Causes and Consequences of Transnational Religious Soft Power

Jeffrey Haynes, London Metropolitan University
(jeff.haynes@londonmet.ac.uk)

Abstract

Scholarly and policy interest in the involvement of religion in international relations has increased in recent years, often with a focus on various kinds of transnational religious actors - including the Roman Catholic Church, al Qaeda and Shii networks in the Middle East. Some transnational religious actors affect international order, especially networks of Islamic extremists and terrorists.

This paper has several objectives. First, it examines the nature of transnational religious actors. Second, it looks at transnational religious soft power. Third, it discusses how transnational religious soft power can influence international outcomes. Fourth, it focuses on Iran's influence in Iraq in relation to Shii transnational religious networks.

To be successful it appears necessary for transnational religious actors to be successful in maintaining and disseminating their global message while adapting to the local. The Roman Catholic Church was able to do this in relation to democratisation and human rights in the 1980s and 1990s and al Qaeda was able to do it for a while following the USSR's ejection from Afghanistan until its brutal methods dramatically undermined popular support. The paper contends that Shii transnational networks involving Iran and Iraq show the relatively limited capacity of Shii transnational religious actors, as they are find it very difficult to forge collective goals. Instead, such collective goals are undermined by resolutely nationalist concerns. This is not to allege that nationalism necessarily trumps religious collective goals although it seems likely that in most cases this will indeed be the case. Further work is needed on religious transnationalism actors to determine whether this is likely to be the case but the very limited evidence presented in this paper suggests that we underestimate the power of nationalism and locality at our peril when seeking to understand what religious transnationalism can accomplish.

Scholarly and policy interest in the involvement of religion [1] in international relations has increased in recent years, often with a focus on various kinds of transnational religious actors. In Western Europe, religion was privatised following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, ushering in an era of state-led secularisation which was widely disseminated via European colonialism (Halahoff and Wright-Neville 2009: 923). Now, religion's 'return' to international relations necessarily involves the reverse process: 'deprivatisation' (Casanova 1994). Religious deprivatisation in international relations involves reassertion of religion's socio-political relevance, for centuries primarily a state-led initiative.

The circumstances of globalisation are a key factor encouraging transnational religious actors of all kinds – both benign and malign – to involve themselves in cross-border issues (Thomas 2005; Haynes 2007). Such people are often said to be 'excluded' from the benefits of globalisation for reasons of culture, history and geography. More generally, globalisation facilitates increased links between many kinds of state and non-state actors, both religious and secular. Geographical distance or international borders are no longer insuperable barriers to communication. As Peter Beyer explains, 'We now live in 'a globalizing social reality, one in which previously effective barriers to communication no longer exist'. For transnational religious actors, globalisation theoretically increases their ability to spread their messages and to link up with like-minded groups across international borders. In addition, over the past two decades or so, global migration patterns have also helped spawned more active transnational religious communities (Cesari 2010). The overall result is that cross-border links between various religious actors have recently multiplied, and so have their international and transnational concerns (Rudolph and Piscatori 1997; Haynes 2001; Fox and Sandler 2004; Thomas 2005) In short, as Banchoff (2008) claims, globalisation has led to more active transnational religious communities, creating a powerful force in international relations.

In this context, various transnational religious actors – including the Roman Catholic Church, al Qaeda and Shii networks in the Middle East are of importance. [2] Some transnational religious actors affect international order, especially networks of Islamic extremists and terrorists. Extremist pathologies present themselves in various order-challenging forms, including the September 11 outrages in the USA, the 7/7 bombings in London and India's 9/11: the November 2008 atrocity in Mumbai that killed 170 people, and wounded many more. This is not to imply that all transnational Islamic actors have ambitions to challenge international order or that they are all extremists.

Transnational conflicts illustrate how domestic and international political issues can feed off each other to present significant challenges to international order, with religious values and norms of central concern. In addition, the focus on transnational jihadi organisations [3] and

[1] Defining religion is notoriously problematic. Listing 17 different definitions, Martin E Marty concludes that 'scholars will never agree on the definition of religion'. He does however note five phenomena that 'help describe what we're talking about'. Religion focuses our 'ultimate concern', builds community, appeals to myth and symbol, is enforced through rites and ceremonies, and demands certain behaviour from its adherents (Marty 2000, 11–14). This suggests an approach, which I will adopt here, of understanding religion as a (1) body of ideas and outlooks, such as, theology and ethical code, as (2) a type of formal organisation, such as, an ecclesiastical 'church', and as (3) a social group, such as a faith-based organisation. It is clear, however, that religion affects the world in two basic ways: by what it *says* and *does*. The former relates to doctrine or theology, while the latter relates to religion's importance as a social phenomenon and mark of identity, which manifests in various modes of institutionalisation.

[2] In this paper, the term 'transnational' indicates actions conducted across national borders by non-institutional actors from civil society.

[3] Transnational jihadi organisations, such as al Qaeda, pose significant threats to both national and international security. Historically, Islamist movements, despite often pan-Islamic ideologies, typically began as national (not

other Islamist extremist entities has served to reignite the 'clash of civilisations' controversy, while serving partially to obscure the wider issue of what transnational religious actors actually seek to achieve. The current struggle between the USA and its allies and transnational jihadism is not a simple clash of Islam versus the West. Instead, it is a competition within Islam between a tiny minority of extremists and a much larger mainstream of moderates. But the USA cannot triumph in the 'long war' unless the Muslim moderates are victorious. The US needs to use its hard power against the hard core extremists, such as al Qaeda: no amount of soft power alone will do the job. On the other hand, soft power is essential to attract the mainstream and curtail support for the extremists. The US needs to show both cooperation with moderate Muslims and conflict with the extremists. This is also the situation more generally with transnational religious actors. Observers note that this can be characterised by its dualism, with some transnational religious actors seeking conflict and others, cooperation in order to achieve better outcomes in, for example, human rights and development issues (Haynes 2007). The transnational pursuit of cooperation and conflict is a key factor in encouraging dynamic growth of transnational networks of religious actors. The overall result is a new religious pluralism that has impacted upon transnational and international relations in two key ways. First, there is said to be the emergence of 'global religious identities' that may lead to increasing interreligious dialogues, involving greater religious engagement around various issues, including international development, conflict resolution, and transitional justice. On the other hand, this globalising environment can also encourage greater, often more intense, interreligious competition, between members of various religious faiths and traditions (Haynes 2007).

Religion's renewed transnational significance is observable among many cultures and religious faiths and in countries at various levels of economic development. For many observers and scholars, this was unexpected because it challenged conventional wisdom about the nature and long-term historical impact of secularisation, calling into question a core presumption of Western social science: As societies modernise they *invariably* secularise, with consequential effects for religion, which is both marginalised and 'privatised', excluded from the public realm. Fox (2008; 2010) notes however that is actually happening is less clear-cut: secularisation in some areas and sacralisation in others.

Transnational ideas with the capacity to influence international relations are not new; they are not a product of the current phase of globalisation. Transnational ideas, both religious and secular, emerged historically in response to changing domestic and international circumstances. Various transnational ideas – including: Communism, Zionism, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-racism, Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism, Pan-Islam, 'Afro-Asian solidarity', national self-determination and environmentalism – have been influential at various times (Florini 2000). Generally, the ability of such ideas to make their mark and help achieve is reflective of their ability to wield soft power. That is, when transnational ideas appeal to large numbers of people around the world then, by virtue of their collective effort, they can influence outcomes significantly. Such ideas' success or failure does not necessarily depend on their ability to link up with state power. As Thomas (1999: 30) notes, '[t]ransnational actors represent – or are seen to represent by individuals and groups in the international community – ideas whose time has come, ideas which increasingly shape the values and norms of the international system'. Note that this does not necessarily imply that such values or norms are normatively progressive or regressive. They are applicable to a wide

---

transnational) movements against their respective Governments and their policies. As the case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt demonstrates, this often implies use of nationalist besides religious sentiments and a sphere of overlapping ideology with secular organisations.

range of actors with various motives for action, some of which we commend while others we do not. What is clear however is that transnational actors and the ideas they represent, for good or ill, help set and mould international agendas while affecting outcomes in various ways. They do this by adding to the lexicon and vocabulary of debate; and in some cases they are a source of soft power in international relations, informing the ideas and development of transnational civil society.

This paper has several objectives. First, it examines the nature of transnational religious actors. Second, we look at transnational religious soft power. Third, it discusses how transnational religious soft power can influence international outcomes. Fourth, it focuses on Iran's influence in Iraq in relation to Shii transnational religious networks.

Transnational religious actors: Cooperation, conflict and soft power

Although many authors attest to the current significance of religion in international relations — with some observers noting a recent widespread religious resurgence (Fox and Sandler 2004; Norris and Inglehart 2004; Thomas 2005; Haynes 2007; Micklethwait and Wooldridge 2009) — there have been few recent attempts to seek to assess *how* transnational religious actors affect international relations. This is surprising given the widespread agreement that such actors can be influential.

At the present time, some religious transnational networks are clearly influential in international relations. For example, the numerous extant cross border Islamic movements all have soft power that 'enhances [their] strength' (Voll 2006: 15). In addition, as Fox and Sandler (2004: 168) note, religion can also affect international outcomes via 'its significant influence on domestic politics. It is a motivating force that guides many policy makers'.

The increased activities of transnational religious actors since the end of the Cold War reflects not only a general, widely noted, increased involvement of religion in international relations but also highlights the ease with which domestic issues can 'spill over' to become issue of regional or international concern. For example, the involvement of Pope John Paul II in Poland's democratisation in the late 1980s as well as the transnational ramifications of the anti-Israel activities of both Hamas (Gaza Strip) and Hezbollah (Lebanon) highlight the coming together of both religious and secular issues in pursuit of political goals.

There are now numerous, albeit apparently uncounted, transnational religious actors. Many have an impact upon international relations in two main ways: cooperation and conflict, hallmarks of a new religious pluralism. For Banchoff (2008), 'shifting religious identities have encouraged interreligious dialogue and greater political engagement around global challenges, including international development, conflict resolution, transitional justice, and bioethics. At the same time, interreligious competition has contributed to political conflict and running controversy over the meaning and scope of religious freedom'. Such issues are contextualised by the recent international focus on democratisation and democracy; goals which ultimately seek to extend cooperation and reduce conflict. The Roman Catholic Church was especially noteworthy in this context in the 1980s and 1980s. The Church – or more accurately, the Vatican – encouraged authoritarian regimes to democratise in parts of the world where the Catholic Church had considerable influence, including many Latin American countries, parts of Central and Eastern Europe, especially Poland, and several African countries, including Benin, Togo and Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo).

On the other hand, the actions of transnational jihadi organisations, such as al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Taibar, author of the November 2008 atrocities in Mumbai, are based squarely on a conflictual view of the world. Transnational *jihadi* organisations, unlike Islamist-nationalist groups such as Hamas, see even local and regional conflicts, such as the ongoing insurgencies in Yemen and Somalia, as aspects of a wider international conflict to establish an Islamic state (*khalifah*), although for practical reasons it would probably be sub-divided regionally. [4] Transnational jihadi organisations, such as al Qaeda, explicitly reject and seek to undermine foundational norms, values, institutions and rules that underpin international order and its key institutions, such as the United Nations and leading states, such as the United States (Haynes 2005). As a result, they offer a competing logic to the sovereignty-based state system and seek to undermine (Sunni) Muslims' national allegiances (Rudolph and Piscatori 1997: 12). Transnational jihadi organisations' capacity for destabilisation was highlighted in the 2005 *Human Security Report*, which noted that '[i]nternational terrorism is the only form of political violence that appears to be getting worse. Some datasets have shown an overall decline in international terrorist incidents of all types since the early 1980s, but the most recent statistics suggest a dramatic increase in the number of high-casualty attacks since the September 11 attacks on the US'.

Transnational jihadi organisations rarely control territory for long – although the Taliban government in Afghanistan (1996-2001) did allow Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda considerable freedom of movement in the country until overthrow by the US-led bombardment and subsequent invasion. More generally, 'failed' states, such as Somalia, and 'failing' states, such as Pakistan, facilitate formation and development of transnational jihadi organisations because the state is too weak to prevent it. This allows such organisations increased freedom of action, including Lashkar-e-Taibar, author of the Mumbai bombings of November 2008. The overall point is that transnational jihadi organisations seek to exploit the circumstances of failed and failing states in order to try to achieve their objectives. Their success or failure is not linked to their ability to command significant military resources; they don't have them. Instead, their ability to advance their cause and achieve the *khalifah* is largely dependent on their ability to convince putative followers of the appropriateness of their goals. To do this, they need to increase their soft power.

The concept of 'soft power' refers to means to achieve objectives. When Joseph Nye (1990) introduced the concept of soft power into international relations two decades ago, it was a useful reminder that hard power is not the only tool available to achieve goals. Power is the ability to influence others to get them to do what you want. There are three main ways to do this: (1) threaten them with sticks; (2) pay them with carrots; and (3) attract them or co-opt them, so that they want what you want. If you can get others to be attracted, to want what you want, it costs you much less in carrots and sticks (Nye 2004b). In short, soft power 'is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced' (Nye 2004).

Nye's main focus is the rise and fall of US soft power. After World War II, American political ideals favourably influenced Europe in the direction of both democratisation and market economies. During the Cold War, Radio Free Europe helped to build support for both democracy and improved human rights in communist Central and Eastern Europe. In 1989, Chinese students demonstrating in Tiananmen Square used a replica of the Statue of Liberty

---

[4] *Khalifah* is the term used for the series of Muslim states that were formed following the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 C.E.

as a symbol. In 2010, satellite television helps builds support in Iran for Western political and economic ideals. As Nye notes,

> These are all examples of America's soft power. When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction. Seduction is always more effective than coercion, and many values like democracy and human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply seductive. As General Wesley Clark put it, soft power 'gave us an influence far beyond the hard edge of traditional balance-of-power politics.' But attraction can turn to repulsion if we act in an arrogant manner and destroy the real message of our deeper values (http://www.futurecasts.com/book%20review%206-4.htm).

 'Soft power' refers to the capability of an entity, usually but not necessarily a state, to influence what others do through persuasion, not force or threats. Soft power attracts or co-opts people; it does not coerce them. Soft power influences people by *appealing* to them not by *forcing* them to comply. Soft power covers certain attributes—including, culture, values, ideas—collectively representing different, but not necessarily lesser, forms of influence compared to 'hard' power. The latter implies more direct, forceful measures typically involving the threat or use of armed force or economic coercion. In short, soft power is neither 'sticks nor carrots' but a 'third way' of achieving objectives. It goes beyond simple influence—that can rest on hard power threats both military or diplomatic as well as financial payments—to involve *persuasion* and *encouragement* rooted in shared norms, values and beliefs. To exercise soft power relies on (1) *persuasion*, or the ability to convince by argument, and on (2) ability to *attract*.

> If I am persuaded to go along with your purposes without any explicit threat or exchange taking place—in short, if my behavior is determined by an observable but intangible attraction—soft power is at work. *Soft power uses a different type of currency—not force, not money—to engender cooperation. It uses an attraction to shared values, and the justness and duty of contributing to the achievement of those values*. (Nye 2004c, italics added)

In sum, hard power represents the ability to *force* people to do things, irrespective of whether or not they agree with them. Soft power moulds preferences to encourage people to *want* to do things. Soft power is the power of attractive ideas to persuade individuals or groups to act in a certain way, in pursuit of identifiable goals. It can be conceptually contrasted with the notion of 'hard power': military or economic influence, involving overt leverage and/or coercion.

Transnational religious soft power

Transnational religious soft power is not new. For example, Christian and Muslim religious missions have for centuries been key expressions of transnational religious soft power. Their aim was and is to seek to change people's religious norms, values and beliefs from one set of views to another set. The result is that individuals and then communities in foreign countries eventually behave religiously like the original proselytisers. As Nye notes, 'for centuries, organized religious movements have possessed soft power' (Nye 2004a: 98). In recent years, especially since 9/11, competing conceptions of soft power have competed with each other, within the context of the 'war on terror'. The US has sought to project its soft power but has

not been able to convince most Muslims that US objectives in Afghanistan and Iraq are not primarily self-serving (Shlapentokh *et al* 2005). The US has found itself competing for Muslim hearts and minds with both 'extremist' and 'moderate' Islamic soft power.

Focusing on both extremist and moderate Islamic transnational networks, many analysts agree that extremist movements—notably al-Qaeda—more strongly affect the world stage and receive more foreign policy attention from the great powers than many 'weak' states in the international system (Haynes 2005, Voll 2006). Of course, the relevant literature does not begin and end with Islam. Other religious entities—including the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant evangelical churches (often conservative and American-based or rooted), and Jewish lobbies—are also significant transnational religious actors at the current time (Norris and Inglehart 2004, Thomas 2005, Voll 2006; Walt and Mearsheimer 2006). What they all have in common are significant amounts of soft power, which encourage followers and those sympathetic to their goals to adopt norms, values and beliefs that encourage them to act in certain ways and not others.

Religious soft power expands the use of the term 'soft power' beyond Nye's original argument. Initially, soft power was the influence one *government* exercises over another to try to achieve its goals. Over time, however, Nye accepts the plausibility of a non-state actor having soft power. For example, commenting on Hezbollah's war with Israel in early 2009, Nye makes it plain that the concept of soft power can include non-state cultural and religious actors who seek to influence policy by encouraging policymakers to incorporate into their policies religious beliefs, norms and values. For example,

> Israel used its hard military power in a manner that bolstered Hezbollah's soft power and legitimacy in Arab eyes, including many Sunnis who were originally skeptical of a Shi'ite organization with ties to non-Arab Iran. We know that terrorist organizations most often lose popular support by their own excesses — witness the drop among Jordanians in the soft power of Al Qaeda in Iraq, led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, after the organization bombed a wedding in an Amman hotel (http://theinnercircle.wordpress.com/2009/07/15/joseph-s-nye-jr-s-explanation-of-smart-power-in-the-middle-east/).

In sum, whatever their objectives, transnational religious actors aim to spread influence by establishment and development of cross-border networks. They seek to do this through application and development of 'transnational religious soft power'. They must seek to use soft power because such actors very rarely have any hard power worth speaking of. Extending the sue of the term soft power in this way allows us to include transnational religious actors, such as the Roman Catholic Church and al Qaeda, who have sought to apply soft power, aiming to encourage significant religious and political changes in, for example, Poland or Yemen.

Shii minorities in the Middle East: A threat to regional security?

Most discussions of Islamic transnational religious actors focus on Sunni extremist groups, notably transnational jihadi organisations, such as al Qaeda. Relatively little has been written on transnational Shii groups, which are active not only in the Middle East but also Europe and elsewhere. It is estimated that between 10-13% of the world's Muslims are Shii, that is, between 150-200 million Shi'a Muslims worldwide (Miller 2009). The largest Shii group is mainstream (Twelver) Shiism. More than Sunnism, Shii often appears to be inherently

transnational, because of the wide geographical distribution of its core symbols, including in Iraq and Iran. Shiism sometimes seems to be almost a synonym for Iranian interests. This is perceptible in the debate on where Shii loyalties lie. For example, in December 2004 King Abdullah of (manily Sunni) Jordan warned of an emerging 'Shii crescent', and presented the Shii communities in the Gulf, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon as a 'fifth column', controlled by and from Tehran which inherently threatened regional Sunni interests (Cole 2009) Soon after, Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak, went further. He claimed that historically the Shii in the (mainly Sunni) Arab world had shown greater loyalty to Iran than to their home countries (Helfont 2009). Finally, noted academics, including a leading US expert on Islam, Vali Nasr (2006), sought to turn Shiiism='Iranism' into a theory. Nasr contends that the Shii victory in the 2006 Iraqi election would serve to remobilise all the Shii in the region, promoting common demands and identity, which in turn would serve Iranian foreign policy interests. The concern underlying the claims of King Abdullah, President Mubarak and Professor Nasr is obvious: many incumbent Middle Eastern governments believe themselves under threat from Shii transnational religious networks with close links to the government of Iran. But why should such states consider an ideologically orientated regime like Iran, with relatively little military capability, a significant security threat? Iran is widely seen as having ambitions of regional hegemony, but it lacks the military power normally associated with such a role. Iran is widely perceived as a threat to regional stability and security because the country's post-revolutionary government has developed cultural, spiritual, and political ties with other Shii populations and movements in the region.

Other views maintain that this is a simplistic, one-sided assessment which overlooks the power of nationalism in the region. For example, Iraqi nationalism is likely to prove more than a match for the transnational solidarities of Shiism, when it comes to political outcomes. That is, it is most unlikely that inter-Shii solidarity is powerful enough to transcend the basic historical enmity and suspicion which traditionally separates Arabs and Persians. Less than a generation ago, Iraqi Shia fought their Iranian counterparts during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88. This was the bloodiest conflict of the second half of the 20th century, with an estimated 500,000 Iranian and Iraqi soldiers killed. It seems plausible to contend that many Iraqis, even those who lived in exile in Iran during the years of Saddam's rule, would not welcome undue Iranian influence in their country.

One way of thinking about this issue is to focus on how Shii religious actors in one country – for example, Iran – seek to influence Shii actors in other regional countries, such as, Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia or Yemen, where they are in minorities compared to the Sunni majority. Louer (2008) seeks to test the proposition that there is a politically powerful 'Shiite crescent', orchestrated by Iran, which is regionally influential among Shiite populations in these countries. Surprisingly, what she finds is that over time – that is, since Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution – there has been a move *away* from a more transnational orientation, to one accepting national identity ('Politics is domestic', as one chapter puts it). Louer explains that in three regional monarchies: Kuwait, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, Shii Islamic groups were the offspring of various Iraqi movements that surfaced over recent decades. They managed to penetrate local societies by espousing the networks of Shiite clergymen. But that was not the end of the matter: instead of accepting leadership and orientation from outside, what happened was that both factional quarrels and the Iranian revolution of 1979 helped to mould the landscape of Shiite Islamic activism in the Gulf monarchies. The reshaping of geopolitics after the Gulf War and the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003 had a profound impact on transnational Shiite networks. New political opportunities encouraged these groups to concentrate on national issues, such as becoming fierce opponents of the Saudi monarchy.

Yet the question still remains: How deeply have these new beliefs taken root in Islamic society? Are Shiites Saudi or Yemeni patriots?

Saudi Arabia and Yemen are Arab Muslim countries with Sunni majorities and Shii minorities of respectively 10-15% and 35-40%. Both countries' governments have regarded the rise of Shii-majority Iran with great trepidation. This is because Iran is considered to be a significant security threat –- not simply because Iran's revolutionary Islamist regime has long been expected to try to alter the balance of regional (hard) power, but also because of its perceived ability to encourage religious-revolutionary contagion, act irrationally (especially under the present regime, whose leaders include President Ahmadinejad, and/or support religious extremism/terrorism. There is also fear that Iran is able to project its soft power in such a way as to help undermine regional political stability. The (Sunni) Saudi regime fears (Shii) Iran's capacity to use religious symbols to undermine its legitimacy and facilitate collective political action, especially among Saudi Arabia's already disaffected Shii minority. In addition to 'hard balancing' against this transnational ideological/religious threat, Saudi Arabia seeks to employ soft power balancing strategies, consisting of resource mobilisation and counter-framing, to prevent symbols from being used as coordinating devices for collective political action.

Louer considers the transformation of Shii movements in relation to central religious authority. While they strive to formulate independent political agendas, Shii networks remain linked to religious authorities (*marja'*) who reside either in Iraq or Iran. This connection becomes all the more problematic should the *marja'* also be the head of a state, as with Iran's Ali Khamenei. In conclusion, Louer argues that the Shii will one day achieve political autonomy, especially as the *marja'*, in order to retain transnational religious authority, begin to meddle less and less in the political affairs of other countries. Overall, Louer's key finding is that 'it takes more than religion to form a homogeneous whole at a regional or national level as demonstrated by the internal divisions within Iraq's Shii community. Their loyalties are unpredictable.'

How then to conceptualise the capacity of Iranian Shii transnational actors to achieve outcomes in Iraq? Does Shii soft power work with Iranian state hard power to produce smart power in Iraq, which benefits Iranian national interests? Or, is the fact of Iraqi-Iranian suspicions and hostilities most significant in denying Iran national interest goals in Iran? Generally, despite the undoubted existence of transnational religious networks of various kinds it is rare to see the claim that such organisations manage to undermine popular national allegiances in favour of the undeniably attractive yet also somewhat abstract and fuzzy notion of transnational religious identity.

A central development in the perceptions of Iran's new powerful position in the region is the post-2006 emergence of Iraq's Shii-dominated regime. This in turn links to a wider security concern: Arab/Sunni incumbent regimes regard non-Arab/Shii/Islamist regimes with limited military capabilities, such as that of Iran, as threats to their security because of the potential of religious soft power to undermine their position. How do Arab incumbent regimes, the great majority of which have Sunni Islam as the majority religion, manage the ideological threat from Iran, a country which, logic tells us, would likely seek to work with minority Shii

groups to help it achieve its regional foreign policy objectives? [5] Table 1 indicates the approximate percentage of Shii Muslims in 13 Middle Eastern countries.
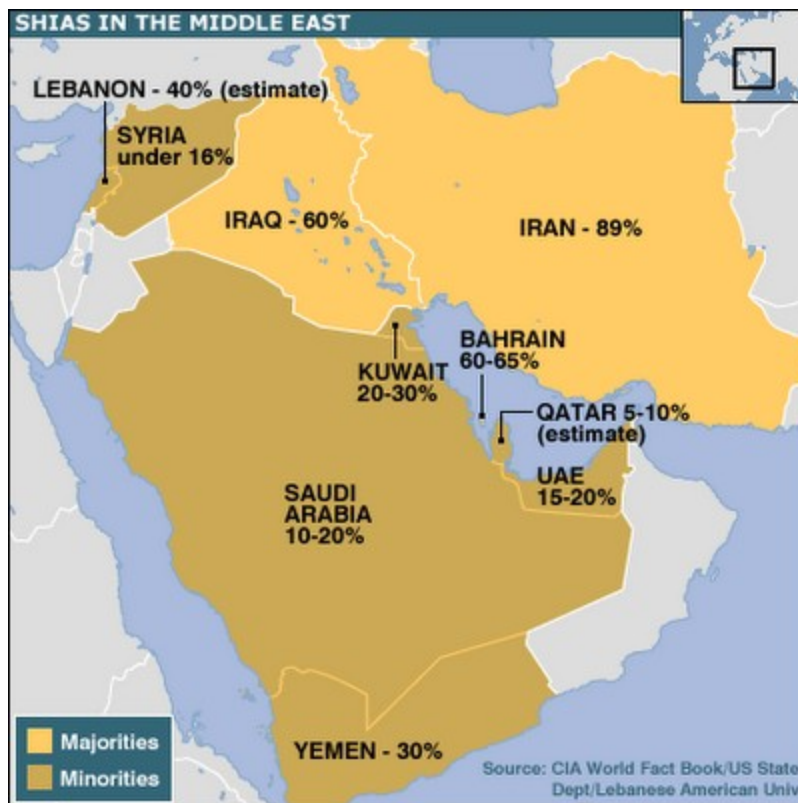
Table 1: Middle Eastern Countries with More Than 100,000 Shii Muslims

Country	Estimated 2009 Shiite Population (millions)	Approximate Percentage of Shii in Muslim Population
Iran	66 -70	90-95%
Bahrain	0.4-0.5	65-75%
Iraq	19 -22	65-70%
Lebanon	1 - 2	45-55%
Yemen	8 - 10	35 - 40%
Kuwait	0.5-0.7	20-25%
Syria	3 - 4	15 - 20%
Afghanistan	3 - 4	10 - 15%
Saudi Arabia	2 - 4	10-15%
Turkey	7 - 11	10 - 15%
United Arab Emirates	0.3-0.4	c.10%
Qatar	0.1	c.10%
Oman	0.1-0.3	5-10%

Note: Countries with an estimated Shiite population of less than 1% of the country's Muslim population are not listed. The figures for Shiis are generally given in a range because of the limitations of the secondary-source data.

Sources: Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, 'Mapping the Global Muslim Population', October 2009 (http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=455); Fox 2008: Table 1, p. 219;

---

[5] Fox (2008: Table 8.1, p. 219) notes that of 20 Middle Eastern and North African countries, at least 15 have Sunni Islam as the majority religion. Of the others, Israel is majority Jewish, while Yemen and Lebanon are noted by Fox to have the same majority religion: 'Islam'. Only Iran, Iraq and Bahrain have Shii Islam as the majority religion. Confusingly, however, Fox lists Bahrain as having as its majority religion, Sunni Islam.

SHIAS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

LEBANON - 40% (estimate)
SYRIA under 16%
IRAQ - 60%
IRAN - 89%
BAHRAIN 60-65%
KUWAIT 20-30%
QATAR 5-10% (estimate)
UAE 15-20%
SAUDI ARABIA 10-20%
YEMEN - 30%

Majorities
Minorities

Source: CIA World Fact Book/US State Dept/Lebanese American Univ

Iran state power and Shii transnational religious networks

Iran's regional significance has its foundations in a mix of hard and soft power. In relation to the later, the government of Iran seeks to exploit transnational Shii religious links to build its influence. Iran's Shii diplomacy focuses on Shii movements that either hold quasi-state power, like the Hezbollah in Lebanon, or which have remained shut out of political power completely, as is the case in Bahrain, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. In those countries, a transnational network of Shii political activists inspired by the Iranian revolution and schooled in Shii seminaries in Iraq and Iran seeks to mobilise large-scale Shii support for Shii empowerment in the context of long-term Sunni domination (Porter 2008).

This is not to contend that Iran's foreign policy is unique in its bid to exploit real or putative transnational solidarities. According to Sarioghalam (2001: 1), 'Iran's foreign policy is shaped, not mainly by international forces, but by a series of intense post-revolutionary debates inside Iran regarding religion, ideology, and the necessity of engagement with the West and specifically the United States'. When the material interests of the state have conflicted with commitments to 'Islamic solidarity', Tehran has usually given preference to security and economic considerations. Post-revolution Iran has sought to use religion to pursue material state interests – as a way of contending with neighbouring regimes or trying to force changes in their policies. For example, it has long promoted Islamist radicals and anti-regime movements – such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Palestinian territories.

It should also be noted that various non-Muslim countries, including the United States, India and Israel, have all sought to work with religious groups to try to achieve national interest goals. In some case, religious actors have sought to exploit their religious soft power with incumbent regimes in order to encourage foreign policy makers to adopt policies informed by

religious norms and values (Haynes 2009). Soft power applied domestically can easily become hard power internationally. For example, during the George W. Bush presidency (2001-2009) the religious right sought to convince the US government, through a mix of soft and hard power, to oppose funding for contraception and abortion internationally. When the US government agreed to curtail funding to various international organisations on these grounds, it was emphasising not the use of soft power but the force of hard economic power. Another example is the influence of various conservative entities in US domestic politics that used soft power to try to encourage the Bush administration to invade Iraq in 2003. The actual invasion was, of course, the epitome of hard power – despite the fact that soft power, focusing on the desirability of spreading democracy to Iraq and then to the Middle East region more generally encouraged use of the policy. What these examples collectively illustrate is that soft power is one end of a spectrum with hard power at the other end. In other words, soft power will not necessarily be used in isolation but will often form an aspect of a continuum that includes, when deemed necessary, use of hard power. Their interaction is smart power: 'the ability to combine hard and soft power into a winning strategy' (http://theinnercircle.wordpress.com/2009/07/15/joseph-s-nye-jr-s-explanation-of-smart-power-in-the-middle-east/).

Turning to Iran, it is clear that the government understands the value of soft and hard power working together to achieve optimum foreign policy outcomes. In March 2005, at the start of its fourth five-year economic development plan, the Iranian government issued 'Iran's 20-Year Economic Perspective'. The document set out the country's strategic economic, political, social and cultural directions over the next 20 years. The preamble promised that by 2025, i.e., after the completion of four five-year development plans, Iran would be a fully advanced country, the most economically, scientifically and technologically developed country among 28 Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian states. Iran was to achieve this by projecting its 'Islamic and revolutionary identity, offering a guiding light for the Islamic world while engaged in effective and constructive interaction with the rest of the global community' (Amuzegar 2009).

Achieving these goals would require use of both hard and soft power. Yet, Iran's hard power is limited; on the other hand, the country potentially has considerable soft power. For Nye (2004a), a country's soft power can come from three resources: (1) Its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), (2) Its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and (3) Its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority). What might be the sources of Iran's soft power? For Maleki (2007), they are: *culture* (Persian language, Iranian traditions, mainstream [Twelver] Shiism), *political values* (democracy, elections, women's rights, civil society), and *foreign policies* (legitimacy, prestige, public relations).

Since the overthrow of Saddam in March 2003, Iran has sought to use both hard and soft power, including cultural, religious, political, and economic influences, to pursue national interests in Iraq. As table 1 notes, Iraq is demographically a predominantly Shii majority country. However, under Saddam Hussein's rule, the state privileged the Sunni minority, dealing consistently harshly with the Shii majority. During the immediate post-Saddam years, 2003-2006, Iran actively supported the position of the United States in supporting elections in Iraq. Iran hoped to use its cultural and religious soft power in Iraq to try to increase its influence by virtue of its position among Iraq's Shiite majority and, as a result, achieve an influential position. The 2003-2006 position contrasted with the approach that Iran adopted in the aftermath of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Then, the revolutionary government sought,

primarily via hard power strategies, to export the revolution into Iraq 'through the funding of Shiite resistance groups'. However, Iran's hard power strategy failed and 'current circumstances encourage Iran to use soft power to help create some sort of Islamic government in Iraq' (Kemp 2005: 6).

Iran is likely to continue to promote democratic structures and processes in Iraq – as a strategy to help consolidate a strong permanent Shiite voice in Iraq's government. On the one hand, Iran is likely to seek to continue to use its soft power as a key short- and medium-term means to try to facilitate achievement of its main objectives in Iraq: political stability and an accretion of Iran's influence. On the other hand, Iran's involvement in Iraq is also part of a long-term strategy that may involve exercise of both soft and hard power. Since 2003 Iran has opted for intervention through primarily soft power and religious ties, but it could choose to be a more significant and active (and violent) player should its strategic interests be challenged. In sum, 'Iran's capacity, capability, and will to influence events in Iraq are high in terms of both hard power and soft power' (Kemp 2005: 7). Iran aims to develop a successful smart power strategy in Iraq via strategic use of political, economic, religious and cultural power.

Iran's political influence is focused on the development of close relationships with Iraq's Shii political parties, which has undoubtedly enhanced Iran's ability since 2003 to pursue its national objectives in Iraq. For example, Iran maintains close ties with the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (formerly SCIRI) and has also funded the Islamic Dawa Party (Islamic Call Party), the Sadrist Trend (an Iraqi nationalist movement led by Muqtada al-Sadr), and other sympathetic political groups (Felter and Fishman 2008: 13). Through such ties, Iran seeks to encourage Iraqi politicians to pursue policies favourable to Iranian interests. In this respect, Iran sought to ruin the 2008 US-Iraq Security Agreement and Strategic Framework Agreement (http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/iraq/WH/20081204-6.pdf). On the other hand, the fact that they were agreed – albeit against strong Iranian opposition – shows that there are clear limits to Iran's political influence in Iraq, even when the country is controlled by (Shii) politicians who might be thought to be inherently sympathetic to Iran's goals. On the other hand, Iran still has close relationships with many top officials in the current Iraqi administration. It was reported in mid-2009 that there had been numerous two-way visits involving high-level Iranian and Iraqi officials in the early months of that year.[6]

Iran's economic influence in Iraq is significant. By 2009, Iran had become Iraq's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching an estimated $4 billion (Katzman 2009). In addition, the government of Iran and state-owned companies have invested heavily in Iraq's reconstruction. News reports in 2008-2009 indicated that two of Iraq's holiest cities – Najaf and Karbala, locations of the holiest Shii shrines, which receive hundreds of thousands of Iranian pilgrims each year – received major investments from Iranian state-owned companies (Dreyfuss 2008). The governor of Najaf province reported that Iran's government provided $20 million a year for construction projects aimed at improving the city's tourism infrastructure (Wong 2007). In addition, Iranian government-owned tourism companies are key sponsors of pilgrimages to Iraq's holy cities. They have the power to select the Iraqi companies with which they work for pilgrims' transportation, protection and accommodation (Dagher 2009). These Iraqi companies are often linked to Iraqi Shii political parties, via

---

[6] See, for example, 'Iran's Larijani arrives in Najaf', United Press International, March 24, 2009; 'Iran's Rafsanjani Visits Iraq', Voice of America News, March 2, 2009; Stephen Lee Meyers, 'Security Talks About Iraq Not Needed, Iran Signal', *The New York Times*, February 11, 2009; 'Talabani Arrives in Tehran', United Press International, February 27, 2009; Kimi Yoshino, 'Iraqi Prime Minister Visits Iran', *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 2009.

shared personnel, which obviously indicates further Iranian influence, as it brings together both political and economic considerations (Dagher 2009).

Finally, Iran's cultural influence in Iraq is ambivalent. We noted above that Maleki (2007) characterises Iran's cultural soft power in three ways: Persian language; Iranian traditions; mainstream [Twelver] Shiism. Very few Iraqis speak Persian/Farsi, so it is difficult to see how this would be a soft power strength for Iran in Iraq. On the other hand, the high standard of reporting on the Iranian satellite television channel al-Alam is said to have won a large audience among Iraqi Shii. Second, it is not clear what 'Iranian traditions' Maleki has in mind; however, bearing in mind the fact that the two countries fought a bitter war less than 25 years ago, it is unlikely that Iranian traditions would be well regarded in Iraq. This brings us to the third and potentially most significant aspect of Iran's putative soft power in Iraq: mainstream Twelver Shiism. However, what we see is by no means clear indications of Iran's power in this regard. Instead, Shiism seems to be a further source of competition.

Two cities, Qom in Iran and Najaf in Iraq, are centres of Shiite learning; both have important *hawzas* (seminaries). Yet, rather than developing under Iran's guidance, they have developed under two distinct and competing traditions. Najaf is home to the Imam Ali shrine, one of the holiest sites in Shi'a Islam. The Najaf *hawza* is the oldest Shii seminary, the chief exemplar of the 'Quietist' tradition, which holds that clerics should not get involved in politics and should instead focus 'only' on guiding their followers' religious and spiritual trajectories (Otterman 2004). Najaf flourished as the centre of Shiite learning and faith for hundreds of years until its influence was limited under the repressive policies of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime. Following the March 2003 US-led invasion, Najaf re-emerged as an intellectual and religious Shiite centre, led by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, a highly revered and immensely popular Quietist cleric who was born in Iran in 1930.

Following the Islamic Revolution in 1979, during the 1980s and 1990s the Iranian city of Qom eclipsed Najaf as an intellectual centre for Shiism. Unlike the *hawza* in Najaf, that in Qom is affiliated to the tradition established by Iran's first post-revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. This tradition has it that a senior Shii scholarly figure, or a group of such people, enjoys absolute political, religious and social authority in the Shii community. The clerical establishment in Qom has close ties with the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Finally, while there is a great deal of religious, economic interaction between Qom and Najaf, Najaf's recent re-emergence presents a significant challenge to Qom's religious authority Qom has provided scholarships to and books in Najaf as a means to try to build its influence (Bazzi 2003; Nasr 2006; Blanchard and Katzman 2008).

The issue of Iranian culture in Iraq was also highlighted in a recent controversy about the use of Farsi in street signs in Shii pilgrimage centres, places where tens of thousands of Iraqis travel each year. While it would be a practical advantage for such people to be able to read street signs in Iraq, a country where most people speak Arabic or Kurdish, the issue was seized upon by some Iraqis as an unwelcome sign of burgeoning Iranian influence. The anti-Iran stance was evident in February 2009, when Iraq's minister of the interior, Jawad al-Bolani, banned the public use of Farsi-language signs in both Najaf and Karbala. (Farsi is of course the official language of Iran and this act can only be interpreted as an anti-Iran action.) ('Iraq bans Farsi signs in holy cities', 2009). Soon after, Karbala residents 'demonstrated against the awarding of a contract to an Iranian company, Al Kawthar, to renovate the historic city center, including the area around the shrines of Imam Hussein and his brother

Abu Fadhil al-Abbas, part of a $100-million project' (Dagher 2009). This would appear to indicate that although the majority of Iranian and Iraqi citizens share a common faith, Shii Islam, this does not imply that their shared religious affiliation is more important than their separate national identities.

Overall, a focus upon culture including religion, in the context of Iran-Iraq relations indicates that many Iraqis would not agree that Iran is the appropriate nation, whether by default or by adoption, to which Iraqi Shii should turn. For example, the Shii theologian and political leader, Muqtadah al-Sadr exploits the Iranian origins of Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani in order to criticise him. Iran's strategy is not based on a sense of allegiance but on its understanding of the Shii, people who share a religious tradition yet are very divided politically in Iraq. There is a deep social divide between conservative Shii (including the religious community in Najaf, traders in the holy cities, urban middle classes) and the politically radical masses, many of whom who support Muqtadah al-Sadr (Harling and Yasin 2006).

Conclusion

It is possible to hypothesise that Iran's mix of hard and soft power 'should' be an effective strategy to build and deepen its influence in post-Saddam Iraq. Our account suggests however that so far at least this is not clearly the case. This is because while inter-elite links between senior religious and governmental figures have developed, Iran's central position in post-Saddam Iraq is not popular with most Iraqis. Following the overthrow of Saddam and the US-led invasion in March 2003, Iran has sought to increase its influence in Iraq by a mix of hard and soft power. But does this add up to smart power, that is, is it a winning strategy?

Iran seeks to spread its influence through many channels. Tehran has encouraged its allies in Iraq to get fully involved in the political process, the better to influence it. Given its political, economic and cultural, including religious, interests, Iran clearly has good reasons to seek to be influential in Iraq, utilising its resources: a mix of soft and hard power. Yet, as Iraq emerges and develops as a sovereign state, it will likely remain very wary of its eastern neighbour, seeking to limit Iran's influence within its borders. This necessarily will diminish the ability of Iran to achieve its goals.

In terms of the wider issue examined in this paper - transnational religious soft power – the case of Iran in Iraq provides interesting food for thought. Iran's involvement in Iraq has clear policy relevance and important implications for the international relations literature on regional perceptions of threat and the balance of power, constructivist interpretations of what governments and other actors do, as well as wider issues of the links between religion and international security. The example examined in this paper contributes to a growing literature examining transnational Islamic political activism. For many Iraqis, the ideological, religious and political threat emanating from Iran appears to be an important factor that works to undermine any attempts to build a transnational Shii network involving the two countries.

To be successful it appears necessary that transnational religious actors accomplish two goals: disseminating an attractive cross-border global message while adapting to the local circumstances. The Roman Catholic Church was able to do this in relation to democratisation and human rights in the 1980s and 1990s and al Qaeda was able to do it for a while following the USSR's ejection from Afghanistan until its brutal methods dramatically undermined popular support. It comes as something of a surprise however to see the relatively limited capacity of Shii transnational religious actors to forge collective goals which are

characterised by religion. Instead, as the case of Iraq shows very clearly any potential of such collective goals can be undermined by popular nationalist concerns. This is not to allege that nationalism necessarily trumps religious collectivity although it seems likely that in most cases this will indeed be the case. Further work is needed on religious transnational actors to determine whether this is likely to be the case, but the very limited evidence presented in this paper suggests that we underestimate the power of nationalism and locality at our peril when seeking to understand what religious transnationalism can accomplish.

REFERENCES

Amuzegar, J. (2009) *Middle East Policy Council Journal*, Fall 2009, no. 3. Excerpt available at http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol16/3toc.asp Last accessed 22 January 2010.

Banchoff, T. (ed.) (2008) *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Bazzi, M. (2003) 'New Battle in Najaf Over Soul of Shiism, Debate over political roles for religious leaders', *Newsday*, May 8.

Peter Beyer (1994) *Religion and Globalization*, London: Sage.

Blanchard, C. and K. Katzman (2008) 'Iraq: Regional Perspective and U.S. Policy', *Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress*, April 1, 2008.

Casanova, J. (1994) *Public Religions in the Modern World,* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Cesari, J. (ed.) (2010) *Muslims in the West after 9/11. Religion, Politics and Law*, London: Routledge.

Cole, J. R. (2009) 'Shiite Crescent: A New International or a Series of Nationalisms?'. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ISA - ABRI JOINT INTERNATIONAL MEETING, Pontifical Catholic University, Rio de Janeiro Campus (PUC-Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Dagher, S. (20090 'Devotion and Money Tie Iranians to Iraqi City', *The New York Times*, May 31.

Dreyfuss, R. (2008) 'Is Iran Winning the Iraq War?', *The Nation*, March 10.

Felter, J. and B. Fishman (2008) 'Iranian Strategy in Iraq - Politics and 'Other Means', *Occasional Paper Series*, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, October 13.

Florini, A. (2000) *The Third Force. The Rise of International Civil Society*, Tokyo and Washington, D.C.: Japan Center for International Exchange/Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Fox, J. (2008) *A World Survey of Religion and the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fox, J. and S. Sandler (2004) *Bringing religion into International Relations*, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan

Halahoff, a. and D. Wright-Neville (2009) 'A missing peace? The role of religious actors in countering terrorism', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32, pp. 921-932.

Harling, P. and H. Yasin (2006) 'Iraq's Diverse Shia', *Le Monde Diplomatique,* September.

Haynes, J. (2001) 'Transnational religious actors and international politics', *Third World Quarterly*, 22, 2, pp. 143-58.

Haynes, J. (2005) 'Al-Qaeda: ideology and action', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 8, 2 (June 2005), pp. 177-91.

Haynes, J. *An Introduction to International relations and Religion,* London: Pearson.

Haynes, J. (2009) Transnational Religious Actors and International Order', *Perspectives*, 17, 2, pp. 43-70.

Helfont, S. (2009)' The Muslim Brotherhood and the Emerging "Shia Crescent"'. Available at http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6W5V-4VP1CV1-8&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&_docanchor=&view=c&_searchStrId=1176967354&_rerunOrigin=google&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=3b329552f5ce68c4239c1fb782e56cea Last accessed 22 January 2010.

Human Security Centre, 'Overview', *Human Security Report 2005. War and Peace in the 21st Century, Vancouver, BD:* Simon Fraser University. Available at http://www.humansecurityreport.info/ Last accessed 19 January 2010.

"Iraq bans Farsi signs in holy cities," *Agence-France Presse*, February 14, 2009.

Katzman, K. (2009) 'Iran's Activities and Influence in Iraq', *Congressional Research Service*, February 13, p. 7.

Kemp, G. (2005) *Iran and Iraq. The Shia connection, soft power, and the nuclear connection,* Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Louer, L. (2008) *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf*, London: C.J. Hurst and Co.

Maleki, A. (2007) 'Soft power and its implications on Iran'. Institute for North America & European Studies, Tehran University, May 15.

Marty, M., with J. Moore (2000) *Politics, Religion and the Common Good: Advancing a Distinctly American Conversation About Religion's Role in Our Shared Life*, San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers.

Micklethwait, J. and Wooldridge, A. (2009) *God is Back: How the Global Rise of Faith is Changing the World*

Nasr, V. (2006) 'Iran and the Shia Revival in the Middle East'. Transcript, Council on Foreign Relations, March 23.

Norris, P. and R. Inglehart (2004) *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Nye, J. (1990) *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York: Basic Books.

Nye, J. (2004a) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Washington, DC: Public Affairs.

Nye J. (2004b) 'Edited transcript, 04/13/04 Carnegie Council Books for Breakfast'. (Nye discussing *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* with Joanne Myers.). Available at http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/viewMedia.php/prmTemplateID/8/prmID/4466a Last accessed 10 April 2006.

Nye, Joseph S (2004c) 'The benefits of soft power', *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge*, 2 August. Available at http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item.jhtml?id=4290&t=globalization Last accessed 10 April 2006.

Otterman, S. (2004) 'Iraq: Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani', *Backgrounder*, Council on Foreign Relations, September 1.

Porter, Gs. (2008) 'Iran's Regional Power Rooted in Shia Ties'. 'Anti-War.com' Available at http://www.antiwar.com/porter/?articleid=13917 Last accessed 22 January 2010.

Rudolph, Hoeber, S. and J. Piscatori (eds.) (1997) *Transnational Religion and Fading States*, Boulder, CO: Westview.

Sarioghalam, M. (2001) 'Iran's Foreign Policy and US-Iranian Relations. A summary of remarks by Dr. Mahmood Sarioghalam, National University of Iran, Middle East Institute, February 5, 2001. Available at http://209.196.144.55/html/b-sarioghalam.html Last accessed 6 January 2006.

Shlapentokh, V., J. Woods and E. Shirav (eds.) (2005) *America. Sovereign Defender or Cowboy Nation*, Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

Thomas, S. (1999) 'Religion and international society', in J. Haynes (ed.), *Religion, Globalization and Political Culture in the Third World*, London: Macmillan, pp. 28-44, at p. 30.

Thomas, S. (2005) *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century*, New York and Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Voll, J. (2006) 'Trans-state Muslim movements in an era of soft power'. Paper presented at the conference on 'The New Religious Pluralism in World Politics', Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, Georgetown University, March 16–17.

Walt, S. and J. Mearsheimer (2006) 'The Israeli lobby and U.S. foreign policy', *The London Review of Books*, 28: 6, March 23. Available at www.lrb.co.uk Last accessed 6 April 2006.

Wong, E. (2007) 'Iran is Playing a Growing Role in Iraq Economy', *The New York Times*, March 17.