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**Raqs Sharqi in Cultural Diplomacy: An Important but Neglected Diplomatic Tool
in U.S.-Egypt Diplomatic Relations**

“Soft Power is a dance that requires partners.”¹

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May 13, 2013

Master's thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
International Affairs at the City College of New York

Advisor: Prof. Jean E. Krasno, Ph.D.

¹ Joseph Nye, “Soft Power” in *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011): 84.

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Abstract

Following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, America's image abroad plunged, especially in the Arab world, where anti-Americanism has been on the rise. America's hard power alone can no longer efficiently boost America's reputation and the U.S. government has abandoned its soft power resources. Although important, the linchpin of public diplomacy, known as cultural diplomacy, I argue has become a neglected diplomatic tool in U.S.-Middle East relations. Accordingly, this thesis will explore the role of dance in cultural diplomacy as a catalyst of releasing tension and bringing peace among nation-states, especially in U.S.-Egypt relations. After the calamities of the Egyptian Revolution in 2011, the role of Egypt as a valuable U.S. ally in the Arab world has brought uncertainty among U.S. foreign policy makers, mainly because of its Muslim Brotherhood-nurtured Egyptian president. The U.S. Department of State should revisit its soft power strategies such as its successful cultural exchange programs during the Cold War, and apply them to its current U.S.-Egypt relations.

In order to test my hypothesis, I will elucidate the importance of Raqs Sharqi as an effective diplomatic tool of cultural diplomacy in U.S.-Egypt relations. Hence, special attention will be given to the critical assessment of several case studies during the Cold War, in particular, the role of American dancers as cultural diplomats, who successfully broke down ideological and cultural barriers in political hot spots with growing anti-Americanism. The conclusion offers recommendations that serve as a prescription to reduce anti-American attitudes. Although Raqs Sharqi in cultural diplomacy is not a panacea to U.S.-Middle East relations, I argue it is an important feature of soft power.

Key words: cultural diplomacy, international relations, soft power, Raqs Sharqi, dance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After the political turmoil of 9/11 in 2001, followed by an anti-Muslim stigma in the U.S., including the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, an increased understanding of American and Muslim culture is imperative to improve diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the Middle East. To illustrate, recent presidential elections in Egypt and the attacks on the U.S. embassy in both Egypt and Libya in 2012 have required strenuous diplomatic relations between the U.S. and these two countries. Accordingly, as Egypt has chosen a Muslim Brotherhood-nurtured president, Mohammed Morsi, the U.S. government has been concerned with what the new Egyptian president will bring to U.S.-Egyptian diplomatic relations. What's more, Nathan Brown argues that the U.S.-Egypt relationship does not need a divorce; instead, it needs therapy.² Ironically, since the U.S. government has always shown an obsession with the Middle East, especially, now with the recent Egyptian President, Mohammed Morsi, it might be beneficial to the U.S. government to reapply some of its previous strategies of utilizing soft power strategies during the Cold War. That is to say, in today's strenuous relations between the U.S. and the Middle East, where traditional diplomacy or military strategies may not be the best solution for fruitful diplomatic relations, there is a necessity for cultural dialogue and exchange of cultural ideas between the West and the Middle East to deliver an effective message of mutual understanding.

Likewise, Cynthia Schneider, a cultural diplomacy expert at the Washington's Saban

² Nathan Brown, "The U.S.-Egypt Relationship Needs Therapy, Not a Divorce," *The New Republic*, September 13, 2012, <http://www.tnr.com/blog/plank/107241/the-us-egypt-relationship-needs-therapy-not-divorce> (accessed on January 21, 2013).

Center for Middle East Policy, hopes that Washington policymakers take the opportunity of implementing soft power through cultural diplomacy to increase cross-cultural awareness through the arts and culture, which can change the current U.S. relationship to the Middle East, “If [people are] open to it, arts and culture can increase understanding.”³ Because of these reasons, it is important to mention that this thesis does not imply that soft power is the only solution to stronger diplomatic relations with Egypt or that it is a panacea to U.S.-Egyptian relations. This addresses the need for softening the traditional U.S. approach of hard power through the spectrum of cultural diplomacy, and specifically in U.S.-Egypt relations, because cultural exchange is necessary, even though it is a neglected diplomatic tool, especially, in U.S.–Middle East relations. Cultural diplomacy is important because it serves as a buffer zone between nation-states with fragile or weak diplomatic relations, and it helps create a mutual cultural understanding that is imperative in building fruitful U.S.-Middle East relations.

HYPOTHESIS

My hypothesis is that pursuing cultural diplomacy in other contexts, such as U.S.-Soviet relations has been productive in bringing conformity between nation-states, and reducing tension between states; particularly, through dance. Therefore, in U.S.-Egypt relations through an Egyptian folk dance, known in Arabic as Raqs Sharqi, might be as effective as a hegemonic hard power approach. I will attempt to support my hypothesis by examining the cases of dance in improving diplomatic relations to identify the effectiveness of each case common to cultural diplomacy. Then, using former U.S. President, Eisenhower’s Emergency Fund for International Affairs that supported the nation’s first cultural export

³ Marisa Mazria-Katz, “Middle Eastern Cultural Diplomacy.” March 7, 2009, *The Financial Times*, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/7a8618ea-091d-11de-b8b0-0000779fd2ac.html#axzz2CoYddg36> (accessed on January 31, 2013).

program of dance, I will identify the processes by which dance was formed. Emphasis will be placed on U.S. state interest and the role of American dancers, who served as cultural diplomats during the Cold War. Cultural diplomacy through dance is important because dance is a universal language through which people express their cultures to counteract isolationism, misunderstanding, hatred, gaffes, and missteps. Most importantly, dance brings understanding, respect, and peace between states.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis will use a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. As far as quantitative methods, I will use statistical data and economic figures, related to the funding for cultural exchange activities and U.S. aid foreign budgets, drawn from the U.S. Department of State, the Egyptian Ministry of Cultural Affairs, cultural institutions, agencies, and dance organizations. For qualitative methods, I will use five case studies of cultural diplomacy in U.S.-Soviet relations (The Jose Limón Dance Company, Martha Graham's Dance Company, Alvin Ailey's Dance Company, Igor Moiseyev's Dance Company, The Robert Joffrey Ballet, The Porgy and Bess, American jazz musicians' tour, the Mahmoud Reda Troupe, and the El-Nil [The Nile] Folkloric Troupe), drawn from books, journals, articles, and reports, outlining each case's history and methods. I will look at how nation-states have dealt with them at various points of history, in order to validate the premise that cultural diplomacy is an important diplomatic tool nowadays. In order to evaluate the benefits of Raqs Sharqi in cultural diplomacy, I interviewed both American and Egyptian dance experts who perform and teach Raqs Sharqi. This Egyptian folk dance dates back to thousands of years ago and celebrates the joy and happiness of life. After I look at the case studies, I will apply Raqs Sharqi to cultural diplomacy in

today's U.S.-Egypt relations to see how this Egyptian folk dance can be used in cultural diplomacy to foster cultural understanding in U.S.-Egypt relations.

As a result, it is important to address the following questions: how is soft power different than hard power? Does the U.S. government view cultural diplomacy as an important part of its diplomatic efforts, and if not, what are the underlying reasons for this? Will cultural diplomacy play a significant role in U.S. foreign policy? How can the U.S. Department of State benefit from using soft power effectively through cultural exchange to improve its relations with Egypt? Why mostly hegemonic dance forms like ballet or similar Western dance forms, instead of Raqs Sharqi have been sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, therefore, included in cultural diplomacy? What is Raqs Sharqi? What is its historical and social background? How does Raqs Sharqi fit into the trajectory of cultural diplomacy? How is Raqs Sharqi used by dancers both in the U.S. and Egypt? How American dancers, who both have taught and performed Raqs Sharqi in Egypt, were perceived by the Egyptian people? What sort of impact has Raqs Sharqi had on the Egyptian people? Will the U.S. Department of State ever send American dance artists, who perform and teach Raqs Sharqi, to serve as cultural diplomats in the Middle East and North Africa? Will the U.S. Department of State ever invite Egyptian dance artists to the United States? As a cultural attraction will Raqs Sharqi be able to increase mutual understanding between the U.S. and Egypt? What will happen to American soft power? Will cultural diplomacy play a significant role in U.S.-Egypt relations or in U.S.-Middle East relations? Is the U.S. Department of State's present investment in cultural relations of the Middle East and North Africa sufficient? How can we assure that the best of U.S. culture is exported to the Middle East and North Africa, particularly to Egypt, and

also encourage reciprocity, making Egyptian culture more accessible to Americans?

These questions and more will be explored.

No one has the final word on the contested concept of Raqs Sharqi in cultural diplomacy, but because it is an important, yet, neglected diplomatic tool in U.S.-Middle East relations, I hope to introduce more clarity into the discussion and a larger perspective into strategic visions.

The following chapter of this thesis will present the review of literature, followed by chapter three that will address the following: first, the concept of power, and the theoretical framework of soft power versus hard power in order to highlight the importance of cultural diplomacy; second, the decline of U.S. soft power, and finally the changing context of power in the field of international relations, and why soft power has become more important than before. The fourth chapter will introduce the historical background of cultural diplomacy in international affairs, specifically, the benefits and necessity of culture diplomacy for the purpose of promoting America's positive image in the Middle East and North Africa. Chapter five gives attention to both the social and historical background of Egypt, including U.S.-Egyptian relations. Chapter six introduces the history of the Egyptian folk dance, known in Egyptian Arabic as Raqs Sharqi, and some of the obstacles to Raqs Sharqi as a soft power approach in Egypt today, such as the religious fundamentalists and the conservative urban elites. The next chapter will consist of discussion and analysis of several case studies where cultural diplomacy, initiated by the U.S. Department of State, have been successful during the Cold War as, special attention will be given to dance artists, being sent overseas to serve as cultural diplomats, and how applying Raqs Sharqi to cultural diplomacy might be as productive as ballet in

cultural diplomacy during the Cold War. The last section will include concluding remarks such as implications and policy recommendations to the U.S. Department of State, for the necessity of Raqs Sharqi in cultural diplomacy in improving U.S.-Egypt relations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent U.S. government approaches towards the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia such as hard power have not only been exhaustive and expensive, but have also faced serious challenges; for example, deployment of U.S. troops to Afghanistan in 2001, U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, and recent NATO bombings of Libya, where hard power has been used, have stirred unfavorable views of the United States around the world. Furthermore, the use of military force can cause a negative impression. To illustrate, according to recent opinion polls about the United States conducted by the Pew Research Center, negative views of U.S. politics outnumber positive views in Western countries like France, Germany, Britain, Italy, and Spain; what's more, starting in 2003 negative opinions of the U.S. have increased in the entire Middle East, including Egypt where positive views of the U.S. have decreased from 61% to 15% and 71% to 38%.⁴

While completely wrong, nevertheless, according to another poll, in 2003 many Germans believed that the Bush administration might have set up the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.⁵ Therefore, according to Joseph Nye, America's negative image abroad has been increasing, which has formed a perception of the United States as "a classically imperialistic power."⁶ What's more, an Australian observer, Paul Kelly, points out that the outcomes of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 clearly indicate declining U.S. soft power, which has enabled the rise of anti-Americanism, an increase of

⁴ Cynthia Schneider, "Culture Communicates: U.S. Diplomacy That Works," *Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'*, no. 94 (2004): 17.

⁵ "Poll: One-Third of Germans Believe U.S. May Have Staged Sept 11 Attacks," *Reuters*, July 23, 2003, accessed October 8, 2012, <http://soc.culture.german.narkive.com/8sVQc6hs/one-third-of-germans-believe-bush-was-behind-9-11-attacks>

⁶ Joseph Nye, "Soft Power and American Foreign Policy," *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 2 (2004): 255.

terrorism, and most importantly, high U.S. military expenses in the recent war of Iraq and its rebuilding efforts.⁷ Paul Kelly reiterates that the consequences for America's negative image abroad are a product of the Bush administration's failure to gain U.N. authorization for the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.⁸

In another instance, a Eurobarometer poll indicates that most Europeans consider the U.S. "to play a negative role in fighting global poverty, protecting the environment, and maintaining peace in the world."⁹ Joseph Nye also explains that negative views towards America are highest among the younger generation.¹⁰ Furthermore, as U.S. pop culture might be still popular among young people overseas, "the unfavorable views of U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East and North Africa stir uncertainty about U.S. power," which shows that U.S. soft power is in decline.¹¹

Nye's definition of soft power is "the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes."¹² Moreover, Nye clarifies that because soft power is the ability to attract positive perceptions, its resources are the key to producing attraction, which often brings conformity between nation-states.¹³ In terms of attraction between states, Nye distinguishes two models of soft power: a direct model that includes such power resources as government elites, and an indirect model that includes publics. A

⁷ Paul Kelly, "Power Pact," *The Australian*, July 26, 2003, quoted in Joseph Nye, "Soft Power and American Foreign Policy," *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 2 (2004): 255.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Nye, "Soft Power and American Foreign Policy," 255.

¹⁰ Ibid., 256.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Joseph Nye, "What is Power in Global Affairs?" in *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011): 50.

¹³ Joseph Nye, "Soft Power and Leadership," *Compass: A Journal of Leadership*, (2004): 13, http://www.hks.harvard.edu/netgov/files/talks/docs/11_06_06_seminar_Nye_HP_SP_Leadership.pdf (accessed February 14, 2013).

direct model is when political leaders are attracted by the charisma and expertise of other leaders such as the ability of President Obama to convince powerful states to increase their donations at a G-20 meeting.¹⁴ An indirect mode of soft power is when power creates an amicable platform for discussions, where “publics and third parties are influenced, and they in turn affect the leaders of other countries.”¹⁵ For example, according to Nye, The Turkish government did not authorize the American Fourth Infantry Division to pass through Turkey during the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.¹⁶ In another instance, Mexican President, Vicente Fox, failed to accommodate the Bush administration by backing up its second U.N. resolution authorizing U.S. invasion of Iraq because Mexican public opinion disapproved it.¹⁷ To sum up, Nye argues that public polls are not irrelevant when an element of soft power because they “act as a constraint on authoritarian leaders, and in many authoritarian states where internal dissent is muted, international opprobrium has an effect.”¹⁸

Equally important, Joseph Nye argues that the costs of ignoring soft power are high, because the United States pays a price. To illustrate, in *Soft Power and American Foreign Policy*, Nye explains that U.S. foreign policies can only be seen as legitimate in the view of others, when U.S. “soft power is enhanced.”¹⁹ Accordingly, Nye explains that the attractiveness of a country’s policies can be used to cooperate in critical moments, such the recent trend of terrorism, which has become a threat to Americans.²⁰ It is important to note that Nye emphasizes the need for cooperation from other states when dealing with

¹⁴ Joseph Nye, “Soft Power,” in *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011): 94.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 96.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 94.

¹⁹ Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” 257.

²⁰ Ibid.

terrorism because the United States is not capable of fighting terrorism alone; however, cooperation requires the use of soft power.²¹ Nye gives an example of Germany's disapproval of the U.S. rationale for the invasion of Iraq; that is to say, Iraq being blamed for possessing weapons of mass destruction, and being linked to Al Qaeda. Furthermore, Nye indicates that the U.S. will only overcome the threat of Islamist terrorism, "if moderate Muslims win, and the ability to attract the moderates is critical to victory."²²

On the other hand, in *Soft Power: Power of Attraction or Confusion*, Ying Fan argues that soft power is not a power of attraction but "confusion" because it is not only difficult to measure, but also time consuming as it "takes longer to produce the desired outcomes."²³ What's more, Fan shows that soft power has the ability to persuade through attraction but on a personal or individual level as opposed to a national level, wherein there are various actors that may or not like the attraction.²⁴ Unlike Fan, Joseph Nye presents the advantages of soft power as other than the threat or use of force to persuade the adversary as in the "sticks and carrots" approach, which is essential for hard power; therefore, excluding the following hard power approaches: coercive diplomacy, war, alliance, aid, bribes, and sanctions.²⁵ Similarly to Fan's argument about the limits of soft power not being a power of attraction, Nye explains that the reason some people are skeptical about the trajectory of soft power. In other words, because in their eyes, power is perceived only as "deliberate acts of command and control" that exclude power as "the

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 258.

²³ Ying Fan, "Soft Power: Power of attraction or confusion?" *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 4 (2008): 6-7.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Joseph Nye, "The Changing Nature of Power," in *The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 31.

ability to get the outcomes you want without having to force people to change their behavior through threats or payments.”²⁶

Although hard power is beyond the scope of this thesis, Joseph Nye mentions that without denying the need for hard power, a new concept of power has emerged in the lexicon of international relations, known as smart power; in other words, a blend of soft with hard power that provides balance of power.²⁷ Nye even clarifies that smart power “is not about maximizing power or preserving hegemony; above all, it is about “combining resources into successful strategies in the new context of power diffusion and ‘the rise of the rest.’”²⁸ Nye explains that President Obama and Secretary Clinton’s policies have adopted the concept of smart power. He also gives past examples of Otto von Bismarck’s Prussia defeating Denmark, Austria and France, and even Japan’s diplomatic policy toward Britain and the U.S. in order “to make itself attractive overseas.”²⁹ Similarly, in *The Future of Power*, Nye gives another example of China when the Mao regime used a blend of soft with hard power to attract allies abroad.³⁰

It is important to note that according to Joseph Nye, one of the country’s soft power basic resources is its culture, and “in some contexts culture can be an important power resource.”³¹ In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz elucidates culture as “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life”

²⁶ Ibid., 15.

²⁷ Joseph Nye, “Soft Power and Higher Education,” *Forum for the Future of Higher Education*, <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ffp0502s.pdf> (accessed November 23, 2012).

²⁸ Joseph Nye, “Smart Power,” in *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011): 207-208.

²⁹ Ibid., 210-211.

³⁰ Ibid., 211.

³¹ Ibid., 84.

that has been transmitted throughout history.³² Nye explains that more research is necessary on the relationship of culture and power behavior. He even questions the possibility of Western cultural attraction to diminish recent extremist trends in Muslim societies around the world.³³ Furthermore, Nye explains that some think such a possibility is unrealistic. However, he gives the Islamic state of Iran as an example, where “Western music and videos are anathema to the ruling mullahs, but attractive to many of the younger generation.”³⁴ Equally important, Nye emphasizes that cultural contacts have been beneficial to the United States. For instance, Chinese students experience U.S. culture while pursuing their studies in American universities, and this helps Chinese citizens discover the democratic and free enterprise potential for Chinese development. He explains that “over time cultures influence each other.”³⁵ In another instance, Joseph Nye elaborates on how the American University of Beirut not only “enhanced American soft power in Lebanon, but “it later enhanced Lebanon’s soft power in America.”³⁶

In *How Soft Power Works*, Alexander Vuving explains that soft power can be extracted from the media, the arts, peacekeeping, economic aid, visits exchange programs, teaching a nation’s language, and promoting the studies of other cultures and languages.³⁷ Cynthia Schneider describes that the exchange of cultural ideas, art,

³² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), quoted in *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011): 255.

³³ Nye, “Smart Power,” in *The Future of Power*, 84.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 85.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Alexander L. Vuving, “How Soft Power Works.” Paper presented at American Political Association annual meeting for the panel “Soft Power and Smart Power,”

Toronto, Canada, September 3, 2009, 13,

<http://apcss.org/Publications/Vuving%20How%20soft%20power%20works%20APSA%202009.pdf>

(accessed February 19, 2013).

thoughts, beliefs, information, values, systems and other features of culture, necessary to foster mutual understanding are known in the trajectory of international relations as cultural diplomacy, which is “a prime example of soft power.”³⁸ According to Marta Osojnik, the author of *Cultural Diplomacy and the European Union: Key Characters and Historical Development*, cultural diplomacy “has existed since the beginning of civilization, in one form or another, under one name or another.”³⁹ Accordingly, a 2005 Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy at the U.S. Department of State shows the first example of U.S. cultural diplomacy to be as early as World War I.⁴⁰ Most importantly, in 1938, the U.S. government began “to support exchange programs for students and artists under the 1936 Convention for the Promotion of Inter-American Cultural Relations,” which later served as a model to another critical for U.S.-Soviet relations series of strong cultural diplomacy efforts during the Cold War.⁴¹

In *Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy in World War II: The Art of Making Friends*, Darlene J. Sadlier discusses the importance of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA), “whose main objective was to strengthen cultural and commercial relations between the U.S. and Latin America” to counteract the face of Nazi Germany’s cultural activities in the latter.⁴² What’s more, Sadlier reiterates that the CIAA created a platform for numerous “artists, filmmakers and writers, who perhaps for the

³⁸ Schneider, *Culture Communicates*, 1-2.

³⁹ Marta Osojnik, “Cultural Diplomacy and the European Union: Key Characters and Historical Development,” Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (2011): 1, <http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/pdf/case-studies/cd-eu.pdf> (accessed February 19, 2013).

⁴⁰ “Cultural Diplomacy-the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy: Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy.” *U.S. Department of State*, September 2005, 7, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/54374.pdf> (accessed February 19, 2013).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Darlene J. Sadlier, “Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy in World War II: The Art of Making Friends,” Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (2011), <http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2012-03-cdp/Good-Neighbor-Cultural-Diplomacy-in-World-War-II-The-Art-of-Making-Friends--Dr-Darlene-J-Sadlier.pdf> (accessed February 19, 2013).

first time, felt that culture was a recognizable and integral part of U.S. foreign diplomacy.”⁴³ Yet, Sadler emphasizes that the Cold War ended the CIAA, “an agency that achieved what no other agency then or now had in terms of U.S.-Latin American relations.”⁴⁴

In *Soft Power and Higher Education*, Joseph Nye points at the Cold War as the strongest example of U.S. cultural diplomacy during the U.S. government’s battle against the former Soviet Union included a blend of hard and soft power, described earlier as smart power. Furthermore, he explains that what helped promote American soft power during that period were both cultural and academic exchanges between the United States and the former Soviet Union in the 1950s.⁴⁵ In 1958, Columbia University political scientist, David Truman, influenced Aleksandr Yakovlev’s studies, who later became the head of the Politburo, and managed to influence important Soviet Union political figures like Mikhail Gorbachov. In addition, many soft power strategies followed, including that of the increased number of Soviet Union students, visiting the United States during exchange programs.⁴⁶

Accordingly, in *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War*, Naima Prevots focuses on the Cold War period when former President Eisenhower’s cultural diplomacy program sent American dance artists to the Soviet Union to dispel the notion of Americans as nothing but “boorish, uncultured, superficial, and materialistic.”⁴⁷ In addition, American dance artists like Martha Graham, Alvin Ailey, and Jose Limón,

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Joseph Nye, “Soft Power and Higher Education,” 14.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁷ Naima Prevots, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 7.

served as cultural diplomats in host countries, including those of the Middle East, and “broke down barriers between cultures and ideologies.”⁴⁸ Above all, Prevots discusses how the intersection between dance and diplomacy made significant contribution to ameliorating U.S.-Soviet diplomatic relations. Yet, she emphasizes that despite the contribution of dance in cultural diplomacy during the Cold War very little credit, if any, has been given to dance and dance artists, who served as cultural ambassadors in U.S.-Soviet cultural exchange programs.⁴⁹

For these reasons, Prevots also points out that during the Cold War the U.S. government invited Soviet ballet artists, such as Igor Moiseyev to help both the U.S. and the Soviet government “create an atmosphere that will enable the United States and Russia to live in peace.”⁵⁰ Hence, Prevots finalizes the outcomes of Moiseyev’s ballet performances all over the U.S., not only contributed to “international relations, but also to artistic exchange.”⁵¹ To reiterate, Prevots provides an example of one U.S. representative during the Cold War, who mentioned that through music and dance, American dancers who were sent overseas “have done more towards establishing a close rapport between our countries than a staff of attachés could hope to do in years.”⁵²

Accordingly, Prevots reports that in 1955 in Cairo, Egypt, the U.S. cast of *Porgy and Bess*, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, “received Egyptian President Nasser’s personal expression of appreciation, including a journalist’s statement, “If this is propaganda, let us have more of it.”⁵³ In like manner, Prevots elucidates the success of

⁴⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 74.

⁵¹ Ibid., 72.

⁵² Ibid., 31.

⁵³ Ibid., 29.

Martha Graham's touring company in politically hot spots like the Soviet Union, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia, a country with a significant Muslim population, whose government was anti-American.⁵⁴ On the whole, Prevots illustrates the impact of *Porgy and Bess* on Israel with an example,

In Tel Aviv—at Ambassador Lawson's reception for the Company—the Russian Ambassador said, with gleaming face to Mrs. Ira Gershwin, "Oh—if only WE had a PORGY AND BESS—WE—*would—send—it!*" and then he wound up with an "on!" and a global gesture. It is impossible to transmit on paper the knowing intent of his gesture.⁵⁵

In *Choreographic Politics*, Anthony Shay examines the successes and challenges of Egyptian folkloric troupes, designed to preserve Egyptian heritage through various forms of Egyptian dance. According to Shay, *the El-Nil Folkloric Troupe* is "the most significant and well-received group outside of Egypt, but its existence in Cairo goes almost unnoticed."⁵⁶ An Egyptian dance scholar, Magda Saleh, explains that unlike the success of *the El-Nil Folkloric Troupe* overseas, the same dance troupe is not received well in Egypt because "native arts do not have any cultural cachet, and are regarded as primitive and non-aesthetic," unlike "theatricalized versions," which are "considered a substantial improvement."⁵⁷ Although native arts are not as welcomed in Egypt as they are in the West, Shay mentions that the dance troupe toured successfully the U.S. several times, and were invited by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. in 1975.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁶ Anthony Shay, "Egypt Bazaar of Dance," in *Choreographic Politics: State Folk Dance Ensembles, Representation and Power* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2002): 159.

⁵⁷ Quoted in "Egypt Bazaar of Dance," 159.

⁵⁸ Shay, "Egypt Bazaar of Dance," 158.

Also, according to Shay, initially the Egyptian government expressed an interest in sending the famous *Reda Troupe*, led by a native Egyptian, named Mahmoud Reda, to perform at the Smithsonian Institution. Yet, “the folklorists of the Smithsonian Institution” refused to do so because unlike *the El-Nil Folkloric Troupe*, the Reda Troupe “manifested a patently nontraditional representation of Egypt.”⁵⁹ According to Marjorie Franken, *the Reda Troupe* performances impacted the creation of folkloric troupes in other Arabic countries, such as “Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other Arabic-speaking countries.”⁶⁰ Finally, Shay notes that in another Egyptian dance troupe, known as *the El-Tannoura Egyptian Heritage Folkloric Troupe*, “the tannoura (skirt) dancer brought audiences through America to its feet.”⁶¹

In the same way, Shay describes another form of Egyptian folk dance, known in Egyptian Arabic as *raqs sharqi*, that has gained popularity in the last century, and it is also known in the West under the term, *belly dance*.⁶² According to Magda Saleh’s documentary, *Egypt Dances*, Raqs Sharqi is a unisex folk dance that can be seen in many of the regions in Egypt.⁶³ According to Shay, teaching and performing raqs sharqi in Egypt along with other Egyptian dance forms like tahtib, and the Ghawazi “has greatly subsided since Islamist resurgence in Egypt, and dance activity is much less than it was.”⁶⁴ On the contrary, Shay argues that it is not Islamic law and attitude, but rather colonialism, both Ottoman and British that resulted in “the negative attitude toward

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Marjorie Franken, “Revolutionary Images: Farida Fahmy and the Reda Troupe of Egypt (Unpublished paper delivered at the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA), Phoenix, Arizona, November 20, 1996), quoted in “Egypt Bazaar of Dance,” in *Choreographic Politics: State Folk Dance Ensembles, Representation and Power* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2002): 162.

⁶¹ Ibid., 160.

⁶² Ibid., 161.

⁶³ *Egypt Dances*, VHS, directed by Magda Saleh (1979).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

dance, including choreophobic attitudes that Egyptians [and other Middle Easterners] hold concerning dancing and its place in Egyptian life and on Egyptian stages.”⁶⁵

Therefore, a Middle East studies scholar, Timothy Mitchell, clarifies that “the reason for colonialism was “to create both a material order and a conceptual moral order.”⁶⁶ On the whole, Shay quotes former Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, who states, “Recent riots in the Imbaba district of Cairo were instigated not by radical Islamists but by indecent and troublesome elements of the local district,” who happen to be belly dancers and drummers “from the slums.”⁶⁷

Although the practice of cultural diplomacy has been demonstrated here as highly desirable in *Culture Communicates: U.S. Diplomacy that Works*, Cynthia Schneider examines the reasons behind the decline of U.S. cultural diplomacy starting in the 1990s to present. She points out that with the end of the Cold War, cultural exchange programs faced severe cutbacks, when the host of cultural diplomacy, the United States Information Agency (USIA), was integrated into the U.S. Department of State.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Juliet Antunes Sablosky reports that “since 1993, budgets have fallen by nearly 30%, staff has been cut by about 30% overseas and 20% in the U.S., and dozens of cultural centers, libraries and branch posts have been closed.”⁶⁹ To illustrate, “between 1995 and 2001 the number of exchange participants in The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (BECA) programs fell from about 45, 000 to 29, 000.”⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁶ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Los Angeles: University of California Press): 132, quoted in “Egypt Bazaar of Dance,” in *Choreographic Politics: State Folk Dance Ensembles, Representation and Power* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2002): 130.

⁶⁷ Shay, “Egypt Bazaar of Dance,” 134.

⁶⁸ Schneider, *Culture Communicates*, 2.

⁶⁹ *Cultural Diplomacy-the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 8.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

In like manner, Schneider explains that the lack of institutional support for cultural diplomacy to be “capricious and sporadic reflecting the interests of individual ambassadors,” who are the epicenter of exchange of cultural ideas among nations.⁷¹ Accordingly, *the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy* indicates that when a war is over, the promotion of cultural activities is suspended because of America’s “traditional lack of public support for the arts.”⁷² In *Culture Communicates: U.S. Diplomacy that Works*, Schneider concludes that the above cutbacks in the U.S. cultural diplomacy budget “reflected a profound misunderstanding of diplomacy in the post Cold War world,” where the U.S. closed down its libraries and America Houses overseas and “replaced by information resource centers.”⁷³ In like manner, Samer Shehata, a distinguished Georgetown University Assistant Professor and specialist in Arab Studies, explained that the American Cultural Center in Alexandria [Egypt] was where she learned about Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.⁷⁴

The Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy recommends for the U.S. State Department to include more “cultural exchange programs, inviting more Arab and Muslim artists, performers, and writers to the United States, and sending their American counterparts to the Islamic world.”⁷⁵ Similarly, Cynthia Schneider clarifies that “while security risks prohibit American writers and artists from visiting Iraq at present, Iraqi writers and artists could be invited to the U.S. and other western countries for frank exchanges modeled after those in the 1950s.”⁷⁶ However, *the Report of the Advisory*

⁷¹ Schneider, *Culture Communicates*, 14-15.

⁷² *Cultural Diplomacy-the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 1.

⁷³ Schneider, *Culture Communicates*, 12-13.

⁷⁴ Quoted in *Culture Communicates*, 13.

⁷⁵ *Cultural Diplomacy-the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 2.

⁷⁶ *Cultural Diplomacy-the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 8.

Committee on Cultural Diplomacy explains that “tightening visa restrictions since the events of 9/11 threatens our most successful, albeit underrated, exchange program—access to higher education and exposure to America.”⁷⁷

In *Hard Power Trumps Soft in U.S. Policy Towards Egypt*, Cynthia Schneider criticizes the U.S. government for failing to use its soft power over hard power, as recently stated by both U.S. President Obama and former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, during the Egyptian Revolution in the Tahrir Square of Cairo, Egypt. Moreover, a cultural diplomacy expert, Cynthia Schneider, explains that “the United States appears to be choosing the short term ‘hard power’ and security of the ‘stability’ provided by the [the Supreme Council of armed Forces] SCAF over the long term interests of dignity, justice, democracy, and human rights for the Egyptian people.”⁷⁸ Furthermore, Schneider illustrates an example with a female Egyptian Presidential candidate, Bothaina Kamel, who refused to accept an award, hosted by the U.S. Department of State in 2011, as she expressed her disapproval of the U.S. government by indicating that “she cannot accept an award stained with blood of the martyrs.”⁷⁹ In other words, Schneider argues that the U.S. provided Egypt with its usual military aid that was used against the Egyptian people by the Egyptian government. What’s more, through this example, Schneider implies that the U.S. government “participated, even if indirectly in the crackdown on the revolution, importing weapons that were used on Egyptian protesters.”⁸⁰ To sum up, Schneider reports that:

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Cynthia Schneider, “Hard Power Trumps Soft in U.S. Policy Towards Egypt,” *The Huffington Post*, December 23, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cynthia-p-schneider/us-policy-egypt_b_1167537.html (accessed November 23, 2012).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

There is still time, indeed a precious opportunity, to redeem the promise of the president's and secretary's words. But without action, they will remain just words, and Egyptian people will continue to associate the United States with the weapons pouring down on them.⁸¹

⁸¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER III

SOFT POWER

Power

The definition of power varies according to the nature of power; for example, power is both the process of influencing outcomes and national attributes or capabilities. In other words, power is the ability to influence someone's behavior. Equally important, power is the ability "to affect the opportunities available to others and their willingness to choose particular courses of action."⁸² According to some, power is like money because it can be both "saved and spent," which similarly to money is fungible.⁸³ It is important to note that here *fungibility* implies that power's attributes are useful not only in one area, but also in another; specifically, power can be as interchangeable as money. However, according to Nye, power's attributes are not as fungible as money because what might win in one scenario may not win in another one.⁸⁴ To illustrate, Nye uses two past case studies, where America's resources were mightier than those of Vietnam; yet, the United States lost the Vietnam War. Another case study was that although the U.S. was the hegemonic world power in 2001, it did not succeed in preventing terrorist attacks on September 11.

As it has been noted in the above chapter, the list of definitions and examples of power is extensive, but not exhaustive. To reiterate, power is "the ability to overcome

⁸² Bruce Russett, Harvey Starr, and David Kinsella, "Relations between States: Power and Influence," in *World Politics: The Menu for Choice*, 8th ed. (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006), 103.

⁸³ David Baldwin, "Power and International Relations," in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons (London, UK: Sage, 2002), 180.

⁸⁴ Joseph Nye, "The Changing Nature of Power," in *The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 3.

obstacles and influence outcomes;” more specifically, the ability to get what one wants in order to accomplish a “desired outcome through control of one’s social and physical environment.”⁸⁵ Because the focus of this chapter is power in international relations, let’s examine the role of power globally and its relationship among states.

Power in International Relations

Power has been an integral part of international politics, starting from the international interactions of an Ancient Greek historian and Athenian general, Thucydides, with other states to the present.⁸⁶ Furthermore, in *Power and International Relations* Baldwin elucidates that the reason power matters is that different fields have different approaches to power concept.⁸⁷ For instance, international relations, Baldwin claims to be power politics, referring to the fact that all politics involve power; however, politics is not only about power. In the spectrum of international relations, some nations have greater influence or control over other nations; that is to say, Western powers like the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany. Hence, power is the ability to exercise political, social or economic control or exert influence and authority.

In international relations the discussion of power falls within the scope of how power affects the state’s behavior towards another international actor. Defining power clearly gives the reader a window into understanding state behavior. According to Morgenthau, whatever the final agenda of international politics is, power is always the immediate aim.⁸⁸ Therefore, states compete for power, which helps clarify the nature of the competition. If one understands more fully what power is, one can appreciate better what

⁸⁵ Russett, “Relations between States: Power and Influence,” 104.

⁸⁶ Baldwin, “ Power and International Relations,” 177.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁸⁸ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed. (New York: Knopf, 1985), p. 31.

states compete for. Yet, according to Russett et al., some scholars argue that despite power's central role in international relations, power may take different forms.⁸⁹ To summarize, understanding the true nature of power might help illuminate how and why international actors compete among themselves.

The nature of power in international relations refers to state actors competing with other state actors. Hence, the nature of power explains why some actors have a different interpretation of the concepts of power. What are the possible interpretations of power according to international actors? What is power to them? How it is being used, namely, how, why and why not, international actors share a similar view of the world economy and of power resources? In any event, power is central to international relations, and it takes different forms. For these reasons, there are two distinctive types of power in the international system: *hard power* and *soft power*. Although hard power is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is helpful to define it and see how some states make use of it.

Hard Power

Hard power refers to the “ability to coerce,” and “it grows out of a country’s military and economic might.”⁹⁰ Hard power employs the *carrot and sticks* approach, used frequently in political science, to indicate that carrots serve as inducements such as reducing trade barriers, creating an alliance or military protection. In contrast, the sticks refer to threats such as a military intervention, an embargo as an economic sanction, or applying coercive diplomacy as in the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Thus, some international actors like the United States, Israel, and Great Britain use a militaristic interpretation of the concept of power; that is to say, hard power. What’s more, by

⁸⁹ Russett, “Relations between States: Power and Influence,” 103.

⁹⁰ Joseph Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 2 (2004): 256.

employing hard power to their foreign policies, one may understand how these state actors behave in international relations in order to accomplish their goals. Moreover, these international actors share a traditional *realpolitik* mind-set, often considered by political science scholars as a realist approach in international politics.

Power as influence

Notwithstanding, not all international actors follow the realist approach, empowered by the Western powers; specifically, Canada, France, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and many others. As a result, hard power is not a common scenario in their foreign policies. Although all of these international actors are U.S. allies, the manner in which they behave in the arena of international relations rarely involves power as a militaristic approach. Instead, these international actors are mostly concerned with power as a process of exercising influence. After all, the beginning of this chapter presented power not only as the ability to coerce, but also as the ability to influence. For instance, Robert Dahl uses the model of state A causing state B to perform something that state B would not do otherwise. In other words, state A is the international actor that exercises influence, whereas state B is the influenced actor.⁹¹ Consequently, actor A causes a change in the behavior of actor B. It is important to note that influence can vary; for example, *compellence*, also known as coercive diplomacy as in the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Another form of influence could be deterrence where during the Cold War the U.S. attempted to deter the former Soviet Union from a possible nuclear attack and vice versa.⁹²

⁹¹ Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* 2 (1957): 201, quoted in David Baldwin, "Power and International Relations," in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons (London, UK: Sage, 2002), 177.

⁹² Russett, "Relations between States: Power and Influence," 104-105.

Besides the above examples of power being exercised through the lens of influence, another form of influence, according to Russett et al., “is influence over the values held by other states, and therefore what they take to be their own interests, goals, and desired outcomes.”⁹³ In international relations or political science that type of influence as a power source happens through attraction, also known as soft power.

Soft Power

In the field of international relations, Joseph Nye is considered the father of the term soft power, which he coined in 1990, referring to the ability of a country to persuade another country through attraction.⁹⁴ Soft power rests on a country’s desire to achieve outcomes through convincing the other country to admire its values, and follow its examples. Equally important, soft power is the ability to shape other states’ long-term attitudes and preferences, which benefits the initiative country by creating alliances. Accordingly, Nye distinguishes the levels of attraction in soft power.⁹⁵ First, there is the so-called personal level, where one encounters attraction or seduction. Second, when there is a relationship or a marriage, power lies in the “chemistry of attraction.”⁹⁶ Third, in the practice of business, CEOs of companies are aware that leadership requires “attracting others to do what one wants,” not simply relying on giving orders to others.⁹⁷ Hence, the power of attraction, described here as *soft power* is the necessity to get others to buy in to one’s values.⁹⁸

⁹³ Ibid., 106.

⁹⁴ Joseph Nye, “Soft Power and Higher Education,” *Forum for the Future of Higher Education*, <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ffp0502s.pdf>

⁹⁵ Nye, “The Changing Nature of Power,” 5.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

The Advantages of Soft Power

According to Joseph S. Nye, the advantage of soft power, as the power of attraction, over hard power is that soft power does more than persuading the adversary through deliberation. Because soft power is attractive power, its resources are the key to producing attraction, which often brings forward understanding between nation-states.⁹⁹ To illustrate, in the mid 1970s during concessions over France selling Pakistan a nuclear plant, the U.S. government, led by the Ford and Carter administrations, attempted to stop France from selling the plant to Pakistan.¹⁰⁰ However, the French government refused to cooperate until June 1977, when Jimmy Carter's nonproliferation policy convinced French government officials not to sell the plant to Pakistan because of fear of using it for either civilian purposes or for bombs.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, the U.S. government succeeded in convincing France not to sell the nuclear plant to Pakistan without inducing threats or the traditional carrots and sticks approach, both being indispensable elements of hard power in U.S. foreign policy. Instead, the U.S. government used the power of persuasion to influence the behavior of France. In brief, the U.S. government incorporated a successful soft power approach, built on trust and persuasion that not only avoided a threat, but also proved to be as effective as a hard power approach could have been.

The disadvantages of soft power

As has been noted, soft power has advantages over hard power, but many object to the use of soft power because they only look at power as nothing but a source of command, force or control. That is to say, influence, attraction, and persuasion are often underestimated as a power source in international relations. Furthermore, influence,

⁹⁹ Joseph Nye, Jr. "Soft Power and Leadership," *Compass: A Journal of Leadership*, (2004): 1-6.

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), p. x.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

attraction, and persuasion are all abilities that help produce desired outcomes, yet avoiding the use of force or threat such as a military might.

Conversely, unlike hard power, soft power relies on “willing interpreters and receivers;” therefore, in order to have such, it is important “who relates to whom under what circumstances.”¹⁰² For instance, if two international actors share a similar culture, it is likely for both actors to attract each other because of the cultural similarities they share. Therefore, desired outcomes are more likely to produce soft power, unlike two actors with different cultures. Although the effects of U.S. softer power on Europe during the Cold War did not happen overnight, provided the fact that “the cultural differences between the U.S. and Europe were not as great as those between the U.S. and the Middle East,” cultural boundaries did not stop Japan and South Korea, or Turkey and Bangladesh from becoming democratic, despite the longer timeframe of the latter.¹⁰³

Equally important, soft power can be prolonged as it takes longer to produce the desired outcomes, which is also why so many skeptics object to it. In like manner, soft power has the ability to persuade through attraction but on a personal or individual level as opposed to a national level, wherein there are various actors who may or may not like the attraction.

Soft Power Resources

For instance, some soft power resources could be ideology, the protection of human rights, education, international institutions, and most importantly, cultural attraction. Soft power can be extracted from media, the arts, peacekeeping, economic aid, visits, exchange programs, teaching a nation’s language, and promoting the studies of other

¹⁰² Nye, “The Changing Nature of Power,” 15.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 19.

cultures and languages. Accordingly, to project soft power through U.S. traditions, values, and culture has enabled Washington to attract many critical partners and supporters through companies, institutions, foundations, and universities. All of these aspects mediate soft power by framing the first most important step of it: to spread appreciation and assertiveness, wherein both combined favor the source country. Therefore, soft power can be beneficial to the United States in educating the U.S. populace about Muslim culture, and spreading U.S. cultural values to the Arab world.

Culture as a Soft Power Resource

The relationship between culture and power can be seen in the many examples of American culture as a source of soft power. For instance, American education has served as a magnet for many foreign students, who after graduating have returned to their homelands and have incorporated American values and traditions into their native cultures. Namely, some of these foreign students end up taking high positions in politics, education, and the arts in their native lands. Therefore, by utilizing American education in other countries, former students “can affect policy outcomes,” that are crucial to U.S. foreign policy.¹⁰⁴ To illustrate, the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who is a Harvard University graduate, is one of the many former foreign students in the U.S., who has established an amicable relationship with U.S. political leaders. Secretary of State Colin Powell sees the alliance of potential political leaders, “who have been educated in the U.S., as a valuable asset.”¹⁰⁵

American popular culture has also served as an attraction to achieve desired outcomes. For instance, “the apartheid regime in South Africa, the increase in the number

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Nye, “Sources of American Soft Power,” in *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, 44.

of democratic governments in Latin America and parts of East Asia, and pressure for liberalization in Iran.”¹⁰⁶ The popular music of Elvis Presley, The Beatles, and John Lennon made significant contribution to projecting soft power during the Cold War. What’s more, the spread of American news to Iran was possible through private American TV broadcasts; for example, the Iranian community in Los Angeles broadcasted from Iran and vice versa.¹⁰⁷ It is also important to note that although American popular culture, such as Hollywood movies or pop music, attracts much of the younger generation abroad, the unattractiveness of U.S. foreign policy may serve as an opportunity for the following generation to mistrust or be in doubt with the legitimacy of American power.

Soft Power and U.S. Foreign Policy

Because soft power is a power of attraction, the nature of attraction depends on the values a country employs in its foreign policy; hence, the more attractive the values of a country are, the more attractive its foreign policy becomes. Consequently, soft power depends on the type of foreign policy objectives a government pursues. In other words, the more attractive the policy objectives are, the more they can be shared with other international actors. Joseph Nye clarifies that broad foreign policies, including those that contain “far-sighted definition of the national interest,” are more efficient because they are more attractive to other actors, compared to foreign policies, based on “a narrow and myopic perspective.”¹⁰⁸

For example, the United States, has been striving to incorporate important U.S. values that appeal to others, such as democracy and human rights since its foundation.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 61.

What's more, realists like John Adams have done so, along with followers of Woodrow Wilson, and neoconservatives, who after 9/11 urged former U.S. President, George W. Bush, "not to adopt a narrow view of U.S. national interests, and make religious freedom, human rights, and democracy priorities to U.S. foreign policy."¹⁰⁹

As a result of George W. Bush's unilateral foreign policy, America's attractiveness overseas has been declining since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003; therefore, anti-Americanism overseas has increased. What's more foreign policy objectives, employed by the Bush administration, have contributed to the negative view of America and its people by many countries, including those of the Middle East and North Africa.

Anti-Americanism

In order to understand anti-Americanism, it is important to shed light not only on its sources, but also its consequences. Various scholars have defined anti-Americanism differently; for example, according to Alvin Rubenstein and Donald Smith, anti-Americanism is "actions or statements that involve sanctions or attacks against the policy, society, culture, and values of the United States."¹¹⁰ However, Russel Berman defines it as "a form of prejudice, in which views toward the U.S. are immutable, irrational, and even obsessive."¹¹¹ Although both definitions exclude both information about the sources of anti-Americanism and what causes irrational views of the U.S., data drawn from polls clearly indicates the decline of both America's attractiveness and favorable attitude towards the U.S. To illustrate, in 2007, a *Pew Global Poll* reports that

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 62.

¹¹⁰ Alvin Rubenstein, and Donald Smith, "Anti-Americanism: Anatomy of a Phenomenon," in *Anti-Americanism in the Third World*, ed. Alvin Rubenstein and Donald Smith (New York: Praeger, 1985), quoted in Monti Datta, "The Decline of America's Soft Power in the United Nations" (PhD diss., University of California, 2009), 7.

¹¹¹ Russel Berman, *Anti-Americanism in Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), quoted in Monti Datta, "The Decline of America's Soft Power in the United Nations" (PhD diss., University of California, 2009), 7.

compared to 2000 British, French, German, Russian, and Turkish public opinion on favorable attitudes towards the U.S. has decreased in 2006.¹¹² Moreover, unfavorable ratings of the U.S. in Turkey are among the lowest in the world: starting from 52% in 1999/2000 to 12% in 2006.¹¹³

According to Nye, The United States has lost its attractiveness in several past cases. For example, during the Vietnam War and “the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Germany in the early eighties.”¹¹⁴ Consequently, the loss of U.S. attractiveness had negative outcomes; namely, the inability of former President, Lyndon Johnson, to persuade other countries to cooperate in the Vietnam War.

In like manner, anti-Americanism continues to grow, especially right after 9/11 when the world was very sympathetic towards the U.S. invasion in Iraq in 2003. Paul Kelly reports,

The lesson of Iraq is that the U.S.’s soft power is in decline. Bush went to war having failed to win a broader military coalition or UN authorization. This had two direct consequences: a rise in anti-Americanism sentiment, lifting terrorist recruitment; and a higher cost to the U.S. for the war and reconstruction effort.¹¹⁵

That is why the United States has lost its support, especially, in Islamic countries. According to *the Pew Global Attitudes Project*, those who had unfavorable ratings of the United States mentioned that they disagreed with the Bush administration’s foreign policy rather than American values and culture.¹¹⁶ Hence, the percentage of those who

¹¹² Monti Datta, “The Decline of America’s Soft Power in the United Nations” (PhD diss., University of California, 2009), 9.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹¹⁴ Joseph Nye, “Sources of American Soft Power,” in *Soft Power: the Means to Succeed in the World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004): 35-36.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” 255.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Nye, “Sources of American Soft Power,” 35.

are in support of the U.S. is below 15 % in Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Jordan, and about 27 percent in Morocco and Lebanon.¹¹⁷ As a result, Richard Bernstein describes the image of the United States as nothing but a “classically imperialist power.”¹¹⁸ It would be inaccurate to simply state that anti-Americanism in the Islamic world is only due to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Equally important, anti-Americanism can be a byproduct of U.S. foreign policies that impose Western values of democracy on the Islamic world, and primarily pro-Israeli U.S. foreign policies in regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Anti-Americanism has also affected the relationship between the United States and the United Nations (U.N.). The United Nations is a multilateral intergovernmental organization that was founded in 1945 after World War II, replacing its ancestor, the League of Nations, in order to prevent aggression between states, such as war, and most importantly, to build a platform for a dialogue between state actors. The United Nations is not only the pioneer of legitimacy in international relations, but it is also known for its ability to develop soft power and to attract international actors’ consent when voting for or vetoing resolutions. In fact, Monti Datta states that in the case of anti-American sentiment in a country, the government of that country might break away from supporting U.S. foreign policy within international organizations like the U.N. by threatening to vote against issues that are considered important to U.S. national interests.¹¹⁹ Specifically, both Russia and France threatened to veto U.S. plans to invade Iraq in 2003.

As a result, public opinion plays a critical role in democratic societies like France, Great Britain, and Germany because “political elites generally consider and enact the will

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 43.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” 255.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

of the public;” otherwise, “their political survival may be in jeopardy.”¹²⁰ Accordingly, Datta hypothesizes that “there is a positive relationship between public approval of the United States within a given country and the level of voting coincidence that country shares with the U.S. on UNGA lobbied votes, other things being equal.”¹²¹ Finally, American soft power in the U.N. has declined and ignoring it may cause negative consequences; especially, for U.S.-Middle East relations.

Soft Power in the Middle East

Projecting U.S. soft power in the Middle East is an arduous challenge that requires time, commitment, and financial investment. Although culture can be attractive to some, it may not appeal to others, namely, dissimilar cultures such as American versus Middle Eastern, and North African culture. Moreover, after 9/11 the nature of power has changed because both terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism have penetrated the Middle East and North Africa. In like manner, if the United States wants to continue to be the world’s policeman, when fighting terrorism, the U.S. needs cooperation from other countries. Because a terrorist transnational network like al Qaeda, has numerous cells in many countries, U.S. troops cannot reach every single one of them on their own. Instead, capturing al Qaeda terrorists, therefore, defeating terrorism requires partners and alliances with other states. Yet, partnership with other states depends on America’s willingness and ability to project soft power through attractive U.S. foreign policies that can persuade international actors to cooperate. To reiterate, cooperation is enhanced through soft power.

However, the U.S. government has undermined America’s attractiveness in the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.,12.

Middle East and North Africa. As a result, the U.S. has paid a high price; that is to say, the loss of civilian cooperation, the disapproval of public opinion, and the unwillingness of close U.S. allies, such as France to cooperate in the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.

George W. Bush's unilateral foreign policy approach has caused not only a higher cost to the U.S. for the Iraq War, but also for Iraq's rebuilding input. It is also important to note that the majority of people in Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan, Morocco, and the Palestinian Authority mentioned that "they had more confidence in Osama bin Laden than in George W. Bush or Tony Blair."¹²²

Besides the U.S. invasion of Iraq and terrorism that stirred anti-Americanism in the Middle East, clashes between moderates and radicals in the Islamic world are not to be dismissed when we address U.S. soft power. The Middle East and North Africa have not been able to adapt to Western values of democracy. In addition, unemployment among the youth in the Middle East has skyrocketed along with stagnant economic growth, where illiteracy among women still remains high. Islamic ideology can be traced from the epicenter of Wahhabism, Saudi Arabia, to the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and the Islamic state of Iran. Finally, Nye suggests that the U.S. should include foreign policies that are attractive to moderate Moslems, if it wants "to win."¹²³ Despite the opposition from Islamic extremists and terrorists in the Middle East, Nye explains that "the grounds for [U.S.] soft power [in the Middle East] exist, but the world's leading communications country [the U.S.A.] has proved surprisingly maladroit in exploiting those

¹²² Joseph Nye, "Others' Soft Power," in *Soft Power: the Means to Succeed in the World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004): 97.

¹²³ Nye, "Soft Power and American Foreign Policy," 258.

opportunities.”¹²⁴

For these reasons, it is important to draw an analogy to the sources of soft power during the Cold War, when the U.S. government successfully employed soft power strategies to counteract Communist ideologies and the spread of Soviet Union influence. The battle of winning the hearts and minds of the Soviets through soft power required a long commitment, but succeeded in the long run. Notwithstanding, European culture was dissimilar to American culture. Therefore, cultural boundaries between the West and the Islamic world might require more time, but as Joseph Nye reiterates, “The long-run strategy for the transformation of Iraq and the Middle East,” as implemented by the Bush administration, “will not succeed without a similar role for American (and others’) soft power.”¹²⁵

Soft Power During the Cold War

Soft power resources were critical for the U.S. in Soviet Union relations during the Cold War. Similarly, the Soviet Union projected its soft power in its relations with the United States by investing billions of dollars in public diplomacy, namely, promoting its culture, technology, science, sports, dance, music, and media. Probably the most important aspect of the Soviet soft power resources was cultural diplomacy. Therefore, the Soviets invested highly in the arts. To illustrate, major ballet companies, symphony orchestras, and even sports teams that won gold medals were some of the resources of cultural diplomacy that attracted Soviet culture in the U.S. In like manner, former U.S. President Eisenhower’s cultural diplomacy program sent American dance artists to the Soviet Union to dispel the notion of Americans as nothing but “boorish, uncultured,

¹²⁴ Joseph Nye, “Wielding Soft Power,” in *Soft Power: the Means to Succeed in the World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004): 121.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

superficial, and materialistic.”¹²⁶ Lastly, American dance artists served as cultural diplomats in host countries, and “broke down barriers between cultures and ideologies.”¹²⁷

During the Cold War educational exchange became an integral part of U.S. foreign policy. Exchange programs attracted many foreign students to the U.S. from various parts of the world. In retrospect, foreign students were educated about American traditions and values. In the same sense, American scholars and educators were sent overseas to educate the populace about American culture and lifestyles.¹²⁸ A cultural diplomacy expert, Cynthia Schneider, explains that through the ability of U.S. diplomats to relate to the significance of cultural exchange with the Soviets to recognize “their literary and artistic achievements, the U.S. government became an ally with the Soviets.”¹²⁹ Despite the differences between the systems of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the advocacy of cultural diplomacy with the Soviets as a soft power resource can be seen as a diplomatic tool for increasing mutual understanding in U.S.-Soviet relations. Therefore, an important but neglected diplomatic tool in international relations today is cultural diplomacy.

¹²⁶ Naima Prevots, “Prologue,” in *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War*, (Hannover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998): 7.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹²⁸ Liping Bu, “Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War,” *Journal of American Studies* 33, no. 3 (1999): 398-399.

¹²⁹ Schneider, “Culture Communicates,” 7.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

“*Culture humanizes what politics demonizes.*”
--Wole Soyinka.¹³⁰

In order to better understand the trajectory of culture diplomacy in international relations, it is important to look at the theoretical framework of this phenomenon.

Historical background of diplomacy

Diplomacy, the art of negotiation, has been present since the second or fourth millennium BCE. The practice of diplomacy was first developed in the late fifteenth century in Italy, as best described in the alacrity of Niccolò Machiavelli, whose approach was later adopted by the French system. That led to “the first fully-developed” modern system of diplomacy by the British scholar and diplomat, Harold Nicolson, in the mid-twentieth century.¹³¹ According to Berridge, the term diplomacy was first referred to as *negotiation* during the diplomatic missions of the first minister of Louis XIII, Cardinal Richelieu.¹³²

Nicholas Cull distinguishes three important definitions of diplomacy. First, in broad terms, diplomacy can be defined as “the mechanisms short of war deployed by an international actor to manage the international environment.”¹³³ *Diplomacy*, in general, is practiced by a variety of actors, such as non-governmental, governmental, international, and multi-national organizations. Second, *traditional diplomacy* is best known as “the international actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through

¹³⁰ Schneider, *The Unrealized Potential of Cultural Diplomacy*, 262.

¹³¹ G.R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 2.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³³ Nicholas Cull, “Public Diplomacy: Lesson form the Past,” *USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School* (Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2009): 12.

engagement with another international actor.”¹³⁴ To illustrate, in the field of international relations traditional diplomacy is practiced by diplomats, government officials, consulates, and embassies. Third, *public diplomacy* is described as “an international actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public.”¹³⁵ Unlike traditional diplomacy, which usually encompasses relations between governments, public diplomacy not only focuses on the interaction between governments, but also it targets foreign audiences through foreign policy goals.

In the U.S., the term public diplomacy was coined between 1965 and 1970 during the Cold War era. In another sense, public diplomacy was often labeled as propaganda, used by U.S. government officials and politicians to accomplish their foreign policies. However, Eytan Gilboa (2008) argues that because public diplomacy is mistaken by scholars and politicians with propaganda, measured only through opinion polls and media coverage, “its essence and uniqueness” are underestimated.¹³⁶ Cold War public diplomacy clearly illustrates that “if public opinion in the target society is persuaded to accept a favorable image of the other side, it will exert pressure on its government to alter existing hostile attitudes and policies.”¹³⁷ During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union used international broadcasting, an important element of public diplomacy, to draw a positive image to the domestic ideologies of each country.

History of cultural diplomacy

An important element of public diplomacy is cultural diplomacy, i.e. “the exchange of ideas, art, thoughts, beliefs, information, values, systems, and other features of

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Eytan Gilboa, “Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, (2008): 56.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 59.

culture,” necessary to foster mutual understanding among nations.¹³⁸ Although this thesis will explain that cultural diplomacy is an important but neglected diplomatic tool in U.S.-Egypt relations nowadays, it is important to point out that cultural diplomacy is not limited to just cultural exchanges between nations. What’s more, cultural diplomacy can be practiced between individuals, communities, organizations or cities in a single nation.

According to Clifford Geertz, culture is “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” that has been transmitted throughout history.¹³⁹ As has been noted, culture is an important soft power resource, and the core of cultural diplomacy. According to Marta Osojnik, the author of *Cultural Diplomacy and the European Union: Key Characters and Historical Development*, cultural diplomacy “has existed since the beginning of civilization, in one form or another, under one name or another.”¹⁴⁰ Because the focus of this thesis is U.S. cultural diplomacy, it is important to examine the history of U.S. cultural diplomacy.

Throughout history, cultural diplomacy has existed in ancient times, namely, in Ancient Greece during “the construction of the great library at Alexandria.”¹⁴¹ In like manner, cultural diplomacy has been an integral part of “the Roman Republic’s policy inviting the sons of “friendly kings from their borders to be educated in Rome,” which

¹³⁸ Milton Cummings, “Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: a Survey,” *Center for its Arts and Culture*, (2003): 1, quoted in Ronit Appel et al., “Cultural Diplomacy: an Important but Neglected Tool in Promoting Israel’s Public Image,” *The Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya*, (Israel: Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy, 2008): 7.

¹³⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), quoted in *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 255.

¹⁴⁰ Marta Osojnik, “Cultural Diplomacy and the European Union: Key Characters and Historical Development,” Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (2011): 1, <http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/pdf/case-studies/cd-eu.pdf> (accessed February 19, 2013).

¹⁴¹ Nicholas Cull, “Public Diplomacy in a Changing World War,” *Annals of the American Academy of the Political and Social Science* 616, (2008): 33.

can also be seen today in the following organizations: the British Council and the Italian Cultural Institute.¹⁴² Equally important, France has always been the pioneer of large investments in cultural diplomacy through the realm of educational institutions, designed to preserve French language and culture.

Perhaps a prime example of the potential of cultural diplomacy can be traced as far as 1785 in Thomas Jefferson's letters to James Madison, during Jefferson's visit to Paris, I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world and procure them its praise.¹⁴³

Some of the first public diplomacy efforts by the United States began with the foundation of Robert College in what is known today as Turkey in 1863, and the American University of Beirut in Lebanon in 1866.¹⁴⁴ Both of these efforts embarked on an important educational exchange between the United States and the Middle East, which have lasted for more than a century. During World War I, President Wilson founded the Committee on Public Information (CPI), which became the first example of foreign information policy.¹⁴⁵ Consequently, the Institute of International Education, one of the first public diplomacy institutions in the U.S., was founded by both former Secretary of State, Elihu Root, and Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, in

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Kristen Bound et al., *Culture is a Central Component of International Relations. It's Time to Unlock Its Full Potential: Cultural Diplomacy* (London, UK: Demos, 2007): 15.

¹⁴⁴ John Lenczowski, "Historical Background" in *Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy: Reforming the Structure and Culture of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Estover Road, UK: Lexington Books, 2011), 27.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

1919.¹⁴⁶ For these reasons, John Lenczowski elucidates their ideology to be that peace could be accomplished through international understanding, promoted by international educational exchange.¹⁴⁷

Equally important, during World War I political figures used the so-called, Wireless File, a transmission of ideas through “industrial-age communication technologies,” such as telegraphs, undersea cables, and radio to magnetize not only opinion of foreign government officials, but also public opinion in other states around the world.¹⁴⁸

According to Bruce Gregory, the World War I period marks the groundwork for enabling international affairs among states through the realm of cultural diplomacy.¹⁴⁹ The United States along with Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union used cultural diplomacy aggressively to prevent upcoming wars from happening through educational and scientific exchanges.¹⁵⁰ Unlike European state’s ministries of culture, the United States’ cultural diplomacy initiatives were driven by private philanthropy such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundations.¹⁵¹

The antecedent of the current U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs was founded in 1938, and known as the Division of Cultural Relations in the U.S. State Department.¹⁵² As a result, several cultural and broadcasting organizations were created by the U.S. government; namely, the Creel Committee, and later on the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA). In 1936, the United States government

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Bruce Gregory, “Public Diplomacy: Sunrise of an Academic Field,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, (2008): 276.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 277.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Juliet Sablosky, “Recent Trends in Department of State Support for Cultural Diplomacy: 1993-2002,” *Center for Arts and Culture* (Washington, DC: Center for Arts and Culture, 2003), 3.

engaged in promoting exchange programs for both students and artists, during the signing of the Convention for the Promotion of Inter-American Cultural Relations in Buenos Aires.¹⁵³

The CIAA was founded in 1940 by President Franklin Roosevelt to improve cultural and economic relations between the U.S. and Latin America, specifically Brazil, to counteract fascist influence and ensure hegemonic stability. This was the highlight of the U.S.-Latin American alliance, known as the *Good Neighbor Policy*, where the CIAA was the first major investment in U.S. cultural diplomacy. According to Darlene Sadlier, this period was the first time in U.S. history when artists played a significant role in U.S. public policy.¹⁵⁴ The CIAA invested in promoting several art exhibitions of U.S. paintings in Latin America with the help of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), called the Inter-American art project. In addition, the Inter-American art project helped host art exhibits of many Latin American works in U.S. museums, institutions and private companies.¹⁵⁵

Besides art exhibitions, the CIAA sponsored the first ballet company in American history to tour South America in 1941. Namely, the American Ballet Caravan, led by choreographer George Balanchine, was sent by the CIAA on a twenty-eight week tour and it received a grant of \$100,000. According to Bernard Taper, the reason behind this dance tour was for the U.S. government to convince the South-American people that

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Darlene Sadlier, "Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy in World War II: The Art of Making Friends," *YouTube*, March 31, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SLkOU3f4SQ&list=PLUjdkixQIDvdlrzg0CkNGm_KCUOw-zy2 (accessed March 20, 2013).

¹⁵⁵ Darlene Sadlier, "Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy in World War II: The Art of Making Friends" (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 2012), *Institute of Cultural Diplomacy*, 1-3.

America was not just materialistic.¹⁵⁶

The CIAA served as a platform for many artists, filmmakers, and writers from both the U.S. and Latin America to learn from each other and build an amicable bond. As a result, these artists “felt that culture was a recognizable and integral part of U.S. foreign diplomacy.”¹⁵⁷ Sad to say, the end of World War II terminated the CIAA in 1946.

The end of World War II caused the United States to decrease its budget on educational and cultural exchange programs. For these reasons, some of the already designated offices for cultural activities were consolidated with the U.S. State Department. However, because of America’s recovery and reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of World War II, the U.S. Department of State sponsored several speakers, art exhibits, and performing artists to be sent to American libraries and cultural centers in Germany, Austria, Western Europe, and even Japan.¹⁵⁸

It is also important to note that many of today’s exchange programs were possible thanks to Senator J. William Fulbright’s 1946 amendment to the Surplus Property Act of 1944 that enabled finances for America’s most known academic exchange program—the Fulbright Academic Exchange Program.¹⁵⁹ The Fulbright Program is a product of America’s cultural diplomacy efforts that provides grants or scholarships for American and foreign students, scholars, professionals, teachers, and administrators. This academic program is binational with the help and support of foreign governments in fifty-one countries.¹⁶⁰ Following the Surplus Property Act of 1944, in 1948 the so-called *second mandate*, launched the Smith-Mundt Act that initiated America’s cultural and educational

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 19.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 22.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 4.

exchange programs through cultural diplomacy with the goal of building a mutual cultural understanding with other nations.¹⁶¹

Cultural diplomacy during the Cold War

The Cold War illuminates the highlights of cultural diplomacy in U.S. history. This war was a clash of dissimilar cultures, wherein two major powers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, competed in both military might and ideologies. That is why, the Cold War is also known as the war of ideas, where “cold warriors” competed in a “battle for the hearts and minds of men.”¹⁶² As influential as American pop music is today around the world, during the Cold War, jazz and rock’n roll became productive tools for cultural diplomacy. To illustrate, the U.S. State Department sent jazz legends, Dizzy Gillespie and Louis Armstrong, on a world tour to Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union. According to Cynthia Schneider, a cultural diplomacy expert, jazz and rock’n roll helped people in authoritarian regimes to enjoy “moments of freedom while listening, and it provided a unifying bond for young people” around the world.¹⁶³

Another very powerful example of cultural diplomacy as an important diplomatic tool was the New York Philharmonic Symphony’s (NYPS) tour in Latin America in 1958, supported by Vice President Nixon’s administration. Consequently, in May 1958, mobs in Caracas, Venezuela were outraged with Nixon’s administration. Yet, around the same time the NYPS had been warmly welcomed thanks to a tremendous success in every Latin American country it traveled to. In that same year, *The New York World Telegram* reported that although successful cultural activities cannot commensurate with America’s economic and political decline in Latin America and other countries, the

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Prevots, *Dance for Export*, 1.

¹⁶³ Schneider, *Culture Communicates: U.S. Diplomacy That Works*, 9.

NYPS has helped “win the minds of alien and suspicious people.”¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, “the gentlefolk in the Kremlin delight in picturing Americans as Babbitts braying in a cultural desert. Tours such as the Philharmonic’s provide a sure and relatively inexpensive way of proving them wrong.”¹⁶⁵ Hence, these cultural activities imply the success of U.S. cultural diplomacy as a tool for conformity and released tension between nations.

The struggle for public opinion on behalf of the U.S. Department of State was a concerted effort to present the American way of life as liberal and democratic, unlike a communist foe—the Soviet Union. For example, in 1959 an American National Exhibition presented the innovations of American technology, as demonstrated in Moscow during the so-called kitchen debate between President Krushchev and President Nixon, wherein the latter linked American freedom to material plethora.¹⁶⁶ As a result, the Soviets depicted Americans as “gum chewing, insensitive, and materialistic barbarians,” according to a New Jersey congressman, who was in favor of the arts.¹⁶⁷

In another example, in 1948, the author of *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War*, Naima Prevots shared that when she and her parents embarked on a family trip to Israel and Europe, people were surprised to learn that Americans “read books, went to museums, ate in cheap restaurants, could speak French and Hebrew, and did not own a car.”¹⁶⁸ Equally important, during the Cold War most countries around world viewed Americans as nothing but “boorish, uncultured, superficial, and materialistic.”¹⁶⁹ According to Eric Foner, for these instances of negative portrayals of America and its

¹⁶⁴ Prevots, *Dance for Export*, 129-130.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

people overseas, the U.S. State Department engaged in presenting a positive U.S. image through dance diplomacy.¹⁷⁰

Dance as a Weapon during the Cold War: A Successful Case Study

As U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War emerged, the U.S. Department of State increased funding for cultural diplomacy. The Department of State invested heavily in the arts, especially dance, as a tool to export American values of democracy and freedom overseas to counteract Soviet communism. Cultural diplomacy during the Cold War marked the U.S. government's most momentous support for the arts, when dance was used as a weapon in U.S.-Soviet diplomatic relations. Although dance played a small but significant role in U.S.-Soviet cultural diplomacy, very little, if any credit has been given to dance artists, who served as cultural diplomats overseas, as mandated by the U.S. government.

In order to understand this phenomenon, it is important to elucidate the role of dance artists as cultural diplomats.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower should be given credit for his support for the performing arts in cultural diplomacy during the Cold War, when he authorized the Emergency Fund for International Affairs in 1954. The Emergency Fund encompassed America's first cultural export program, designed to promote the performing arts. Funding for the performing arts consisted of \$2,250,000. In addition, the United States Information Agency (USIA), originally founded in 1953, was given \$157,000 for the promotion of performing arts and sports.¹⁷¹ Equally important, government financial support was combined with funding from the private sector.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 11.

According to Prevots, President Eisenhower not only realized the significance of performing arts in America, but also he saw it as an indispensable diplomatic tool in the formation of “world peace.”¹⁷² Among the exported cultural activities of America were dance, music, and theatre organizations in politically hot spots. America’s image overseas was strengthened by the Eisenhower’s Emergency Fund through dance artists, who served as cultural diplomats and exported the arts. Consequently, dance artists “did so not only as performers but also as individuals, whose interactions with citizens of the host country broke down barriers between cultures and ideologies.”¹⁷³

Because the central focus of this thesis is dance in cultural diplomacy, let’s examine the tours of performing artists overseas, who served as cultural diplomats during the Cold War. In 1954, the State Department decided to send performing artists to represent the U.S. at both the Inter-American Economic and Social Council in Rio de Janeiro and the United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conference in Montevideo.

In 1955, USIA’s paranoia about the spread of communism in South America was the State Department’s rationale to send a Mexican-born and Spanish-speaking dance artist, José Limón, on a tour to South America.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, the José Limón Dance Company, founded in 1946, became officially the first dance company to be sponsored under the Emergency Fund, and sent on a tour to both Brazil and Uruguay. After receiving rave reviews from critics in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Montevideo, the U.S. Embassy contacted the State Department to congratulate José Limón Company’s “artistic and

¹⁷² Ibid., 7.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 23.

personal success.”¹⁷⁵

In 1955, the cast of *Porgy and Bess* was sent on a tour in many countries around the world, including Moscow in the Soviet Union, and the Middle East, specifically, Cairo, Egypt and Tel Aviv, Israel. After a successful performance in Cairo, former President Nasser expressed his appreciation towards the cast of *Porgy and Bess* for their performance. Furthermore, as delighted as President Nasser was from the performance, he enthusiastically reported, “If this is propaganda, let us have more of it.”¹⁷⁶ Prevots reports that in Tel Aviv *Porgy and Bess* sold out, and the Russian Ambassador expressed his enjoyment of the performance to Ira Gershwin as, “Oh—if only WE had a PORGY AND BESS—WE—*would—send—it!* and then he wound up with an ‘on!’ and a global gesture. It is impossible to transmit on paper the knowing intent of his gesture.”¹⁷⁷

In another instance, the Symphony of the Air toured in Japan, becoming the first Western orchestra to visit Japan and to win the admiration of not only Japanese people, but also Japanese government officials, diplomats, ambassadors, and industrial leaders. An American Embassy report from Japan indicates that the Japanese expressed “eagerness to come more closely in touch with Americans and American thought and life.”¹⁷⁸ Rave reviews followed in major Japanese newspapers, reporting that audience members “forgot for the moment their social status...nationalities, and racial differences...Music is really an excellent bridge to transport the friendly feelings of nations.”¹⁷⁹ All of these powerful statements indicate the magnitude of culture as a power resource in cultural diplomacy; not to mention that music is a universal language that

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 29.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 31.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

unites people from all over the world. To sum up, as one U.S. representative expressed that American music and its “individual activities and attitudes have done more towards establishing a close rapport between our countries than a staff of attaché could hope to do in years.”¹⁸⁰

The enlistment of performing artists, who served as cultural diplomats under the auspices of the State Department, was administered by the American National Theater and Academy (ANTA), founded in 1935. In regards to dance artists, the Dance Panel became the determining body of all the dancers, who served as cultural diplomats overseas. It is helpful to contextualize the pre-conditions, set by the Dance Panel, in order to understand the challenges and struggles of American dance artists prior to their enlistment of cultural diplomats overseas.

The minutes of the Dance Panel, as reported by Prevots indicate the stigma against many American dancers, attached to the rationale behind the selection of dance artists. Because the Dance Panel was based in New York City, bias and prejudice against dancers was not as strong as that of other places in the U.S. where dancers were not welcomed or supported. For instance, Martha Graham, a modern dance icon was one of them. Her dance choreographies were neither “easily accessible, nor enjoyed a mass following in the U.S.”¹⁸¹ Although puritanical views of Martha Graham criticized her choreographies for including themes of sexuality, the State Department regarded her dance company and choreographies as the prime example of America’s freedom and liberty.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 45.

Equally important, the Dance Panel sought to present overseas the uniqueness of American dance. To illustrate, in 1955 the American image overseas was negative because it was perceived as undemocratic, even prior to the struggle for civil rights in the U.S. At that time, communism swept across the Asian and African continent, which led to the necessity of enhancing the American image abroad. As Martha Graham's dance company included a diversity of Asian and African artists, the State Department saw it as an opportunity to improve its negative image abroad through the enlistment of a multiracial dance company to represent America. Consequently, Martha Graham was sent on a tour to politically hot spots, where anti-Americanism was not a new phenomenon. Martha Graham's mission as a cultural diplomat included countries like Indonesia, Japan, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Ceylon.¹⁸²

It is imperative to mention that although Indonesia was one of those countries whose government was very critical of the U.S., Martha Graham's lecture performances were a smash hit, where her shows were not only sold out, but also had to be moved into larger spaces that could accommodate the enormous crowd of patrons. In like manner, Graham shows received rave reviews in Indonesian newspapers, where Graham broke down ideologies that proved wrong previous notions of "Americans living in a cultural wasteland only with gadgets and frankfurters and atom bombs."¹⁸³ Furthermore, Burmese Prime Minister U Nu's statement compared Martha Graham to be an important cultural ambassador as that of Soviet artists. Of utmost importance is Burmese Prime Minister's acknowledgement that "Miss Graham can very effectively contribute towards

¹⁸² Ibid., 46-49.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 50.

international goodwill and therefore [she is] a potent force for peace.”¹⁸⁴ Giving the importance of dance in cultural diplomacy in this thesis, such an empowering statement by U Nu elucidates the effectiveness of the performing arts as a diplomatic tool in international relations.

Unlike Graham’s previous experience in her home country, where her choreographies were considered risky and controversial because of themes of sexuality, her successful diplomatic missions to anti-American countries, where her work was unknown, helped her gain more popularity and credibility not only abroad, but also in the U.S. In other words, as dance artists conquered abroad, their reputation back home was strengthened. Hence, they became America’s goodwill ambassadors.

The Dance Panel saw new dance styles such as avant-garde, created by dance artists, as risky for audiences to accept because of a fear of being considered problematic abroad. For these reasons, the Dance Panel rejected several avant-garde dance artists, and even considered them boring. In the first place, racial prejudice among African-American artists, who later served as cultural diplomats, was a common scenario. To illustrate, in the 1940s and ‘50s African-American artists like Alvin Ailey shared in his autobiography that dancers of color were discriminated against because “their feet weren’t shaped right or because their legs wouldn’t turn out correctly...” The people who directed major ballet and modern dance companies “coldly rejected, and broke the hearts of many” talented African-American dancers.¹⁸⁵ On the other hand, the Dance Panel often criticized and

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 94.

rejected another African-American modern dancer, Katherine Dunham, for the “overt sexuality of her dances.”¹⁸⁶

Although survival for African-American dancers was harsh, the civil rights movement in the U.S. increased and became known abroad. Consequently, the Dance Panel decided to send African-American dance artists overseas. Hence, a modern dance company, led by Carmen de Lavallade and Alvin Ailey, became the first African-American dance group to be sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. Alvin Ailey’s dance company toured Africa and Asia, specifically Japan and Vietnam. Finally, the Japanese raved at Ailey’s performances, “The dancing on the stage, as the program went on, demolished the barriers between countries, forced us to forget all the stuff about race, color, creed, etc...”¹⁸⁷ Because of its success overseas, ANTA approved Ailey’s dance company for a second tour, but not until 1962. The State Department terminated ANTA in 1967.

Besides representation of modern dance, tap, Native-American, and avant-garde dance companies, the Dance Panel decided to send ballet dance companies abroad, namely, to the Soviet Union. The American Ballet Theatre was the first dance company to be sent to the Soviet Union, after which both the Joffrey Ballet and the New York City Ballet followed. It is important to note that the State Department sent American ballet companies to the Soviet Union to show appreciation towards Russian culture through Russian ballet. In like manner, by doing so the U.S. wanted to show the Soviets that “the U.S. could not only produce dancers as technically accomplished as any in the USSR, but

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 109.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 99.

also ballets that surpassed in sophistication and complexity anything seen on a Soviet stage.”¹⁸⁸

While American ballet companies toured all over the world, winning admiration and elevating America’s image through ballet, Igor Moiseyev’s ballet dance company was sent on a tour to France and Great Britain as sponsored by the Soviet Union Ministry of Culture. The sponsorship of Moiseyev’s ballet was first proposed at a meeting in Geneva in July 1955, mediated by the U.S., France, and the United Kingdom. Dance became the most exported cultural commodity during the Cold War. In addition, cultural exchange extended to “science, technology, agriculture, medicine, public health, radio and television, motion pictures, exhibition, publications, government, youth, athletics, scholarly research, culture, and tourism.”¹⁸⁹ Finally, after a series of negotiations in Geneva in 1955, led by Soviet Minister of Culture, Nikolai Mikhailov, the U.S. and USSR signed an exchange agreement in 1958 that made possible Moiseyev’s ballet company to tour the U.S.¹⁹⁰ Unlike a traditional ballet choreography, Moiseyev’s choreographies displayed a theatricalized version of Russian folk dances that included major ballet movements.

In reciprocity, Moiseyev’s ballet company made its U.S. debut in 1958 storming several major cities: New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. In 1958, the *Dance Magazine* reports, “And there is the strong non-dance element—the indisputable excitement that comes of seeing Russians—real people—laughing, dancing, waving. For forty years the doors have been shut. We have known Soviet citizens only by

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 71.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

hearsay.”¹⁹¹ Similarly to earlier description of misperceptions of America and its people by the Soviets and other countries, the statement explains that Moiseyev’s U.S. tour helped break down American ideologies of the Soviets. Even dance critic John Martin, who once had been against cultural exchanges through the performing arts under Eisenhower’s Emergency Fund in 1954, became impressed by Moiseyev’s ballet performance. To illustrate, John Martin concluded that the outcomes of Moiseyev’s performance were grandiose “not only to international relations, but also to artistic exchange.”¹⁹²

Perhaps the most important statement of all in regards to Moiseyev’s U.S. tour as a cultural exchange was that of a note in the dance program in Philadelphia: “It is our earnest wish that this program will be the beginning of an enlightenment which will enable our Governments to create an atmosphere which will enable the U.S. and Russia to live in Peace.”¹⁹³ After Moiseyev’s U.S. tour, the Soviet Union expressed an interest in sending another major ballet company, known as the Bolshoi Ballet, in 1959, which similarly to Moiseyev’s company dazzled with its performances throughout the U.S.

The State Department decided to extend its array of ballet dance companies by sending on a Soviet Union tour the Joffrey Ballet Company, which was a small ballet ensemble that traveled extensively to the Middle East as well. The director of this company was a ballet dancer, named Robert Joffrey. From the end of 1962 to early 1963 the company traveled extensively to Jordan, Egypt, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Iran,

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 72.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 74.

India, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.¹⁹⁴ Joffrey's ballet was the first ballet company to perform in Amman, Jordan, in 1962; therefore, Jordanians had never seen ballet prior to the Joffrey Ballet's visit in their country. What's more, the Jordanian press reported that the Joffrey Ballet made an enormous impression on the Arab audience. In like manner, the State Department acknowledged that the performances had a significant role and purpose in this cultural exchange. Consequently, the company's tour in Syria was a smashing success, where an ecstatic Syrian critic noted that although Lebanon has witnessed some of the finest performances of ballet from France, the United Kingdom, and Russia, the Joffrey Ballet had offered the Syrian audience what no other ballet company had before.¹⁹⁵

The ups and downs of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy Budgets: Severe Cutbacks in Funds

As has been noted, the U.S. Department of State invested heavily in cultural diplomacy during the Cold War to project anti-Communism and secure hegemonic solidarity. In 1978, during President Jimmy Carter's administration, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), both responsible for any cultural activities, were combined into a newly formed agency, best known as the U.S. International Communication Agency (USICA). However, during the Reagan administration USICA was renamed USIA.¹⁹⁶ As of October 1, 1999, the Bureau for Public Affairs (PA), and the Office for International Information Programs (IIP) have been administered by a new position, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy

¹⁹⁴ Sasha Anawalt, *The Joffrey Ballet and The Making of an American Dance Company* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1996): 154-155.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Sablosky, *Recent Trends in Department of State*, 5.

and Public Affairs.¹⁹⁷

Unfortunately, with the end of the Cold War, the State Department decided to reduce the size of government, programs, staff and its resources. According to *the Consolidation of the USIA into the State Department Report*, the International Visitor Program (IVP), designed to bring cultural exchange participants to the U.S. from various parts of the world, is in need of “not just rhetorical support, but additional financial resources as well.”¹⁹⁸ Indeed, IVP is one of the best governmental programs that exposes foreigners to the values, tradition, and culture of U.S. society. Needless to say, IVP plays a pivotal role in breaking down barriers, ideologies, and clichés of U.S. culture abroad.

Although in the 1990s the U.S. Congress approved additional funds for USIA related to cultural exchange activities in Eastern Europe to project freedom and democracy after the fall of communism, USIA staff and resources experienced major cutbacks. Needless to say, by the late 1990s USIA budget cuts became 33%, decreasing its staff by 29%.¹⁹⁹ Consequently, in 1999 the USIA was consolidated into the U.S. State Department. Staff was not only reduced in the U.S., but also overseas, especially in U.S. embassies, consulates, cultural centers, libraries, universities, etc. Therefore, these budget cuts had a severe impact on cultural activities abroad creating a crisis for cultural diplomacy. What’s more, slashing cultural programs through budget cuts undermines the potential of cultural diplomacy, that is to say, keeping cross-cultural communication alive is imperative to effective diplomacy.

¹⁹⁷ Consolidation of the USIA into the State Department: An Assessment After One Year, *United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, October 2000), 16, http://books.google.com/books?id=aVU-MoWqtG8C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed March 26, 2013).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 12.

¹⁹⁹ Sablosky, *ibid.*

The Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations Bill is responsible for the funding of public diplomacy, which budget is less than eight percent of the State Department's total budget.²⁰⁰ The State Department's budget for public diplomacy for fiscal year 2003 was \$600 million out of which 40% was allocated for educational and cultural activities.²⁰¹ From 1978 the Office of Citizen Exchanges/Cultural Programs, also known as the Arts America, was responsible for cultural programs, but in 1997 it was closed. The cultural activities budget cuts limited the tours of performing artists, art exhibitions, panelists on the arts and literature, and cultural attachés. For example, in 1993, "the Arts America office consisted of a personnel of 30 and a budget of \$1.6 million; in addition, \$3.2 million in salaries and opening costs."²⁰²

However, starting in 1997, personnel decreased to three, including the allocation of staff and \$1.2 million in program funds to the Office of Citizen Exchanges under the State Department.²⁰³ Similarly, from 1995 to 2001 the number of ECA-sponsored cultural exchange participants decreased from 45,000 to 29,000.²⁰⁴ Equally important is the decline of foreign students in U.S. colleges and universities because of strict U.S. visa requirements. For these reasons, there has been an increase in the number of students attending European Union and Australian universities. In 2004, there has been a decline with 2.4 percent in the number of U.S. enrolled foreign students, compared to 1971.²⁰⁵ Finally, the economic losses from the decline of foreign student enrollment in 2003 were \$300 million.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ *Consolidation of the USIA into the State Department*, 5.

²⁰¹ *Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 9.

²⁰² Sablosky, 10.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁰⁴ *Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 8.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

The Cultural Programs Division monitors U.S. State Department funds for American artists at international venues, a public-private partnership that includes the National Endowment for the Arts, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Rockefeller Foundation, which enables financial support for U.S. representation at festivals by artists.²⁰⁷ The Kennedy Center provided funds for jazz tours; yet, funding for the arts is primarily oriented towards U.S. educational and cultural institutions as opposed to the performing arts. Therefore, financial support for the performing arts in U.S. cultural diplomacy by the State Department has diminished.

U.S. Cultural Diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa

Cultural diplomacy funds from the State Department are miniscule compared to the Cold War, when America used the performing arts as a weapon to counteract communism. Yet, cultural diplomacy activities towards the Middle East and North Africa still take place under various initiatives. For example, in 2004 the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) published a report on recent U.S. public diplomacy efforts, where the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) faced serious challenges in the Middle East. In 1999, BBG became the independent body of international broadcasting through Arabic language television, the Afghanistan Radio Network, and Radio Farda in Iran.

Although BBG shares the State Department's annual budget of a little more than one billion dollars, insufficient public diplomacy resources, lack of foreign language proficiency among foreign service officers, and projecting diplomacy only towards the Arab elites are some of the challenges that hinder BBG's efficacy. In addition, there have been insufficient personnel, and a lack of database with information on the number of

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

exchange participants. Because of insufficient funds, ECA has not been able to provide BBG with accurate information on exchange participants either. Providing feedback on exchange participants helps estimate the progress and effectiveness of BBG. What is compelling here is that according to the GAO report, neither the State Department nor BBG have “systematically and comprehensively been measuring progress toward the goals of reaching broader audiences and increasing the public’s understanding of the U.S. To sum up, BBG has shown inefficiency in its mission in the Middle East because of insufficient funding from the State Department.”²⁰⁸

In another instance, in 2004, *the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy (ACCD)* at the State Department, went on a mission to Muscat, Cairo and London to investigate the role of arts and culture in foreign policy. Most importantly, ACCD’s agenda was to explore the possibilities of U.S. government-sponsored arts and cultural programs, and how cultural diplomacy can improve America’s image in the Middle East and North Africa. Consequently, ACCD concluded that the U.S. image could not have been worse, specifically, hostility towards U.S. foreign policy and politics. Equally important, ACCD discovered that there was a lack of literary cultural exchanges, namely, literature works and translation of Arab literature in English and vice versa. For example, while in Egypt ACCD found out that compared to the total of 185,000 works translated in English in 2004, only 874 of them were literary. This shortage of literary work translation leads to “cultural cross-fertilization.”²⁰⁹ Hence, according to the *2002 Arab Human Development Report* issued by the UN pointed that, “Translation is one of the most important channels

²⁰⁸ State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors Expand Efforts in the Middle East but Face Significant Challenges, *United States General Accounting Office* (Washington, DC: United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, February 10, 2004), 3-11, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/120/110584.html> (accessed on March 27, 2013).

²⁰⁹ *Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 12.

for the dissemination of information and communication with the rest of the world.”²¹⁰

During a luncheon in Muscat, Cairo, ACCD met with a photographer from the Omani Fine Arts Society, who explained that American prejudices towards the Muslim world are cultural, where Muslims are seen as backward. However, Muslim prejudice towards the U.S. is political because of America’s foreign policy in favor of Israel.²¹¹ Above all, because of cultural diplomacy budget cuts on behalf of the U.S. State Department, “Arabs only see U.S. political machinations; hence, there is no cultural counterweight to [U.S.] foreign policy.”²¹² In addition, the luncheon discussed attempts on behalf of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture to reach the U.S. Department in regards to reciprocal invitations of American and Egyptian dance troupes, singers, musicians, visual artists, and stage directors. Conversely, one of the Egyptian officials at the Ministry of Culture explained that there was a lack of communication between the State Department and Egyptian cultural institutions, which is a direct result of no U.S. cultural presence in Egypt.²¹³

Because of fear of terrorist threats after September 11, 2001 and severe budget cuts, the State Department decided to close down all American libraries in the Middle East and North Africa. Instead, the State Department replaced them with American corners, reducing the exposure of Arabs to various aspects of U.S. culture. For these reasons, the public and press affairs counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi, Olsin-Windecker, noted that “it’s not ‘Culture’ with a capital C. That kind of activity over the last 10 years

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid., 13.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

has just about ceased.”²¹⁴

Unlike the Cold War, today the U.S. government has brought few performing artists to the Middle East and North Africa. For instance, in Amman, Jordan, the U.S. Embassy has brought *the Battery Dance Company* several times to the Hussein Cultural Center, thanks to the assistance of the mayor.²¹⁵ *The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs* at the State Department has created *the DanceMotion U.S.A.* Program that sends several American dance companies on a cultural diplomacy tour overseas. In 2012, *DanceMotion U.S.A.*, along with its partner, *The Brooklyn Academy of Music* has chosen several American dance companies to serve as dance ambassadors in tours to Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Israel, The Palestinian territories, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and the Kyrgyz Republic. Some of these contemporary American dance companies include *the Trey McIntyre Project*, *the Sean Curran Company*, *the Jazz Tap Ensemble*, and *Rennie Harris Puremovement*.²¹⁶

Notwithstanding, there has been little, if any reciprocity, namely, inviting dance artists from the Middle East and North Africa to perform in the U.S. Above all, the U.S. Department of State has neither sponsored American dance organizations performing the dances of the Middle East and North Africa, nor Arabic dance artists who do so. Therefore, providing American access to Arab dance artists in the United States and vice versa is critical to increasing cross-cultural understanding between the United States and

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Gordon Robinson, *Flying Under the Radar: U.S. Cultural Diplomacy in the Middle East*, *USC Center on Public Diplomacy* (Los Angeles, CA: USC Center on Public Diplomacy, July 5, 2005), 6, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/Robison_-_Cultural_Diplomacy_July06.pdf (accessed on March 29, 2013).

²¹⁶ Remarks to the Annual Conference of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP), *Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs* (Washington, DC: United States Department of State, January 7, 2011), <http://eca.state.gov/speech/remarks-annual-conference-association-performing-arts-presenters-apap> (accessed on March 29, 2013).

the Middle East and North Africa. Similarly, organized art exhibitions to the Arab world today are a far cry from what the State Department used to do during the Cold War.

In another example, public affairs officer, Mahoney, at the American Embassy in Abu Dhabi, is delighted to provide an opportunity for Islamic clerics to embark on a cultural exchange program to the United States. During this exchange program, junior imams from the Middle East gave sermons, known as *khutbas* in the Arabic language, in local U.S. mosques. Prior to his visit to the U.S. one of the imams had depicted U.S. culture and America as negative, however, after the exchange program in which he participated, he realized that American values are no different than any other values of countries around the world.²¹⁷ What's more, after his U.S. visit, the imam stressed that when one thinks of Americans and their culture, one should differentiate between U.S. foreign policy and the everyday people of the U.S. The imam also shared that he had been welcomed in both U.S. churches and U.S. synagogues, when giving speeches on Islam, being a peaceful religion. Thus, this powerful example elucidates the importance of cultural exchange programs as a diplomatic tool in dispelling stereotypical views of U.S. culture, values, and traditions.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

CHAPTER V

U.S.-EGYPT RELATIONSDemographic Data of Egypt

Egypt is located in the northeastern part of the African continent, bordering with the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, Libya, the Gaza Strip, Sudan, and Israel. With an increasing population of over 82 million people, today Egypt is one of the most populated countries in the world.²¹⁸

Figure 1²¹⁹

Cairo is the capital of Egypt with a population of over 11 million. As of 2010, the country's life expectancy rate at birth is 75.5, whereas its infant mortality rate is 22.0.²²⁰ The country's ethnic diversity includes Egyptians, Bedouins, Berbers, Coptic Christians, Nubians, Greeks, Jews, Italians, and French. As Egyptian dialects vary according to regions, Arabic is the country's official Semitic language. Egypt's main religion is Islam,

²¹⁸ Country Profile of Egypt, *UN Data*, <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=EGYPT> (accessed on March 30, 2013).

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Country Profile of Egypt, *UN Data*, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pocketbook/PDF/2011/Egypt.pdf> (accessed on March 30, 2013).

where the predominant sect is that of Sunni. As the largest population consists of Muslims, eight to ten percent are Christians, Coptics constitute the largest Christian population. Egypt's Jewish community is miniscule. The country's economy predominantly relies on its agricultural sector; Egypt has been historically known for its cotton industry and also tourism.²²¹

History of Egypt: From the Birth of Ancient Egyptian Civilization to Modern Egypt

Egypt takes pride in its rich history that dates back to the Predynastic Period circa 5300 to 2950 BC. The following is the chronology of the Egyptian civilization: Early Dynastic Period circa 2950-2613 BC, Old Kingdom circa 2613-2160BC, First Intermediate Period circa 2160-2055 BC, Middle Kingdom circa 2055-1640, Second Intermediate Period circa 1640-1550 BC, New Kingdom circa 1550-1069, Third Intermediate Period circa 1069-715 BC, and the Late Period circa 715-332 BC.²²²

According to Jason Thompson, the ancient Egyptians developed “political unity, kingship, writing, monumental architecture, agriculture, large-scale irrigation, modes of artistic expression, and social organization.”²²³

Egypt's history continues with the Arab conquest from 639 to 642 by Amr Ibn Al As, followed by the Ayyubi Dynasty that ended in 1250. Afterwards the Mamluks controlled Egyptian provinces until 1516, when the Ottoman Empire took control over Egypt until 1805. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt until the French defeated the British. In 1805, an Albanian commander-in-chief, named Muhammad Ali, became the viceroy of Egypt until his death in 1849. Muhammad Ali banned professional dancers in Egypt in

²²¹ Egypt, Encyclopedia.com, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Egypt.aspx> (accessed on March 30, 2013).

²²² Jason Thompson, “The Birth of Egyptian Civilization: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt,” in *A History of Egypt: From Earliest Times to the Present* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2009), 12.

²²³ Ibid., 13.

1834. In 1882, England gained control over the Egyptian government. In addition, England proclaimed Egypt a protectorate in 1922, and recognized Egypt's sovereignty under the rule of King Fuad. Following the calamity of World War II, Egypt joined the United Nations, and brought into question the possible withdrawal of British troops from the country that had occupied Egypt for twenty years.

The Creation of Modern Egypt

The Arab Republic of Egypt was founded on June 18, 1953, along with its first president, Muhammed Naguib, a former Egyptian general.²²⁴ In 1954 Lieutenant Gamal Abd al-Nassar became Egypt's second president. By the end of June 1954, the British troops withdrew from the Suez Canal through an evacuation agreement, signed in October 1954. On July 1956, President Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal.²²⁵ However, in late 1956, a military conflict between Egypt, Britain, France, and Israel broke out, known in history as the Suez Canal Crisis. The United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Nations condemned and pressured Britain, France, and Israel to withdraw. Even though the Suez Canal Crisis was resolved, it reopened the crisis between Israel and Egypt.²²⁶

As the prominent voice of Arab nationalism, President Nasser became the charismatic leader of the Arab world, mesmerizing the Arab populace in the Middle East and North Africa. President Nasser represented not only unity among Arab nations, but also, independence from colonial powers. Perhaps Nasser's greatest ally was Syria because both countries shared the idea of pan-Arabism. Both countries advocated for Arab unity, supporting Arabic countries operating under the auspices of a single unity, known as the

²²⁴ Ibid., 125-128.

²²⁵ Ibid., 130.

²²⁶ Ibid., 298-299.

United Arab Republic (UAR), originally founded on February 1st, 1958.²²⁷ Among the Arab countries that welcomed UAR were Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Yemen. The Headquarters of the UAR were located in Cairo. In like manner, Palestinians also embraced the UAR, especially after hostilities with the Jewish state of Israel had occupied Palestinian territories. The UAR was short-lived, and ended in 1961.²²⁸

As has been noted, the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956 increased tensions between Egypt and Israel, which lasted until 1978, when the Egyptian President, Sadat and the Israeli President, Begin, signed an agreement adhering to the Camp David Peace Accords. The Camp David Peace Accords were a series of diplomatic efforts, led by U.S. President Jimmy Carter with Egypt and Israel that lasted for less than two years. The United States served as the mediator between the two countries that had been at war for three decades. According to Shibley Telhami, the accords not only proposed bilateral agreements between Israel and Egypt, but also served as a platform for “Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank and in Gaza—non-Egyptian territories occupied by Israel during the 1967 war.”²²⁹

History of U.S.-Egypt Relations

Egypt’s diplomatic relations with the U.S. began in 1922. In its relationship with the U.S., Egypt plays a strategic role in the economic stability of the Middle East and North Africa. In addition, as a U.S. partner, Egypt promotes peace, and helps counteract terrorism. According to the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. has exported to Egypt wheat, corn, mineral fuel, oil, machinery, aircraft,

²²⁷ Thompson, *The Birth of Egyptian Civilization*, 304.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 306.

²²⁹ Shibley Telhami, *The Camp David Accords: A case of International Bargaining*, *University of Southern California* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 1992), 1.

iron and steel products. Egyptian exports to the U.S. include apparel, natural gas, oil, fertilizers, textile coverings, and agricultural products.²³⁰ In 1967, as Egypt's debt reached two billion dollars, under President Lyndon Johnson the U.S. government stopped the shipments of surplus American wheat. In 1977, Egypt face a stark financial crisis, when its foreign debt continued to grow.²³¹

In 1981, Hosni Mubarak became Egypt's next president and was reelected in 1987. During his presidency, Egypt's relation to its neighboring Arab countries was restored, namely, Egypt's readmittance to the Arab League in 1988, including Cairo being again its headquarters. As an U.S. ally, during Mubarak's regime, Egypt played a pivotal role both in denouncing the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and later in the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords from 1993-1994.²³² Despite Egyptian support for the U.S. during the Mubarak regime, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 did not win Egyptian approval, especially, when the Egyptian government allowed public demonstrations against it.²³³

U.S. invasion of Iraq decimated the U.S. image in the Middle East, including Egypt, where anti-Americanism and Islamic fundamentalism have been on the rise. Although the majority of Egyptians are in favor of democracy, according to a Gallop poll, when asked if Americans were serious about establishing democratization in Egypt, 63% of Egyptians disagreed.²³⁴ Unfortunately, in 2008, that percentage increased to 75%. In like manner, according to a Pew poll taken in 2011, the Arab Spring did not change Egyptian public

²³⁰ U.S. Relations with Egypt, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, March 3, 2013), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/03/185184.htm> (accessed on April 1, 2013).

²³¹ Thompson, *The Birth of Egyptian Civilization*, 309-328.

²³² *Ibid.*, 345.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ Glassman, James and Dan Glickman, Strategic Public Diplomacy: The Case of Egypt, *Bipartisan Policy Center* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, October 2011), 35, <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/sites/default/files/EgyptCaseStudy.pdf> (accessed on April 2, 2013).

opinion over U.S. favorability, decreasing it to 17% in 2010 compared to 30% in 2006.²³⁵

A pivotal point in U.S.-Egypt relations was President Obama's speech in Cairo as part of his public diplomacy efforts, addressing U.S.-Middle East relations but not specifically addressing U.S.-Egypt affairs. Moreover, Obama's speech discussed political freedom but not democracy. Consequently, in November 2009, in a speech by Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, she envisioned the promotion of human rights, education, economic development, and the support of civil society. Unlike the Bush administration that prioritized economic reform and military assistance in U.S.-Egypt relations, the Obama administration focused on soft power multilateral approach to international relations versus unilateral. For example, when President Obama authorized a military intervention in Libya, it was through a U.N. Security Council resolution.

Mubarak's regime has been known for fraud and violence, namely, beginning with the elections in 1995, when although the National Democratic Party won the votes, Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court noted that parliamentary elections were not "properly supervised."²³⁶ As a result, Mubarak assured the Egyptian people that the next elections would be fair and democratic. Nevertheless, the 2002 elections thwarted Muslim Brotherhood candidates. Similarly, an anti-Mubarak movement rose again in Egypt after rumors about Mubarak's poor health in 2010, and in early 2011 mass demonstrations took place in the streets of Cairo, following the fall of Tunisian President, Ben Ali. Notwithstanding, because of large protests in Tahrir Square, Cairo against Mubarak's corrupt regime, and violence against Egyptian civilians, President Obama turned to President Mubarak to commit to democratic values, such as not to harm

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Thompson, *The Birth of Egyptian Civilization*, 350.

peaceful protestors in Cairo. However, Obama did not call for Mubarak to resign from power. The events in Cairo became known as the Egyptian Revolution.

In February 2011, Mubarak resigned and was replaced with a Muslim Brotherhood-nurtured President, Mohammad Morsi. His recent election brought uncertainty in U.S.-Egypt relations, namely, with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the military both increasing its influence on all aspects of the government. According to Jeremy Sharp, a Middle Eastern Affairs specialist, the Muslim Brotherhood has gained much support from the Egyptian people because of its emphasis on "social services, party discipline and organization, the broad popular appeal to Islam, and its history of opposition to Mubarak's regime."²³⁷ In addition, Egypt's economy has weakened; for example, Egypt's annual budget deficit is estimated to be from \$26 billion to \$31 billion.²³⁸ Similar to Israel, the U.S. government has been concerned over Egypt-Israeli relations, namely, anti-Semitic attitude that stems from the Muslim Brotherhood. To illustrate, in 2010, President Morsi used anti-Jewish rhetoric, comparing Jews to "the descendants of apes and pigs."²³⁹

It is important to note that the Camp David Peace Accords put in place the framework for a strong alliance between the United States and Egypt that lasted for many decades. Although the accords achieved peace between Israel and Egypt, the latter was criticized for allowing Israel to occupy the West bank and Gaza, which left unresolved the creation of a possible Palestinian state. Furthermore, it could be argued that Israel sacrificed the Sinai Peninsula for peace with Egypt, yet, "Egypt may be Israel's enemy in any case."²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Sharp, *Egypt Background and U.S. Relations*, 2.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

Even though Egypt was removed from the Arab League and it was not granted economic aid from the Arab states, it became the recipient of both economic and military aid from the United States.

U.S. Congress has approved economic and military aid to Egypt as an investment in regional stability, as a direct result of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in March 1979 at Camp David. To illustrate, in fiscal year 2012, the U.S. bilateral aid to Egypt totaled \$1.55 billion: \$1.3 billion in military aid and \$220 million in economic aid.²⁴¹ In addition, the House Foreign Affairs Committee in Washington allocated \$450 million from the Economic Support Fund (ESF) to compensate for “Egypt’s bilateral debt to the U.S.” in exchange for Egypt’s adherence to “a fiscal stabilization program,” as prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, as of December 2012, the ESF’s \$450 million has been placed on hold.²⁴² According to Jason Thompson, U.S. economic and military aid to Egypt totals more than \$71.6 billion, making Egypt the second largest U.S. aid recipient after Israel.²⁴³

Unfortunately, in the eyes of most Egyptians, U.S. hard power as in providing Egypt with U.S. military aid, has hindered U.S. soft power. Although the U.S. government considers Egypt to be the pillar of the Arab world, the Egyptian people have expressed their disenchantment for America’s long support of Mubarak’s corrupt regime. What’s more, Egyptians consider U.S. military aid a free pass for the Egyptian government to suppress the voices of the Egyptians, who long for democracy. As seen in the Egyptian revolution in 2011, the Mubarak regime used military weapons, provided for by U.S.

²⁴¹ Jeremy Sharp, *Egypt Background and U.S. Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, December 6, 2012), <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/155979.pdf> (accessed on April 1, 2013).

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid., 344.

military aid that do not justify America's support for Egyptian democracy. To illustrate, Cynthia Schneider reported that the U.S. government "participated, even if indirectly in the crackdown on the revolution, importing weapons that were used on Egyptian protesters."²⁴⁴ For these reasons, many Egyptians including a female Egyptian Presidential candidate, Bothaina Kamel, expressed disapproval of U.S. foreign policy to Egypt. Bothaina Kamel refused to accept an award for which she was nominated by the U.S. Department of State in 2011, because she could not "accept an award stained with blood of the martyrs."²⁴⁵ Finally, even though Egypt continues to be the second recipient of U.S. military and economic aid in the world, the U.S. government remains uncertain and unsure about the stability of its bilateral relations with Egypt.

²⁴⁴ Schneider, *Hard Power Trumps Soft in U.S. Policy Towards Egypt*.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER VI

RAQS SHARQI

Raqs Sharqi: An Important but Neglected Component of Egyptian Culture.

Dance is a universal language that represents every culture of the globe; most importantly, dance is one of the many enriching aspects of culture. The dances of the Middle East and North Africa have fascinated many people from all facets of life. Every region of the Middle East and North Africa is known for its individual and distinctive folk dance forms. Each and every folk dance depicts various aspects of people's daily lives. For example, *basrawi*, a folk dance from the Basra area of southern Iraq depicts the lives of fishermen through acrobatic movements. The *tahtib* is a martial arts dance of Egypt that shows the combating skills of men. In reciprocity, in an Egyptian cane dance, *raqs alassaya*, women imitate the combatative skills of the *tahtib* dance that is performed only by men. In another unisex Egyptian folk dance, *fella or fellah*, performed in Upper Egypt, a man looks for love. The *dabke* is also a folk dance of the Levant that can be seen from Palestine to Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. In Turkey, a Turkish Rom folk dance, known as *sule kule*, represents Romany culture with an urban *karsilama* rhythm of 9/8, and depicts the lives of poor Roma girls in a neighborhood in Istanbul. This list of Middle Eastern and North African folk dances is extensive but not exhaustive.

Historical Background of Raqs Sharqi

Raqs Sharqi is a unisex folk dance that represents the lives of Arab men and women, and can be best seen in Egypt. Raqs Sharqi elucidates the joy and happiness of life through dance. For these reasons, in some parts of Lebanon, Raqs Sharqi is often called *raqs alfarrah*, literally translated from Arabic into English as dance of happiness. The

etymology of the term—*Raqs Sharqi* derives from the Arabic language, where *raqs* stands for dance and *sharq* for East. Therefore, its literal translation from Arabic into English is Eastern dance. The term Eastern dance is often mistakenly associated with Chinese, Japanese, Korean and other Eastern dance forms. For these reasons, it is important to distinguish that what is geographically known as the East is divided into Near East, Middle East, and Far East. Although according to the lexicon of geography Egypt is located in North Africa, scholars and politicians often refer to Egypt as a country of the Middle East.

Dancers often refer to Raqs Sharqi as *Oriental dance* or *Middle Eastern dance*; however, both of these terms are plausible. To illustrate, the adjective oriental derives from the noun, *Orientalism*, a derogatory term, coined by Western European colonial powers. The late Egyptian scholar, Edward Said, describes Orientalism as a Western European colonial distortion and romanticization of the Middle East and North Africa, attempting to portray Muslim culture as backward and exotic. Furthermore, Said elucidates that “the Orient was overvalued for its pantheism, its spirituality, its stability, its longevity, its primitivity, and so forth.”²⁴⁶

Similar to Said’s definition of orientalism, there have been misinterpretations of Raqs Sharqi as portrayed by Western European Orientalists such as Gustave Flaubert, George William Curtis and others. These individuals traveled to the Middle East and North Africa to depict Muslims and Arabs as backward and exotic sexual beasts in order to “titillate, educate, and ultimately reassert the superiority of [their] own ideologies to

²⁴⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 150.

[their] own people: white, bourgeois, American readers.”²⁴⁷

Equally important, the term Oriental dance, serves as a conundrum when interchanged with Raqs Sharqi because it covers a broad variety of Asian dance styles, such as Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian, and other East Asian genres. In like manner, the terminology – Middle Eastern dance, is ambiguous because geographically it pertains more broadly to the Middle East, but not to a specific Middle Eastern country.

Nonetheless, the term Middle Eastern dance excludes Egypt, which is located in northeastern Africa.

Raqs Sharqi executes articulations of the torso, pelvis, abdominal muscles, hands, arms, head, and most importantly, the hips as the main body movements. As of today, Raqs Sharqi remains the most popular dance in Egypt, and that is why the country is often referred to as the pillar of Raqs Sharqi. Yet, there is no compelling evidence that reveals the true origins of Raqs Sharqi in terms of place and time because this folk dance dates back to thousands of years ago. Likewise, it is hard to estimate whether or not Raqs Sharqi is the oldest dance on earth. However, the dance is unarguably one of the oldest in the world. Hence, this conundrum has proliferated many speculations about the origins of Raqs Sharqi; namely, there are assumptions that the dance dates back to pre-historic times, when women imitated the undulation movements, used during their childbirths, according to Morocco’s personal observation in 1967.²⁴⁸ In another instance, others have speculated that Raqs Sharqi was first practiced by priestesses to worship Goddesses or in

²⁴⁷ Stavros Stavrou Karayanni, “Dismissal Veiling Desire: Kuchuk Hanem and Imperial Masculinity,” in *Dancing Fear & Desire: Race, Sexuality, and Imperial Politic in Middle Eastern Dance* (Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2004), 43.

²⁴⁸ Morocco, “Giving to the Light: Dancing the Baby into the World,” *Habibi* 15, no. 1 (1996): 12-13.

relation to fertility and love rituals.²⁴⁹ To reiterate, because there have not been any records of evidence to justify the above assumptions, the origins of Raqs Sharqi have been misinterpreted by the West.

In the West, Raqs Sharqi is popularly known as *la danse du ventre*, which translated from French into English means *belly dance*. However, this terminology is erroneous because first, Raqs Sharqi includes not only the abdominal muscles, that is to say, the belly, but also other body parts such as the hands, the torso, and the hips. Second, the term, *belly dance*, was coined by the architect of *the Chicago World's Fair*, Sol Bloom, in 1893 that included dancers of the Middle East and North Africa. Sol Bloom decided to name it *belly dance* in order to titillate the attendees of the fair.²⁵⁰ It is important to note that this happened during the Mid-Victorian era, when exposing any body parts was considered risqué; in other words, indecent or improper. For example, when referring to the following body parts – arms and legs, the Mid-Victorians used only the word, limbs. In like manner, during the Mid-Victorian era a new dance had emerged, known as the waltz, in which when performed by a man and a woman, the male dance partner was not allowed to place his hand below the waist of the female dance partner. Dancing the waltz otherwise was considered salacious by the Mid-Victorians, because it contradicted “the formalities and corporeal distance,” as seen in Victorian courtship rituals.²⁵¹

As a result, watching Middle Eastern or North African dancers perform in a two-piece costume, exposing the abdominal muscles, and calling them *belly dancers* caused a burning sensation among the Mid-Victorians. At that time people would pay anything to

²⁴⁹ Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young, “Belly Dance: Orientalism: Exoticism: Self-Exoticism,” *Dance Research Journal* 35, no. 1 (2003): 19.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁵¹ Molly Engelhardt, “The Natural Accents of Dancing,” in *Dancing Out of Line: Ballrooms, Ballets, and Mobility in Victorian Fiction* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2009), 9.

see what they called “the hoochie-coochie,” referring to belly dance, as performed by Little Egypt at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893.²⁵² Accordingly, the owner of the fair, Sol Bloom, profited greatly from it. One can imagine what the Mid-Victorians made out of *belly dance*! Nonetheless, the event of the Chicago Fair gave birth to the Western misconception of Raqs Sharqi that continues to prevail in Western society.

Westernization and Modernization of Raqs Sharqi

In the West, the media along with Hollywood has mislabeled Raqs Sharqi as the sexual, exotic, and striptease-like belly dance that led to iconic (mis)representations of the dance, being the emblem of the Middle East and North Africa. For example, Hollywood celebrities like Hedy Lamarr, Rita Hayworth, and Theda Bara, have reenacted misinterpretations of Raqs Sharqi in the movie, *Arabian Nights*, and the Broadway musical, *Kismet*, where the average Middle Eastern and North African woman is seen as exotic.²⁵³ Such erroneous beliefs of Raqs Sharqi have stirred anger and frustration among Muslims in the Arab world. Hence, such rhetoric belies this sweeping generalization of Raqs Sharqi. Because of these Western assumptions of Raqs Sharqi being associated with sexuality and striptease both academic scholars and the general public have questioned its legitimacy in the world.

In another sense, the Westernization and modernization of Raqs Sharqi as a sexual dance empowered thousands of American women during the feminist movement in the 1970s. Furthermore, during that time women saw belly dance “as a symbol of personal and sexual liberation,” namely because in the 1970s the female body was often rejected

²⁵² Donna Carlton, *Little Egypt* (Bloomington, IN: IDD Books, 1994), 16.

²⁵³ Shay and Sellers-Young, *Belly Dance: Orientalism: Exoticism*, 17.

in a hegemonic patriarchal society.²⁵⁴ As women advocated for feminism and became fascinated with belly dance, feminists in the U.S. created the “belly dance movement.”²⁵⁵ As a result, the belly dance movement united many American females, including those who began to perform and teach belly dance classes, workshops, and seminars in the U.S. In addition, American women traveled for the first time to Egypt and other places to attend Raqs Sharqi classes. In reciprocity, native Egyptian dance artists followed suit and traveled to the U.S. to teach Raqs Sharqi. Even without the support of the U.S. Department of State, this reciprocity enabled cultural diplomacy through Raqs Sharqi that united, therefore, strengthened many dance communities around the world.

From The Golden Era of Raqs Sharqi to its Decline in Egypt

Professional dancers in Egypt have been performing Raqs Sharqi for a long time. As has been noted, the Westernization of Raqs Sharqi, known as belly dance, became an integral part of the entertainment industry in Egypt and many parts of the world. According to Andrew Hammond, the export of Middle Eastern and North African dancers to Britain, France, and America began in 1851, mainly in exhibitions and Hollywood productions.²⁵⁶ As the British occupation of Egypt began in 1882, British and Ottoman ruling classes and other foreigners that visited Cairo became the main clientele in many public venues that hired Egyptian Raqs Sharqi dancers to entertain them. An early twentieth century, dancer and club owner of Qibtiya and Syrian origin, Badia Masabni, opened the famous Opera Casino in the 1930s in downtown Cairo. In 1933, the

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Najwa Adra, “Belly Dance: An Urban Folk Dance,” in *Belly Dance: Orientalism, Transnationalism, and Harem Fantasy*, ed. Anthony Shay and Barabara Sellers-Young (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, Inc.), 45.

²⁵⁶ Andrew Hammond, “The Belly Dance: A Reinvented Arab Groove,” in *Popular Culture in the Arab World: Arts, Politics, and Media* (New York: The American University in Cairo Press), 190-191.

famous Muhammad Ali Street, named after the Egyptian ruler, became the Cairene version of Broadway. Badia Masabni produced classical Egyptian dancers of the finest caliber during the golden era, prior to 1952: Tahia Carioca, Samia Gamal, Naima Akef, Laila al-Gazairiya, Nelly Mazloun, Kitty and many others. An Egyptian dancer, Hikmat Fahmy, performed for Hitler and Musolini.²⁵⁷

Because of a riot in Cairo in 1952, Badia Masabni's club was turned into ashes by mobs, who allegedly accused her of being a spy, catering to British secret agents.²⁵⁸ A very popular tourist area, the Pyramids Road, became an arena of nightclubs, cabarets, and casino that provided the platform for many Egyptian dancers to perform in the late 1970s. The Pyramids Road in Egypt became an entertainment Mecca for many Persian Gulf tourists that increased revenues from tourism. However, in 1977, there were several attacks against dancers and clubs. Around that time, Egypt's highest paid and most famous Raqs Sharqi dancer, Fifi Abdou, became successful. Afterwards, many other Egyptian dancers followed suit; to illustrate, Dina, who comes from a very educated family, and has an academic degree in philosophy. While pursuing her degree, Dina joined the [Mahmoud] Reda Troupe in the early 1970s, and still remains one of Egypt's leading belly dancers.

Throughout the years, the highest caliber of Egyptian dancers catered to the field of diplomacy, when many performed for dignitaries like Henry Kissinger, Presidents Carter, George Bush, Prince Charles, and Camilla Parker-Bowles.²⁵⁹ Yet, because of negative colonial attitudes, and attacks on dancers that stem from the rising influence of Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Middle East, including Egypt, Raqs Sharqi and similar

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 188.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 192.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 188.

folk dance activities have declined.

Islamic Java: Islamic Fundamentalism Towards Raqs Sharqi in Egypt

As a starting point for this discussion as it pertains to Islamic fundamentalism, let's look at its historical background in Egypt. By 1977, the country's foreign debt had increased tremendously. Because Egypt could not keep up with its interest payments and in order to improve the economy, foreign aid from the U.S. was utilized for food subsidies. Foreign investment was minimal, if any. As a result of Sadat's inability to continue to pay the subsidies, many riots took place in the streets of Cairo. To illustrate, Egyptians burnt down nightclubs, and condemned any signs of foreign influence. At the same time, the Camp David Peace accords were signed by the Sadat's administration, however, Sadat was criticized for doing so because the Arab League was sympathetic towards Palestinians. The flow of foreign money coming to the country enabled the success of businesses owned by the bourgeoisie; yet, it drove the small businesses to foreclosures. In like manner, poverty along with the unemployment rate increased, driving many Egyptians, including college graduates to look for jobs abroad.²⁶⁰

As the country witnessed turmoil, most Egyptians lost faith in their government and turned extremely religious. Because of seeking comfort from God, Allah, women's dress code became more conservative, namely, long sleeved dresses along with head veils, known as *hijabs* in Arabic. Men followed suit by wearing authentic Muslim *galabiyas* or *dishdashas*. Similarly, Islamic organizations opposed Sadat's administration condemning flow of Western capital in the country, and accusing Sadat of being responsible for the highest level of corruption that Egypt has ever encountered. It is also important to

²⁶⁰ Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, "From Sadat to Mubarak, 1970 to the Present Day," *A History of Egypt: From the Arab Conquest to the Present* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 159-161.

mention that by then the Iranian Revolution in Iran, overthrowing the Shah's regime, had taken place, and Islamic fundamentalism swept the entire Middle East, including Egypt.

Twenty years later during Mubarak's regime, several terrorist attacks in 1992 and 1997 targeted tourists in Egypt. Afterwards, because of increased investment in tourism in the Red Sea, Islamic insurgents targeted Israeli tourists as well in 2004 and 2005.²⁶¹

Because Islamic fundamentalism mores regard female dancers as "arousing unlawful sexual passion among males, causing *fitna*," known as social chaos in Arabic, dance as a professional career in Egypt is frowned upon.²⁶² Fundamental Islamists attacking many dancers from Afghanistan, Morocco and Egypt are a common scenario, namely, the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo. Therefore, Islamic clergies consider dance in public to be one of the highest crimes of all equating it with prostitution. Although dancing in public in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan are forbidden and punishable by law, dance is desired in many private homes but not advertised.²⁶³

Negative Attitudes Towards Raqs Sharqi in Egypt

In the Middle East and North Africa, dance in public is still considered a disreputable profession by the elite, and even outlawed in Islamic states like Iran and Saudi Arabia. Because of Western misinterpretations of Raqs Sharqi labeling the dance "exotic," and "sexual" that stem from Victorian morality, native and Western choreographers have been compelled to develop "acceptable" choreographies that appeal to the middle and upper class elite. These polemics towards the folk dances of most Middle Eastern and North African countries have developed as a product of post-colonial attitudes.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 173-175.

²⁶² Shay, Anthony. *Choreographic Politics: State Folk Dance Ensembles, Representation and Power* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press), 245.

²⁶³ Najwa Adra, *International Encyclopedia of Dance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 403.

Throughout history, Egypt has experienced centuries of colonialism: from Greek, Persian, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman to French and British. The continuing impact of colonialism on dance vibrates on Egyptian society. Dr. Shay explains that the Ottomans had an enormous impact on the elite class of Egyptian society that prospered from the Ottoman period, and continues to resonate in Egypt's upper class, also known in Egyptian Arabic under the Ottoman terminology, *efendi*.²⁶⁴

Because this discussion pertains to colonialism, it is important to differentiate Ottoman from British colonial rule. Unlike the British, the Egyptians shared common cultural values with the Ottomans such as Islam. In *Colonising Egypt*, Timothy Mitchell argues that the negative attitudes, as illustrated in Egyptian society, are a direct result of British colonial rule. Also, Mitchell elucidates that colonialism “refers not simply to the establishment of a European presence, but also to the spread of a political order that inscribes in the social world a new conception of space, new forms of personhood, and new means of manufacturing the experience of the real.”²⁶⁵ He also describes the gist of British colonialism as “a new binary order,” where the British attempted to ensure both a material and moral order.²⁶⁶

Because of Ottoman, French, and British colonialism that penetrated most Middle Eastern and North African countries, countries like Turkey, Lebanon, and Egypt among many, have adopted “a system of moral values based on nineteenth-century middle class European notions.”²⁶⁷ As a result of post colonialism, most Middle Eastern and North African countries have adopted a new educational system that incorporated values,

²⁶⁴ Anthony Shay, *Egypt Bazaar of Dance*, 130.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

designed to nullify traditional folk dances that represent a particular culture, including traditional Raqs Sharqi.²⁶⁸ Although colonialism has ended, both the middle and upper class in the Middle East and North Africa still prefer to see more respectable dance forms like ballet versus traditional folk dances that are an embarrassing display of backwardness or old-fashioned.

Although the practice of Raqs Sharqi as a profession still exists in Egypt, negative attitudes from the elite have pressured both native Egyptian and Western dancers to change Egyptian folk dance choreographies. Dr. Shay defines this phenomenon as *choreophobia*. What's more, choreographers replaced the traditional folk dances with theatrical versions along with change of costumes in order for the choreographies to appeal to the Westernized elite of Egypt. After Nassers' revolution in 1952, through government support the Egyptian elite westernized and modernized its indigenous dance styles.²⁶⁹ Therefore, the vulgar and déclassé belly dance was immediately replaced by modernized Egyptian folk dances, created by a pioneer of Egyptian dance choreographies, Mahmoud Reda, who was born during the British colonial rule.

Equally important, the Soviets imposed their Communist model on most Central Asian nations, and on Egypt as well. For instance, President Nasser had established a strong relationship with the Soviets, who projected their communist ideologies on Mahmoud Reda's repertoire of folk dance choreographies. The only way for the Egyptian government to sponsor Reda's folk dance troupe was through the approval of the Egyptian government. Because the Egyptian government had rejected the inclusion of any traditional or any belly dance movements that the elite finds backward and primitive,

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 135.

Mahmoud Reda had to sanitize all sexually aggressive movements and replace them with hegemonic ones like ballet movements. Hence, Mahmoud Reda adhered to rules, dictated by the elite of the Egyptian government that adopted colonial attitudes towards any of the Egyptian folk dances. Despite much financial support and grants from the Egyptian Ministry of Culture in the 1960s and 1970s for the Reda Troupe, Mahmoud Reda left the troupe because of opposition and lack of support from the Egyptian government in the years to follow.²⁷⁰

Similarly, because of Soviet communist influence on Egypt, the Ministry of Culture in Cairo invited Russian experts to teach Egyptian folk dance troupes. Therefore, a former Moiseyev company expert, Boris Ramazin, established a well-known Egyptian folk dance company, *The National Folkloric Troupe*, in 1961.²⁷¹ In other words, the imported Russian experts replaced the traditional Egyptian folk dance movements for balletic movements as suggested by the Moiseyev's Ensemble. As of today, traces of Soviet balletic forms, perpetrated by Moiseyev, are still present in the choreographies of Egyptian state folk dance troupes, known as the Moscow on the [Egyptian] Nile.

Another state folk dance company, *the El-Nil [The Nile] Folkloric Troupe*, was sponsored by the Egyptian government to represent the country at the Bicentennial Celebration of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. in 1975. Yet, the Smithsonian folklorists rejected *the El-Nil [The Nile] Folkloric Troupe's* participation because similarly to the *The National Folkloric Troupe* in 1961, it did not represent authentic Egyptian folk dances. Instead, the Egyptian government-sponsored *El-Nil Folkloric Troupe* had incorporated non-traditional Soviet balletic movements that did not

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 148.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 154.

represent Egyptian culture.²⁷² *The El-Nil Folkloric Troupe* toured both the U.S. and Europe many times. Even though *The El-Nil Folkloric Troupe* is known as the best-received folk dance troupe outside of Egypt, the Cairene audience in Egypt does not reflect on its successes abroad because the Egyptian elites regard traditional folk dances as primitive and backward.²⁷³ In addition, according to *the Egyptian Gazette* in 1995, former Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, projected with his “colonial inspired choreophobic” voice that “recent riots in the Imbaba, a district of Cairo, were instigated not by radical Islamists but by indecent and troublesome elements of the local district: belly dancers [*sic*] and drummers from the slums.”²⁷⁴

Today’s Raqs Sharqi and Dance Diplomacy Activities in Egypt and the West

Cairo serves as a reminder of ongoing post colonialism. Despite the negative colonial attitudes and attacks on dancers from Islamic fundamentalists that have caused the decline of Raqs Sharqi in Egypt, millions of amateur and professional dancers continue to practice this ancient art form all over the world. There are several traditional dances in Egypt that are still practiced by both men and women, such as *raqs al-shamadan*, *simsimiya*, and *baladi*. In addition, the *dabka* from the Levant, the *haggala* of the Bedouins in North Africa, *al-urda* in Saudi Arabia, the Iraqi Bedouin war dance, *al-dahha*, the Iraqi dance, *al-haywa*, *al-hasha’a*, and *andalusi*.²⁷⁵ This list of traditional folk dances is extensive, but not exhaustive.

Former Egyptian Reda Troupe dancer, current dance instructor, and host of the largest Raqs Sharqi dance festival in the world, Raqia Hassan, continues the legacy of Raqs

²⁷² Ibid., 158.

²⁷³ Ibid., 159.

²⁷⁴ As quoted in Shay, *Egypt Bazaar of Dance*, 134.

²⁷⁵ Hammond, *The Belly Dance: A Reinvented Arab Groove*, 202-203.

Sharqi. Raqia Hassan is the owner of the legendary *Ahlan Wa Sahlan* dance festival in Egypt. This festival has attracted many Russian, South American, Japanese, and North American dancers, who gather every year during the summer to celebrate the joy and happiness of Raqs Sharqi as they learn and practice it. It is also the enthusiasm of North American dancers from both Canada and the United States thanks to which Raqs Sharqi still thrives. Many renowned Raqs Sharqi teachers and performers from the West have hosted numerous dance festivals, seminars, workshops, and conferences as a diplomatic tool to bring the world dance communities together through cultural exchange activities. Also, Egyptian dance celebrities like Fifi Abdou, Dina, Raqia Hassan, Tito, Soheir Zaki, Mahmoud Reda, Farida Fahmy, and many others are invited on a regular basis to teach and perform in the United States. Similarly to the *Ahlan Wa Sahlan* festival, the United States takes pride in hosting its annual *Rakkasah* dance festival both on the West and the East Coast. *The International Belly Dance Conference of Canada (IBCC)* also hosts an annual dance festival that brings thousands of Raqs Sharqi dancers. As the dance is exposed to extinction, it is hard to determine whether or not Raqs Sharqi will play an important role in cultural diplomacy in U.S.-Egypt relations.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Testing the Hypothesis

Throughout U.S. history, dance has been an effective diplomatic tool in cultural diplomacy, namely, during the Cold War. Although minimal efforts to support cultural diplomacy exist today in the U.S., the U.S. Department of State's sponsorship of dance diplomacy is limited to dance companies that project mostly American dance. Therefore, the U.S. Department of State has expressed little, if any interest, in sending dance companies other than American dance overseas in political hot spots such as Egypt. As has been noted in chapter IV, in the U.S. most cultural diplomats and academic scholars have advocated an increase in America's soft power; most importantly, cultural diplomacy, in the Middle East and North Africa. They have suggested balancing power strategies, a blend of hard with soft power, in international relations. However, this concept of smart power has not been fully integrated into U.S. foreign policy.

The different outcomes of U.S. cultural diplomacy, initiated by the Department of State prompt a series of reflections. What were the main determinants of successful cultural diplomacy during the Cold War? Did the U.S. Department of State use a distinct soft power resource in cultural exchanges during the Cold War? If so, what type of effective diplomatic tools did the Department of State use in order to ameliorate U.S.-Soviet relations? President Eisenhower's Emergency Fund for International Affairs that supported the nation's first cultural export program of dance will provide an insight to test my hypothesis that argues in favor of bringing cooperation between nation-states, and reducing tension between states; particularly, through dance. This case study will also

show whether Raqs Sharqi, an Egyptian folk dance, might be an effective diplomatic tool in U.S.-Egypt relations.

To verify the accuracy of my hypothesis, I will measure two variables: the degree of success achieved by dance in cultural diplomacy during the Cold War, and the degree of support for Raqs Sharqi in U.S.-Egypt relations. If my research question proves correct, a cultural diplomacy program, combined with dance in U.S.-Egypt relations, should determine Raqs Sharqi as an effective diplomatic tool. In this case, the term “success” pertains to cultural dialogue and exchange of cultural ideas between the West and the Middle East that deliver an effective message of mutual understanding. In fact, it does not entail a panacea to U.S.-Middle East relations, including U.S.-Egypt relations. It is important to note that in the Cold War case studies of cultural diplomacy, the alleged “success” of dancers as cultural diplomats is determined by more than two aspects: bringing the cooperation between nation-states, reducing tension between states, and breaking down ideologies.

The Degree of Success From Dance in Cultural Diplomacy During the Cold War

President Eisenhower authorized the Emergency Fund for International Affairs in 1954. Eisenhower saw the performing arts, including dance as a magnitude of culture, as an indispensable diplomatic tool in the formation of peace. At that time, unlike today the U.S. Department of State allocated funding of \$2,250,000 for the performing arts. It allowed for America’s top-notch dancers and their companies to present Western values of democracy, such as America’s freedom through various choreographies. While on tours, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, dancers performed and met with people from other countries with similar or dissimilar cultures. Their goal was to collaborate and

learn from each other's cultures through dance, which allowed for the formation of an amicable bond. In sum, Eisenhower's Fund Program enhanced America's image abroad tremendously.²⁷⁶

I will now assess if the role of dancers as cultural attachés contributed to the amelioration of U.S.-Soviet relations. As America's image overseas plunged, and Americans were considered nothing but materialistic, boorish, uncultured, and superficial barbarians, the U.S. Department realized the necessity to dispel these negative notions of American culture. Performing artists' diplomatic missions overseas served as an inexpensive way of proving these stereotypes wrong, and breaking down barriers. Martha Graham's role as a cultural diplomat, whether in Japan, Indonesia, Pakistan or the Soviet Union, broke down these negative attitudes through dance. Many other dancers like Robert Joffrey, Alvin Ailey, and Jose Limón followed suit, and helped save America's anti-image abroad. U.S. embassies all around the world received telegrams acknowledging the success of these cultural exchange activities through dance. What's more, dancers, who served as cultural diplomats brought dialogue between states and released tension between nations, while representing the U.S. As a result, the U.S. Department of State repeatedly sponsored the performing arts in cultural diplomacy, unlike today's minimal funds allocated for artists to represent America overseas.

With regards to the effectiveness of dance in cultural diplomacy as a diplomatic tool, this thesis has repeatedly stressed the importance of soft power to demonstrate that dissimilar cultures do not clash but interact and enrich each other. It was the power of music and dance, best represented by America's finest caliber of dance artists that united cultures. Accordingly, dance was used as a weapon during the Cold War, instead of atom

²⁷⁶ Prevots, *Dance for Export*, 9.

bombs that the U.S. was notorious for overseas. The U.S. considered dance as a tool to export American values of democracy and freedom overseas to counteract Soviet communism. Dance became the most exported cultural commodity. Hence, America's dancers became the country's goodwill ambassadors. While interacting with citizens from host countries, dancers captured the admiration of government officials, diplomats, ambassadors, and industrial leaders. Dance artists accomplished what many U.S. government officials have attempted to do for many years—to spread a message of mutual understanding among nations. These prime examples eloquently elucidate the success of cultural diplomacy as a soft power resource. For these reasons, “success” implies dance being an effective diplomatic tool in international relations.

Although arguing that dance in cultural diplomacy served as a catalyst between nations as in the case of U.S.-Soviet relations, it is important to note that dance was not the sole entity that contributed to the success of cultural diplomacy. To illustrate, a variety of performing artists such as jazz and philharmonic musicians, served as cultural diplomats during the Cold War. Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie were some of the African-American jazz musicians that represented the U.S. abroad. These examples elucidate the plethora of cultural resources that can be expressed through cultural diplomacy.

Although analyzing speculations about performing artists in cultural diplomacy is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is useful to contextualize what aspects of the performing arts were considered by some as U.S. government propaganda. As indicated in some of the chapters, Martha Graham, Alvin Ailey, and others often shared their individual and artistic ideas with the citizens of other countries, instead of lecturing foreign audiences about U.S. politics. Although racial segregation in the U.S. was a

common scenario during the Cold War, dance artists like Martha Graham and others toured countries with a multi-racial cast of dancers that truly and vividly portrayed the diversity of U.S. culture. American dance artists “communicated above all through their concern with sound, image, shape, energy, conveying a personal vision derived from their imagination, heritage, and training. It was this vision that was so powerful. It was not their intent to talk or preach about the greatness of America.”²⁷⁷

Similarly, many sceptics thought of jazz in cultural diplomacy during the Cold War to be nothing but more but propaganda, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. Yet, African-American jazz musicians agreed to tour as cultural attachés, despite their notions of being racially segregated in their home country. Accordingly, as cultural diplomacy is designed to shatter stereotypes, when touring countries, African-American jazz musicians embraced the opportunity to express the magnitude of inequalities among people of color in the U.S.A. Therefore, Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie used jazz music as a diplomatic tool to transcend the denial of their civic rights back home. Both African-American musicians and American dancers “insisted on performing” for the everyday people, and not just the elites.²⁷⁸ These examples illuminate the fact that neither dancers nor musicians in cultural diplomacy were a part of U.S. government propaganda. On the contrary, they only reiterate one of the many positive outcomes of cultural diplomacy. That is to say, the performing arts have the power to break political barriers and strengthen ties between nations, even under critical circumstances.

These case studies shed light on the unrealized potential of cultural diplomacy that

²⁷⁷ Prevots, *Dance for Export*, 135.

²⁷⁸ Cynthia Schneider, “The Unrealized Potential of Cultural Diplomacy: “Best Practices” and What Could Be, If Only...” *Academy for Cultural Diplomacy* (Berlin, Germany: Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, 2009), 263.

contributes to an increased understanding among nations, which may lead to positive results in the way governments behave.

The Degree of Support for Raqs Sharqi in U.S.-Egypt Relations.

In order to contextualize the degree of support for Raqs Sharqi, it is useful to clarify that support for this folk dance refers to support from both the U.S. government and Egyptian government as a diplomatic tool in cultural diplomacy. As has been noted, cultural diplomacy takes place not only in the context of diplomatic relations between nations, but also within the domestic peripheries of a country. For example, Raqs Sharqi has received much support from both dance and non-dance communities around the world to bring an awareness for cultural dialogue and exchange for cultural ideas through this folk dance.

As demonstrated in chapter VI, dance communities around the globe have created various dance festivals, workshops, seminars, conferences, and organizations that cater to teaching and performing Raqs Sharqi. In addition to being a folk dance, Raqs Sharqi celebrates the joy and happiness of life as practiced by the people of the Middle East and North Africa.

If Raqs Sharqi is a folk dance that represents the values and traditions of Arabic culture, then why has it not been sponsored by the U.S. Department of State in its dance diplomacy programs? In order to assess the degree of support for Raqs Sharqi under the U.S. Department of State, it is important to consider several aspects. First, as stated in the previous chapters cultural diplomacy activities, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State have suffered severe cutbacks. Unlike the Cold War, when cultural diplomacy was fully funded, therefore, at its best, today the Department of State has ignored the potential of cultural diplomacy. Instead the Department of State has chosen to invest more in hard

power. What's more, funds for tours of performing artists overseas have decreased since the end of the Cold War. To reiterate, at the end of a war, the Department of State quickly dismissed the importance of cultural diplomacy. Therefore, it reduced the funds for cultural exchanges.

Second, today the U.S. Department of State has limited the opportunities for cultural diplomacy to the Middle East and North Africa. Although these geographical regions have been geopolitical and strategic for the Department of State for many years now, especially in U.S. foreign policy, the U.S. government has departed from providing sufficient funds for cultural diplomacy in the Middle East, let alone, in U.S.-Egypt relations. Accordingly, few American dance companies have been sent overseas as cultural diplomats for short periods of time, because of lack of funds for the performing arts. To illustrate, *the Battery Dance Company*, *the Trey McIntyre Project*, *the Sean Curran Company*, *the Jazz Tap Ensemble*, and *Rennie Harris Puremovement* all have received funds from the U.S. Department of State to go on a tour to represent U.S. culture overseas. It is important to note that all of these dance companies are limited to only representing American dance, hence, American culture.

Third, the U.S. government has opted out from incorporating indigenous dances of the Arab world such as Raqs Sharqi into its dance diplomacy programs. The U.S. Department has sponsored tours of American dance companies that perform ballet, but as an art form ballet does not represent American culture. Instead, ballet was developed by the Russians, that is why, they are the pioneers of ballet. The Department of State continues to send the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) to perform in Russia as part of its cultural diplomacy activities. To illustrate, in March 2011, the Department of State sponsored the

ABT to perform at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.²⁷⁹ During the Cold War, the Dance Panel Committee approved several American ballet companies, therefore, the U.S. Department of State sponsored them to represent the U.S. in the Soviet Union. Equally important, none of the ballet dancers in America, sponsored by the Department of State during the Cold War were native Russians. As demonstrated in the earlier chapters, American ballet dance companies captured Soviet audiences, and made positive impressions among everyday people and government officials.²⁸⁰ By doing so, the U.S. Department of State demonstrated that it both understands and appreciates Soviet culture. In reciprocity, the Soviet Union sent on a U.S. tour its finest ballet dance companies, such as the Bolshoi Ballet or Igor Moiseyev's Ballet Company. What's more, these reciprocities illuminate the fact that no matter how different, cultures can interact.

Fourth, as reiterated in chapter VI the Egyptian government has sponsored some of its finest folk dance troupes, including the *Mahmoud Reda Troupe* and the *El-Nil [The Nile] Folkloric Troupe*. The Mahmoud Reda Troupe was well-known for the inclusion of Raqs Sharqi in its repertoire. As the group toured in several countries around the world, including the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the Egyptian Ministry of Culture hired Soviet ballet experts to train Reda's dancers. In other words, to ensure that Mahmoud Reda, the owner of the dance company, will not incorporate any body movements that might be considered risqué in his choreographies. Therefore, substituting these movements with balletic movements. As stated earlier, Raqs Sharqi has suffered ongoing negative attitudes from the Egyptian elite that stem from Ottoman and British colonialism. When

²⁷⁹ U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission: Bi-Weekly Look-Ahead and Wrap-Up, *U.S. Bureau of European and Euroasian Affairs*, (Washington, DC: the U.S. Department of State, March 28, 2011), <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/ci/rs/usrussiabilat/160473.htm> (accessed on April 18, 2013).

²⁸⁰ Prevots, *Dance for Export*, 4.

discussing the elite, it is imperative to note that it refers to the Egyptian government, most importantly, the Egyptian Ministry of Culture. Thus, Raqs Sharqi is still mistakenly thought of being nothing but striptease because of Western misinterpretations, and because some of its movements are misinterpreted as sexual, especially, when the abdominal muscles are exposed in a two-piece costume. In addition, this attached stigma has driven Islamic fundamentalists in Egypt to prevent Raqs Sharqi from being performed in public, namely by threatening the dancers. Of utmost importance is the fact that unlike other Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran or Afghanistan, where dance in public has been banned, in Egypt dancing in public, including Raqs Sharqi, still exists, professionally and when performed in private settings. Finally, because of ongoing colonial attitudes, Islamic fundamentalism, and that Raqs Sharqi is often mistakenly associated with sexuality, the Egyptian government has not expressed an interest in sponsoring Egyptian folk dance companies that present Raqs Sharqi.

Similarly, during the Cold War both the U.S. public and the members of the Dance Panel often criticized Martha Graham and Katherine Dunham for including themes of sexuality in their choreographies.²⁸¹ In like manner, in the first place the Dance Panel refused to approve other dancers like Pearl Primus because it saw her work as too avantgarde and controversial, therefore, too risky.²⁸² Despite these negative attitudes and harsh criticism towards dance, the Dance Panel managed to look beyond these limiting stereotypes and approved both Graham and Dunham's dance companies. Consequently, the Dance Panel recommended them to the Department of State and sent them on tours overseas. Although the Dance Panel criticized their work as overtly sexual, both Graham

²⁸¹ Ibid., 109.

²⁸² Ibid., 53.

and Dunham's tours were a smashing success. As a result, the role of these American dance artists as cultural diplomats strengthened the bond that unites America with other nations. Their dance companies contributed to the development of fruitful, friendly, and peaceful relations between the U.S. and other countries.²⁸³

It could also be argued that the U.S. Department of State has refused to sponsor Raqs Sharqi in cultural diplomacy in U.S.-Egypt relations because of two reasons. First, because in the West, Raqs Sharqi has been Westernized and misinterpreted as sexual, namely, the term belly dance. The Department of State along with U.S. public opinion might have assumed that Raqs Sharqi is too risky or controversial. Also, the Department of State might mistakenly assume that Raqs Sharqi is overtly sexual without being familiar with its true origins because of negative attitudes that stem from the Mid-Victorian Era. In other words, the U.S. Department of State might fear that sending Raqs Sharqi choreographers to Egypt as cultural ambassadors would elicit a negative response among the elite, the conservatives, and the Islamic fundamentalists in Egypt. If fully funded by the public and private sector, and integrated into cultural diplomacy, Raqs Sharqi might be able to elucidate to the world that dissimilar cultures like Western and Islamic culture do not clash but interact. Above all, it is suggested that the U.S. and Egypt facilitate these interactions.

Interviews

In order to elucidate the importance of Raqs Sharqi as a diplomatic tool, a survey with several questions was conducted with professional Raqs Sharqi dancers from the U.S. There were a total of six participants: male and female, both dance instructors and performers. The age range was 28-70. Some of the dancers had higher education, such as

²⁸³ Ibid., 127.

a Bachelor or Master degree, while others had only a high school diploma. Four out of six dancers had at least eight years of both teaching and performing Raqs Sharqi in the U.S., Egypt, and many other countries, where there has been a niche for Raqs Sharqi communities.

All six participants were asked if cultural diplomacy will play a significant role in U.S.-Egypt relations or in U.S.-Middle East relations in the near future. Five out of six participants responded that given the current political discourse of the Middle East and North Africa, cultural diplomacy most likely will not play any role in U.S.-Egypt or U.S.-Middle East relations. Only four of the participants had performed in Egypt during the Ahlan wa Sahlan festival and other public or private events in Alexandria and Egypt. When asked what type of audience did they perform for in Egypt, all four indicated that the audience consisted mostly of dancers, both Egyptians and non-Egyptians. Also, they explained that the audience was a mixture of native Egyptians, tourists, fellow Raqs Sharqi dancers from various parts of the world, but minimal if any religious observants. All four participants responded that the audience was extremely receptive and enthusiastic to their performances.

All six participants noted that they performed and taught Raqs Sharqi at various public venues in several states in America. Their audience members consisted of conservatives, artists, dancers, politicians, students, diplomats, restaurant and club patrons, and patients from hospitals and nursing homes. Their response to the reaction of the audience in the U.S. was mostly positive; however, there was some criticism from conservatives. One of the survey participants was a temporary visitor to the U.S., originally from Panama, who both teaches and performs Raqs Sharqi. Although she admitted that she had never

performed in Egypt or its surrounding countries, this woman noted that she performed in front of native Egyptians, who happened to be critical of her performance. However, although not a native Egyptian, the same female dancer from Panama has been invited by Egyptian government officials to perform at the Egyptian Embassy in Panama on a regular basis as part of representing Egyptian culture. What's more, this dancer explained that the Egyptian Embassy staff members always enjoy her Raqs Sharqi performance.

When asked why only hegemonic dance forms like ballet have been sponsored as cultural exchanges by the U.S. Department of State, all six participants answered that because of the Western misinterpretation of Raqs Sharqi, sometimes referred to as belly dance, Raqs Sharqi is often considered sexual or embarrassing. Therefore, this dance is not seen as legitimate by conservatives or the elite. One of the participants is a male performer from the U.S., who added that if the U.S. Department sponsored Raqs Sharqi as a diplomatic tool in U.S.-Middle East relations, the Islamic fundamentalists in the Arab world would be upset. Equally important, he noted that first and foremost, the U.S. government should increase its budgets for the performing arts in cultural diplomacy, instead of allocating big chunks of funding for hard power resources, such as war. When asked the same question, another participant, who teaches and performs a Levantine folk dance, known as *dabke*, in New York City, reiterated that she sees the problem in the fact that first, the U.S. Department does not support the arts in general. Second, she added that unlike other states, the U.S. lacks a ministry of culture.

When asked if the U.S. Department of State should invite native Egyptian dance artists to teach and perform Raqs Sharqi or other indigenous dance forms, all six participants responded affirmatively, emphasizing that doing so would be great for the

U.S to learn about Egyptian culture through Raqs Sharqi. In reciprocity, when asked if the Department of State should sponsor American dancers to perform Raqs Sharqi in Egypt, all six participants responded that it would be great.

All six participants mentioned that the U.S. Department of State does not invest enough in cultural diplomacy in U.S.-Middle East relations. In addition, one of the female participants added that the Department of State is not interested in doing so because cultural diplomacy does not serve its current purpose, that is to say, hard power, such as war. Also, the participant reported that in terms of cultural understanding, the U.S. Department of State does not want people to understand and appreciate each other. In like manner, two out of six participants thought that even if the Department of State sponsors American dancers for tours in the Middle East, it would be American dancers, who only perform American dance. Therefore, this excludes American dancers who teach and perform Raqs Sharqi.

It is of utmost importance to mention that if it had not been for the development of Raqs Sharqi in North America, namely, the U.S. and Canada, this valuable folk dance would have died out. Because of negative attitudes from the elite and Islamic fundamentalism towards this dance, Raqs Sharqi dancers in the West should be given credit for building strong communities, creating dance festivals, and curriculums to teach this folk dance. In other words, gratitude should be given to all Raqs Sharqi performers in the West and other parts of the world for preserving this dance because it has been exposed to extinction. The list of Raqs Sharqi experts in the West extends to Morocco, Tarik Sultan, Anahid Sofian, A'isha Azar, Serena, Ibrahim Farrah, Nourhan Sharif, Jamila Salimpour, and many others. In reciprocity, in Egypt credit should be given for

Raqia Hassan, Fifi Abdou, Farida Fahmy, Mahmoud Reda, Fifi Abdou, Dina, Dandesh, Tito, and many others.

Final Implications

As has been noted, this discussion illustrates both variables: the degree of success from dance in cultural diplomacy during the Cold War, and the degree of support for Raqs Sharqi in U.S.-Egypt relations, as seen by the U.S. and Egyptian government. Both negative attitudes and Islamic fundamentalism have shaped the ideologies of the U.S. and the Egyptian government in one direction: to hinder the potential of Raqs Sharqi as an effective diplomatic tool in cultural diplomacy. Nevertheless, a distinction should be made when referring to the degree of threat that Islamic fundamentalism projects on Raqs Sharqi. This thesis does not imply that as a diplomatic tool in U.S.-Egypt relations Raqs Sharqi should target Islamic fundamentalist audiences. On the contrary, as a diplomatic tool, Raqs Sharqi should reach out to everyday audiences and the elite.

The establishment of these obstacles indicate that the level of intolerance towards Raqs Sharqi in cultural diplomacy had reached its peak. This conundrum, thus, proves how a substantial absence of Raqs Sharqi support has been one of the factors that both governments have opted out from including it in cultural diplomacy. For my initial hypothesis to be correct, a high level of ideological adaptability coupled with minimal funds for dance in cultural diplomacy should affect the inclusion of Raqs Sharqi in U.S.-Egypt relations, which in turn, may negatively impact the success of and support for Raqs Sharqi in U.S.-Egypt relations.

Notwithstanding, there is a strong correlation between the rationales of both governments—U.S. and Egypt, not to support Raqs Sharqi in cultural diplomacy. For

these reasons, both the U.S. and the Egyptian government have neglected the unrealized potential of Raqs Sharqi in U.S.-Egypt relations. Furthermore, one can draw an analogy between the rationale of the Dance Panel committee to initially reject the dances of Martha Graham and Katherine Dunham because of being sexual during the Cold War, and the rationale behind the U.S. and Egyptian government, where the elite sees Raqs Sharqi as sexual. Therefore, there is a strong correlation between both rationales that revolve around the idea of assuming that some dance forms, such as Raqs Sharqi contain overt sexuality. It is important to note that this analogy does not imply that Raqs Sharqi or Graham's dances are sexual by nature. Despite the above analogy, Martha Graham and Katherine Dunham's dances of being associated with overt sexuality were approved by the members of the Dance Panel. Above all, the success of Martha Graham's dance tours overseas shows that the threshold of support for Raqs Sharqi and its success in U.S.-Egypt relations is yet to be met.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Lessons learned

In final analysis, neither the U.S. Department of State nor the Egyptian Ministry of Culture needs another Cold War to support the performing arts in cultural diplomacy. What's more, the efficiency of dance as a diplomatic tool in international affairs today is the same as that of the Cold War. This scholarship has demonstrated the unrealized potential of cultural diplomacy in U.S.-Egypt relations, and its pivotal role as a diplomatic tool in international affairs. Because of America's declining image in the Middle East and North Africa after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, there has been a necessity for softening hegemonic hard power. Furthermore, following the fall of Mubarak's regime and the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, the U.S. Department of State has been uncertain about the future of its alliance with Egypt. Namely, Muslim Brotherhood-nurtured Egyptian President, Mohammed Morsi. Likewise, a unisex folk dance, known as Raqs Sharqi, has demonstrated its efficiency as an indispensable tool, yet, prejudice by the U.S. and Egyptian governments has hindered its potential in global affairs.

Equally important, this thesis has illuminated the level of Egyptian and U.S. government support for dance as a soft power resource to be minimal and insufficient. The stark cutbacks in cultural diplomacy budgets by the U.S. Department of State, beginning in the 1990s, hindered the magnitude of culture as a powerful weapon. The miniscule budget, allocated for cultural diplomacy has prevented the exposure of

American culture to the Islamic world. As has been noted, cultural diplomacy has gained popularity in international relations, but it still remains a neglected diplomatic tool in U.S.-Middle East relations.

In addition, this thesis has illustrated that Raqs Sharqi is exposed to extinction, because the Egyptian Ministry of Culture has chosen to opt out from fully appreciating and substantially funding the arts. Although there is a platform for Egyptian dance artists to preserve Raqs Sharqi and other indigenous dances, the Egyptian government has chosen to exclude Egyptian dance as an exported cultural commodity. While the diversity of folk dances in Egypt is illustrated here as abundant, it is unfortunate that the Egyptian Ministry of Culture still neglects one of its most valuable treasures: Raqs Sharqi, an ancient dance that dates back to pre-historical times.

Exporting Raqs Sharqi to Egypt might help America boost its shrinking image in the Arab world. The fact that the U.S. is obsessed with the Middle East because of its geopolitics is not a reason to neglect cultural exchange activities. Nevertheless, the rise of anti-Americanism in the Middle East is of high concern, especially for future generations to deal with. This thesis has shown that favorable public opinion of the U.S. overseas has plummeted, particularly, disagreements with U.S. foreign policy, which hinders America's soft power. However, the more the U.S. government continues to neglect its soft power, the harder it will be in the long run. That is why, the more enhanced America's soft power is, the stronger the legitimacy of its foreign policy will be in the eyes of others.

As reiterated, cultural diplomacy is not a panacea to U.S.-Middle East relations. On the contrary, as illustrated in the case studies of the Cold War, the performing arts

became America's most exported cultural commodities, but with the end of the Cold War, funds for cultural diplomacy are slashed. This is probably as a result of America's traditional lack of public support for the arts. Yet, once America is at war, the popularity of cultural diplomacy gradually increases. Although cultural diplomacy requires less funds than a military might, it involves a generational commitment.

Supporting cultural diplomacy as a diplomatic tool in international relations, brings positive outcomes that benefit both the host and the targeted country in the long run. To illustrate, cultural diplomacy fosters cultural understanding, and spreads an effective message of understanding between states. Of utmost importance is the magnitude of cultural diplomacy to attract, therefore, to influence political leaders of nations, unlike a hegemonic hard power approach. Cultural diplomacy also counteracts terrorism, hatred, misunderstanding, gaffes and missteps.

Accordingly, as seen in case studies of dance in cultural diplomacy during the Cold War, dance artists, who served as cultural ambassadors, accomplished what traditional embassy staff members have attempted to do for decades. For example, through the spectrum of dance, performing artists broke down clichés, dispelled notions of American culture, released tension between nations, and brought peace. Similarly, Raqs Sharqi has demonstrated the spread of joy and happiness of life that can counterbalance misunderstanding between the West and the Islamic world, specifically, U.S. prejudices that Islamic culture is backward, bloodthirsty, and undemocratic. In reciprocity, projecting soft power through cultural diplomacy helps dispel political biases of the U.S. government being pro-Israeli. Hence, the Islamic world views lack of cultural diplomacy on behalf of the U.S. Department of State as “no cultural counterweight to our foreign

policy.”²⁸⁴

Recommendations

The following compilation of recommendations, drawn from interviews, articles, books, discussions, conferences, and the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy (ACCD) reports, for the U.S. Department of State to consider, is divided into three sections. The first one pertains to the overall efficiency of cultural diplomacy, specifically in U.S.-Middle East and North African relations, addressed to the Secretary of State:

- To increase the budget, allocated for cultural diplomacy in international relations.
- To increase the staffing for cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy.
- To implement courses on foreign culture, geography, foreign language and literature, and world history in high schools and universities across the nation.
Priority should be given to the Middle East and North Africa as both strategic and critical regions to the Department of State.
- To invite Muslim and other countries’ most prominent artists, writers, scholars, and similar cultural figures to share values, traditions, views, and sensitivities of those cultures that enable people to prevent misunderstanding, hatred, and terrorism.
- To encourage cultural diplomacy funds from both the public and the private sector.
- To increase funds for translations of literary, intellectual, philosophical, political, and other works from English into Arabic, and other foreign languages, and vice versa.
- To expand both cultural and library centers at U.S. embassies and consulates

²⁸⁴ *Cultural Diplomacy: the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 13.

around the globe, namely, the Middle East and North Africa.

- To ease the visa issuing process, especially for international students or exchange visitors from the Middle East and North Africa, holding either F or J visas.
- To expand cultural exchange programs, such as study abroad programs, especially in the Islamic world.
- To encourage U.S. cultural organizations to sponsor internships or fellowships for international students, with a priority given to students from the Muslim world.
- To encourage U.S. television, radio, and online broadcastings to export documentaries that best represent U.S. culture to the Arab world. In reciprocity, to encourage the import of foreign language films that best describe different aspects of foreign culture.
- To organize professional development workshops about cultural diplomacy in which U.S. government officials can learn about the importance of cultural exchange programs.
- To encourage U.S. museums to sponsor exhibits of Middle Eastern artworks and artifacts, and export their American counterparts to museums overseas.
- To advocate for the inclusion of medical outreach into cultural diplomacy, orchestrating visits to the homelands of foreign-born health care professionals, who practice how to train physicians and help patients in the U.S.
- To bring Islamic imams to churches, cathedrals, and synagogues in the U.S. to educate American religious authorities about the values of Islam, and vice versa.

The following recommendations related to the performing arts in cultural diplomacy, specifically Raqs Sharqi in U.S.-Middle East and North African relations urge the

Secretary of State:

- To increase funds for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (BECA), where priority is given to the performing arts.
- To increase the staffing of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.
- To increase the funds, allocated for tours of the *DanceMotion USA*, and to increase the number of American dancers, who serve as cultural diplomats overseas, namely, in the Middle East and North Africa.
- To support the inclusion of Raqs Sharqi in BECA's dance diplomacy tours to the Middle East, most importantly, Egypt.
- To work closely with the Ministry of Culture in Egypt by encouraging tours of the performing arts in cultural diplomacy, specifically Raqs Sharqi.
- To invite performing artists, including troupes, ensembles, and solo performers from the Middle East and North Africa to the U.S.A.
- To invite Raqs Sharqi dancers and instructors from Egypt to the U.S., and other folk dance performers, troupes or ensembles from other Muslim countries to share their cultures through dance.
- To support U.S. cultural institutions, not-for-profits, and dance academies that promote Raqs Sharqi and other folk dances of the Middle East and North Africa.
- To help raise funds for Raqs Sharqi and other folk dance related activities, such as dance festivals, workshops, conferences, workshops, seminars, and symposiums, from the public and private sector.
- To implement curriculum for Raqs Sharqi courses in U.S. schools and universities.
- To help raise funds for academic publications of books, journals, magazines, and

articles that elucidate the historical background of Raqs Sharqi.

- To encourage scholarships and fellowships for Raqs Sharqi and other folk dance performers and instructors in the U.S.
- To encourage U.S. television, radio, and online broadcastings to produce documentaries that expose Americans to Raqs Sharqi.
- To encourage the education of the Arabic language and its distinct dialects in study abroad programs, high schools and universities.
- To encourage U.S. libraries to promote scholarly sources about Raqs Sharqi and the folk dances of the Middle East.

The following recommendations pertain to Raqs Sharqi in cultural diplomacy, specifically in U.S.-Egypt relations urge the Egyptian Ministry of Culture:

- To revisit its soft power resources from the Cold War, when Egyptian dance was prioritized in cultural diplomacy.
- To sponsor tours of its folk dance troupes as a diplomatic tool in cultural diplomacy.
- To increase funds for schools, dance festivals, and cultural institutions that teach and perform Raqs Sharqi.
- To work closely with the U.S. Department of State to expose Egyptian students to American culture through cultural exchanges in the U.S., such as study abroad programs.
- To work closely with the American University in Cairo and coordinate cultural events that introduce American culture to Egyptian students.
- To invite American dancers, who are experts of Raqs Sharqi to share their

expertise with their Egyptian counterparts and collaborate.

- To support the *Ahlan wa Sahlan* dance festival in Egypt and provide security to its participants from possible attacks by the Islamist fundamentalists.
- To encourage the inclusion of Raqs Shari in school curriculums, and the formation of folk dance troupes by young men and women to preserve Egyptian culture.

Will scholars engage in research by developing case studies, and building academic courses that advance learning and address the needs of dance artists as cultural diplomats in cultural diplomacy? Will cultural diplomacy practitioners provide data useful to scholars and take advantage of relevant scholarship? Will scholars and cultural diplomacy practitioners use their knowledge to enrich learning and public debate? Will the U.S. Department of State realize the potential of cultural diplomacy, as it did during the Cold War or not? Will the U.S. Department of State continue to support the performing arts in cultural diplomacy, only when the nation is at war or permanently in the long run?

Will both the U.S and the Egyptian government make the effort to look beyond the limiting stereotypes of Raqs Sharqi as overtly sexual fearing that it might elicit a negative response? Will the Egyptian government encourage the public support of the performing artists, namely its folk dances, as an amplitude of Egyptian culture or not? Will the Egyptian government continue to consider its traditional dances as backward? Will the Department of State enhance its soft power resources or it will rely on its traditional hegemonic hard power resources in U.S.-Middle East relations? Will U.S. foreign policy continue to hinder American culture or not? If we achieve positive answers to these and other questions, the rewards can be significant for academic study and the practice of

cultural diplomacy.

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Appendix

Survey questionnaire

1. What is your age?
2. What is your sex?
3. What is your occupation?
4. What is your level of education?
5. What is your level of expertise on Raqs Sharqi?
6. Do you teach Raqs Sharqi?
7. Do you perform Raqs Sharqi?
8. How many years have you been performing Raqs Sharqi?
9. How many years have you been teaching Raqs Sharqi?
10. Besides Raqs Sharqi, do you perform or teach any other indigenous or folk dances of the Middle East and North Africa? If so, please specify.
11. Have you ever performed or taught Raqs Sharqi in Egypt?
12. Have you ever performed or taught Raqs Sharqi in any other Middle Eastern or North African country?
13. If performed or taught Raqs Sharqi in Egypt or elsewhere, what was the reaction of the audience during your performance or dance class?
14. If performed or taught Raqs Sharqi in Egypt or elsewhere what was the type of audience you interacted with? For example, dancers, tourists, politicians, government officials, religious authorities, elite, etc.?
15. Why only hegemonic dance forms like ballet have been sponsored as cultural exchanges by the U.S. Department of State?

16. Will cultural diplomacy play a significant role in U.S.-Egypt relations or in U.S.-Middle East relations in the near future?

17. Should the U.S. Department of State invite native Egyptian dance artists to teach and perform Raqs Sharqi or other indigenous dance forms in the U.S.?

18. Should the Department of State sponsor American dancers to perform or teach Raqs Sharqi in Egypt?

Your participation in this survey is highly appreciated, and your personal information will be kept as strictly confidential. Thank you kindly!