2 Iran's Soft Power Elements
3-2-1 Islamic/Persian-Revolutionary Culture

Anthony Giddens believes that in the past Marx, Weber and Durkheim would see the general process of the world toward secularization.

However, with the beginning of the 1980s and the Victory of Islamic Revolution we are witnessing a reversal of this process; that is the general process of the world is going toward religion (Giddens, 1995: 75). The occurrence of Islamic revolution of Iran has been one of the big events in the second half of the 20th century that has caused so many transformations in the region's countries as well as the world structure of power (Hafeznia and Ahmadi, 2009: 74). Imperialism that would have colonize the countries of the world and would have Extinct their above and underground resource; communism also for outpacing its rival would have open its colonial mouth as much as it could (Welberg, 2011: 19). Here, Islamic Revolution of Iran was a 3rd path and pole for all those who were seeking to get freed from Imperial - Communism double-headed dragon. Therefore, Islamic Revolution with introducing a different geopolitical discourse among the bipolar world competition managed to establish its anti-colonial discourse in the two poles of capitalism-materialism (Kurzman, 2004: 23). Islamic Revolution of Iran was practically a different geopolitical force with its own discourses. The first districting aspect of the geopolitical discourse of Islamic Revolution was its meaning originality. The literature of Islamic Revolution of Iran was unique at its time; because in the discourse of east pole relations of production and materialism was considered as the base and the geopolitical discourse of west also was revolving around capitalist and enormous wealth. In such context and situation, the spirituality-orientation of Iranian culture found double importance and a more important role in the creation of smart power (Kebriaee Zadeh, 2011: 13).

5-Analysis

Geopolitical elements of smart power of Iran in line with the Middle East transformations identity is the most important criterion of the smart power of Iran. in line with this, it can be noted that in the middle east transformations of middle east social movement the main focus is on values, identities, cultural and religious issues which is integral part of these transformations. This has been linked with the elements of faith and civilization of the Middle East citizens. The reflection of this can be seen in objections of different countries of Middle East. Social-political transformations of Egypt and Tunisia can have so many political outcomes for the Arab world. Formation of Islamic

Revolution, based on Islamic and religious values caused a new wave of transformations with a new and effective content in Governance and ended a few centuries of ignorance of Islamic civilization. Hence, considering that the Iran's revolution is culture-oriented it can be claimed that Islamic revolution is the origin of soft and hard power and is based on smart power. It is obvious that this approach will be reflected in political, cultural and economic levels and would determine the policies of Islamic Republic of Iran at micro and macro levels (Mohammadi, 2011: 13).

A) Micro-Level

After Islamic Revolution of Iran liberal democracy faced serious challenges in Islamic countries. The witness to this claim at this point of time is the creation of Islamic movement in opposition to west in Islamic countries. Religious democracy of Islamic revolution that first was raised from mass of society didn't get established in it and gradually paved the way for realization of civil society. However, the establishment of the civil society contrary as to the western democracy didn't cause the mass society to lose its importance. The reason is that crises in Islamic Revolution, has made the use of mass society in the crisis period inevitable (Dehshiri, 2009: 54-55).

B) Macro-Level

Since Islam has a Universal message which is beyond time, Islamic Revolution of Iran also that has been founded on the basis of Islamic Sharia (law) cannot be considered empty of this characteristic and feature. Hence, Islamic Republic on one hand has a universal look and insight and addresses the entire world and on the other hand, its values and ideals are compatible with human's nature. On this basis, Roger Garaudy says: the revolution that took place with the leadership of Imam Khomeini belongs to the human civilization and doesn't belong to a certain society. This revolution like Prophets Movement belongs to all humans and societies. It is due to this characteristics that Global missions can be explained and related to Islamic revolution that among them we can refer to the change occurred in the political equations of the world, Export of Islamic Revolution, support of liberation movements, fight against Zionism and.... What formed in the spring of 2011 as a social movement in Middle East cannot be

considered irrelevant to approaches and forms of discourse. Middle east revolutions also from the point of view of The study of Political Movements is considered as the continuations of the Islamic movement, in a way that we can discuss and name the common components and elements between these movements and Islamic Revolution. These common aspects provide the mutual interaction of the contemporary Islamic Revolution (Kebriaee Zadeh, 2011: 18). These common aspects are:

A) Common Opinion: although the Islamic Revolution of Iran is a Shiite revolution; however, like every other Islamic movement believes in the unity of God and prophet of Islam. Consider Kaaba as the center and direction of its spiritual wishes and aspirations. Considers Quran as the word of God and Savior of astray mankind and believes in the world after and before death as well as peace, brotherhood and Equality (Anwarjondi, 1992: 257-260). Off course the charismatic characteristic of Imam Khomeini and the anti-colonial stands taken by him, that most of the Muslims in the world agree upon them, have added to the mutual interaction of Islamic revolution and Islamic movements (Jafarian, 1999: 238).

B) Common Enemy: since there are common belief principles between the Middle East revolutions and Islamic revolution of Iran, the definitions provided for friend and enemy also are influenced by these common belief principles. Islamic revolution of Iran with the aim of transforming the international system through making transformation and change in thoughts and minds and providing the mental context and conditions for changing international rules and norms managed to threaten the dominated regimes with its Liberating thinking.

C) Common Goal: Islamic Revolution of Iran and the contemporary Islamic movements all seek to put an end to tyranny and corruption and to execute Islamic rules and establish Islamic rule in the Muslim society all around the world through rejecting powers and relying on the God's power and with trusting the will of people. therefore, people's new movements in middle east inspired by the ideals of Islamic revolution such as putting an end to tyranny, justice, spirituality, Islam, independency and hostility toward Zionism has managed to create a new wave in the region (Dehshiri, 2011: 40-50).

D) Religious Democracy: Religious democracy inspired by Islamic Revolution has given this belief to Middle East people that with the help of Islam democracy can have a richer content. The support of the people of the region from this new governance system can be seen in Islamic slogans and their democracy orientation. Islamic revolution with proving the ability of the religion for governance and reviving the role of religion as an effective element on global transformations has managed to enliven the Islamic identity based on the connection of religion and politics. Revival of Islamic identity and the role of Islamic thinking has blossomed the role of religion in regional and international decision making (Kebriaee Zadeh, 2011: 19). Therefore, in geopolitical terms, the effective characteristics of Iran in line with the Middle East transformations in terms of smart power can be expressed as following:

The first characteristics can be seen in the counteract-oriented course of Islamic groups in Middle East against America's dominance and Zionist regime. When the political leaders of the region's countries started to work with great powers the context for development of political objections and outbreak of the crisis to the internal structure of the conservative Middle East countries was created. The reflection of this process can be considered and seen in relation with countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan and Morocco. The ideology of Islamic revolution of Iran has emphasized on the issue that any type of cooperation of the countries of the region with great powers can provide the necessary infrastructure for development of regional crisis (Hughes, 2010: 4).

The second characteristics can be seen in the counteract-oriented course of social objections of the people of Tunisia in December of 2010. These objections in a short time caused the change of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's rule. Similar process in Egypt was formed. The election of this country showed the intervention of the government in way of political participation of the society.

Conclusion

Inefficiency of soft power and hard power has led to the new pan of power; that is smart power in the foreign policies of U. S. Smart power is a wise and elaborate combining of soft and hard power that lead to their synergy. Smart power seeks to make use of all the

foundations of power, together with new technologies such as media, cyber and digital atmosphere of mental war, creation of opportunity, optimal use and timely use of the available potentials for reducing the expenses and costs as much as possible and achieving the goal as quick as possible. Islamic Republic of Iran also like other countries is seeking smart power and for playing its role and using the available opportunities with the consideration of challenges and its power potentials tries to increase its power not only in terms of hard power but also smart power, so that it can be effective more in the middle east region. Iran possesses special geopolitical capacities, characteristics and advantages in smart power that on the basis of constructivism theory, identity is the most important geopolitical feature of smart power of Iran. In line with this, it can be said that in current Middle East movements these characteristics are an integral part of such transformations. This is linked with the belief and civilization characteristics of the Middle East people and its reflection can be seen in objections of different countries in Middle East.

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