Private Foreign-Affiliated Universities, the State, and Soft Power: The American University of Beirut and the American University in Cairo

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This article contributes to the understanding of the soft power of private foreign-affiliated universities and the interaction between such universities and the state for university soft power and national soft power. The analysis shows university soft power in their Middle East host societies and its basis of academic excellence and biculturalism. Historically, university soft power has been limited first by proselytizing and later by unpopular American foreign policy. The universities have previously undescribed reverse university soft power in the USA on behalf of the Middle East: advocating Middle East interests and raising moral, political, and financial support for education, healthcare, and development in the region. The USA has pursued national soft power through the American University of Beirut and the American University in Cairo since the 1950s. University soft power has been furthered by US government financial assistance to academic excellence, while too close association with the US government has threatened university soft power. The universities have contributed to the national soft power of the USA concerning milieu goals of attraction to education, language, and liberal norms among elites. The universities have not contributed to national soft power regarding the acceptance of unpopular US foreign policies in the Middle East, which was also not a university or US government goal.

Introduction: Soft Power of Transnational Actors

The American University of Beirut (AUB) (established 1866) and the American University in Cairo (AUC) (1919) as private American-affiliated universities in the Middle East have received much policy attention from the USA (since the 1950s) for soft power purposes. The universities continue to receive such attention, and the AUB and AUC play a central role in, for instance, the Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program of the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which is an important part of current US soft power policy in the Middle East. This long-running policy interest has not been matched by corresponding scholarly attention concerning the soft power of these universities and their contributions to the soft power of the USA. This lack of attention reflects gaps in the literature regarding explaining the soft power of transnational and other nonstate actors, historical developments of soft power, and universities as transnational actors in world politics, which this article seeks to address.

The literature on soft power states that the soft power at the disposal of states is often highly dependent on the soft power resources of nonstate actors beyond the control of the state (Nye 2004; Hocking 2005; Riordan 2005; Lord 2006). Accordingly, there is a growing awareness of the importance of such nonstate resources and networks for states pursuing soft power. However, these questions are not addressed adequately even by Nye himself (Zahran and Ramos 2010) or in the literature that ends up focusing on the narrow soft power of the state pursued through public diplomacy.

In the volume on ''The New Public Diplomacy'' (Melissen 2005b), Brian Hocking (2005) and Shaun Riordan (2005) outline a development from a hierarchic state-centered one-way public diplomacy to a network-based public diplomacy created in the interface between the state, civil society organizations, educational institutions, and business among others. Such networks engage its members and audiences in dialogue where legitimacy is a crucial currency and information moves in many directions. However, this awareness is not coupled with adequate analysis and explanation of nonstate actor soft power and its relation with the national soft power at the disposal of states.

The war on terror and the USA's difficult relations with the Middle East have spurned interest in the role of soft power and public diplomacy for this difficult relationship. Carnes Lord (2006) in his study of soft power in the war on terror acknowledges the importance of nonstate actors, such as business, diasporas, and education, but has great issues with the ''uncontrollability'' of nonstate actors and in the end focuses overwhelmingly on US government policies and resources. Rugh (2006) gives an overview of US public diplomacy in the Middle East, but limits himself to the efforts of the US government. In the edited volume on the USA and Japan as soft power superpowers (Watanabe and McConnell 2008), there is characteristically for ''de-militarized'' Japan significant attention to education (Akiyoshi 2008; Altbach and Peterson 2008; Mashiko and Miki 2008), popular culture (Allison 2008; Fraser 2008; Tsutomu 2008; Yoshiko 2008), sports (Guthrie-Shimizu 2008), and civil society (Katsuji and Kaori 2008; Repeta 2008), but again insufficient analysis of the basis and extent of nonstate actor soft power and in the end emphasis on state public diplomacy policy (Crowell 2008; Naoyuki 2008; Seiichi 2008). This inadequate analysis of nonstate actors soft power and focus on state public diplomacy is also the case concerning other countries' soft power, such as Canada (Potter 2009) or China (Guo 2008; Li 2009).

The observations of the importance of nonstate actor resources and networks raise a number of current and historical questions: What is the extent and basis of the soft power of nonstate actors toward different state and nonstate actors? How is such nonstate actor soft power affected by relations with the state and public policy? Does nonstate actor soft power contribute to national soft power? Can the state pursue national soft power through nonstate actors? These are the questions addressed in this article.

Education and international educational exchanges receive significant scholarly and policy attention for American soft power and public diplomacy purposes (Nye and Owens 1996; Nye 2004; Williams 2004; Rice 2006; US White House 2006; Phillips and Brooks 2008; Center for Strategic & International Studies 2009; Atkinson 2010; Geiger 2010). This attention has, however, mainly been focused on foreign civilian or military students coming to the USA (Wilson and Bonilla 1955; Watson and Lippitt 1958; Selltiz, Christ, Havel, and Cook 1963; Richmond 2003; Altbach and Peterson 2008; Atkinson 2010) and not private American- or other foreign-affiliated universities abroad.

Soft power is a recent concept in IR, but an old phenomenon in international politics. This historical pedigree is illustrated, for instance, by France, which at least since the court of Louis XIV through its various republican regimes has

been extremely conscious of its message conveyed abroad (Olins 2005) and use of cultural diplomacy (Sretenovic 2009). Yet, there is little analysis of historical cases or long-term historical developments of soft power or soft power policies. US Cold War policy has received some attention (Geiger 2010; Krige 2010; Parmar 2010). A rare example on early soft power is Sheng Ding's discussion of the historical soft power of classical Chinese culture (Ding 2008). This article analyzes the development of the soft power of transnational actors, private foreign-affiliated universities, throughout their histories from their founding in 1866 and 1919.

Universities are overlooked in the IR literature on transnational actors, even though they often historically have been and continue to be heavily involved in Nye's and Keohane's *global interactions* of moving information, money, and people across state boundaries (Nye and Keohane 1971; Bertelsen 2009, 2012; Bertelsen and Møller 2010). This role is clear from the historical literature on the two universities in this study and is acknowledged in the literature on private higher education in the Global South in educational studies (Altbach 1999; Altbach and Levy 2005), but absent in the IR literature on transnational actors. Research on transnational actors in IR also does not give sufficient attention to historical developments, which Fred Halliday—quoting Martin Wight—terms "'presentism', the exaggeration of the novelty of the present" (Halliday 2001: 27–28). This article follows the development of important transnational actors, private foreign-affiliated universities, from their founding in the late 1800s or early 1900s.

Nye defines soft power as when others adapt desired behavior through attraction or co-optation. Soft power is at work, when persuasion is achieved without threats or exchanges. According to Nye (2004), the soft power of a state relies on three resources: culture (if it is attractive to others), political values (when they are being observed at home and abroad), and foreign policy (when seen as legitimate and with moral authority). How this attraction works deserves close attention, and Steven Lukes (2007) and Mattern (2007) raise the question of attraction through manipulation or coercion.

Power is always contextual (Baldwin 1979), and soft power particularly so due to its dependence on the reception by interpreters and audiences (Nye 2004). Therefore, it is potentially problematic to use terms as governments "exercising" or "wielding" soft power for two reasons highlighted here: the nonstate basis of much soft power beyond government control and the dependency on acceptance by the receiving audience (Nye 2004). This dependence dictates that soft power is rather *with* than *over* somebody, and it is clearer to talk about "having" or "holding" soft power than "exercising" or "wielding" it.

These observations contribute to understanding the soft power of the two universities here as transnational actors and the relationship with the soft power of the US state. These universities as transnational universities held and hold significant soft power in their own right. It is important to keep in mind that nonstate actors can hold soft power of their own separate of the state (Nye 2004). This soft power of the universities has contributed to the soft power the US state holds in the Middle East. The US state understands this contribution and supports the universities materially to augment its soft power. On the contrary, US Middle East policy has been detrimental to university soft power. It is thus not a question of the US government "exercising" soft power through these universities, or the soft power of the universities being an extension of the soft power of the state.

The soft power of the private foreign-affiliated universities here is termed *university soft power*. *University soft power* is here operationalized as behavior by outsiders to the universities, which is desired by the universities and based on attraction or co-optation. It is thus a behavior- and not a resource-based

operationalization. Desired behavior is first and foremost embracing the mission of the university, whether proselytizing in former times or later secular education according to American traditions. Acceptance of the universities and moral, political, and financial support from a wide range of private and public actors in the Middle East and the USA are other important desired behavior. Such support reveals support for the mission of the universities. The motivations for desired behavior show the basis of the soft power of these universities. The absence of university soft power is displayed through rejection of the mission of the university, denial of support, or political or violent attacks on them. This *university soft power* is distinct from the *national soft power*, which is defined here as the public- and private-based soft power at the disposal of the state.

University soft power with students and host states is analyzed in *University Soft Power with Middle Eastern Students and Host States*. This article also introduces the term of *reverse* university soft power: the soft power of these American-affiliated universities vis-à-vis American society and state. Reverse university soft power with academia, philanthropy, and business in the USA is analyzed in *Reverse University Soft Power in the American Society of Origin*. The relations between the universities and the US state both concerning the reverse soft power of the universities vis-à-vis the US state and the contribution from university soft power to US national soft power are addressed in *The Universities and the US State.*

Soft power is usually more effective in achieving, what Wolfers (1962) called *milieu* goals than *possession* goals (Nye 2004; see also Melissen 2005a). This difference is at the core of this university soft power, its relations to the state, and contribution to national soft power. According to then AUB President Waterbury, graduates of the AUB may ''continue to resent US policies and criticize US leadership, but they want to import its institutional successes in governance, legal arrangements, and business organization (2003:67).''

Methodology: Structured, Focused Comparison of University Soft Power

The analysis of university soft power vis-à-vis different actors is conducted as a structured, focused comparison (George and Bennett 2005) between the two universities of (i) university soft power with Middle Eastern students and host states; (ii) reverse university soft power in the American society of origin; (iii) relations with the US state and public policy; and (iv) contribution to US national soft power. This comparison tests actual and not potential soft power behavior and examines the status of the universities in practice, because of the analysis of relations between universities and outside actors and of the actual behavior of these actors.

This structured, focused comparison is based on historical literature on the universities and 60 interviews with board members, presidents and senior administrators, faculty from all disciplines, local and foreign students, diplomats, lobbyists in Washington DC, US congressional staffers, and US civil servants. The broad range of interview persons ensures an all-round view of the relations of the universities with their host societies in the Middle East and the American society of origin. Individual interviews are not referenced as promised to interviewees. The method of structured, focused comparison overcomes the lack of opinion data from students or the public on these universities and steers the analysis clear of unstructured anecdotal evidence. The analysis does not focus on illustrious alumni. Such evidence is anecdotal and unsystematic in the absence of large data sets and relies on assumptions of university socialization of students with effects on later behavior.

The AUB and AUC as private foreign-affiliated universities are a subclass of transnational actors, which is important for the scope of the argument in this article (George and Bennett 2005). They are transnational actors since they are

private universities founded and originally funded by American missionaries with the aim of providing explicitly American-style education in Middle Eastern societies. They continue to have important transnational characteristics since they are strongly characterized by what Nye and Keohane termed *global interactions*: the movement of information, people, and money across state boundaries (Wolfers 1962; Kaiser 1969; Nye and Keohane 1971; Josselin and Wallace 2001). AUB and AUC are incorporated and accredited in the USA, have American presidents and Boards of Trustees based in New York, and continue to benefit from American public and private financial support. Much of the faculty is American-educated.

American-origin higher education in the Middle East provides particularly suitable material for the study of transnational actor soft power, its interaction with the state, and its contribution to national soft power. American-origin education is widespread and well known in the Middle East, and the two universities here are among the leading universities in the region. They are therefore *crucial cases* (George and Bennett 2005) for observing transnational actor soft power and contributions to national soft power. As crucial cases, these universities have to have soft power to render transnational actor soft power and contributions to national soft power probable. According to Waterbury, American higher education has more attraction (soft power) and familiarity to Middle Easterners than any other American institution: ''the word 'American' is to education, what 'Swiss' is to watches (Waterbury 2003:66; see also Ghabra and Arnold 2007).''

University Soft Power with Middle Eastern Students and Host States

The analysis shows that these private, foreign-affiliated universities in the Middle East as transnational actors held and hold soft power in their Middle Eastern host societies. The soft power is clear from their popularity among students and their acceptance by host states and other actors. However, this soft power has also been limited and taken unintended turns in nature and direction. The host societies have rejected the core historical missions of these universities and attacked them violently or threatened their survival politically.

Students and the state in the host society are the most interesting interlocutors for understanding the extent and limits of university soft power. A detailed look at acceptance and rejection of these universities reveals the basis of their soft power. The basis of soft power has remained stable in the Middle Eastern host society. Middle Eastern students and their families have continued to demand and embrace quality education and English skills offering better life chances. However, American liberal arts education is little understood by students' families, who look for professional education for securing employment and income. Also the successful and respectful merger of Arab and American culture in these institutions and their integration into local society has been crucial for their attractiveness.

The responses of the Ottoman Empire, independent Lebanon, Egypt, and other regional states to the universities have been characterized by cautious acceptance. This relationship has been based on attraction to the universities (university soft power) as bridges to the USA and contributors to human resources, education, healthcare, development, and state-building. However, there has also been rejection of proselytizing and US foreign policy in the region (limitations of university soft power). The relationship between AUC and the strong Egyptian state is particularly illustrative of university soft power with the host state.

University soft power was originally limited by the proselytizing nature of the universities, which was rejected by students and society. Unpopular American Middle East policy and too close an association with the US governments later limited university soft power. The analysis of university soft power therefore

focuses first on limitations from proselytizing and then from US–Middle Eastern political relations.

<div style="text-align:center">AUB: Rejection of Protestant Proselytizing followed by Embrace of Education</div>

The founding of the Syrian Protestant College (SPC) (American University of Beirut since 1920) in 1866 had soft power goals. In 1862, Dr. Daniel Bliss along with other American Protestant missionaries in the Levant set out to found an American college with a medical school. The aims were to attract and co-opt the indigenous population to Protestantism through education and to train leaders for society. However, both Islam and local Christian rites rejected conversion, so the university mission of proselytizing was unsuccessful showing limitations to university soft power (Dodge 1958; Bashshur 1964; Penrose 1970; Munro 1977; Bliss, Coon, and Bliss 1989; Makdisi 1997, 2008; American University of Beirut 2005; Anderson 2008a,b; Interviews 2008–2010).

The Young Turks revolution of 1908 promoted freedom of religion, and non-Christian students at SPC/AUB protested—in vain—against the obligatory chapel services and bible classes. This protest showed the nature and limitations of university soft power: the attraction to SPC/AUB as an educational institution and the rejection of Protestant proselytizing. Gradual secularization and offering English-language education attracted students across all religions and beyond Lebanon's borders. This attractiveness contributed to the religiously and nationally diverse student body in the post-WWII years at AUB. This diversity ensured a broad impact for AUB in Lebanese and Middle Eastern society (Dodge 1958; Bashshur 1964; Penrose 1970; Munro 1977; Hanna 1979; Makdisi 2008).

WWI posed an early test of SPC/AUB university soft power with the Ottoman state, which allowed the college to continue operating, showing university soft power. However, Ottoman authorities rejected the core proselytizing mission of the college when they ended compulsory religious exercises. Ottoman acceptance of SPC/AUB (i.e., university soft power) was based on the loyal work of SPC/AUB with the Ottoman Empire in supplying medical assistance to Ottoman forces in Palestine and on the US decision not to declare war on the Ottoman Empire (Dodge 1958; Penrose 1970; Makdisi 2008). Under the French mandate and in the post-WWII years, AUB was discriminated against by the Maronite-dominated state that did not recognize AUB degrees to their full extent, showing limits to university soft power with the Francophone Maronites (Bashshur 1964).

After WWI, new Arab states and British mandate authorities turned to AUB graduates and faculty for school teachers and civil servants and sent bursary students to the university, which shows university soft power with these states. AUB also attracted a substantial number of scholarship students from Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia in the 1950s (Dodge 1958; Burns 1965; Penrose 1970). In contrast, Nasserite Egypt established the *Arab* University in Beirut in 1960, which was affiliated with Alexandria University to compete with the American- and French-origin universities, which shows limits to their university soft power (Munro 1977; Hanna 1979).

US–Middle East political relations became an issue for AUB soft power in the years after WWII. The intense student political activism at AUB with demonstrations and strikes, motivated by Arab nationalism around 1950, and by the Arab-Israeli conflict after 1967, illustrates what students found attractive and what they rejected about AUB. Students strongly opposed US Middle East policy and were suspicious of generous US government support for AUB. However, even many Palestinian militants still chose to study at this American university motivated by its educational quality and paid tribute to its message of intellectual freedom. Students clearly distinguished between unacceptable US Middle East policy and

attractive AUB education and intellectual freedom (Khalaf 1977; Munro 1977; Hanna 1979; Anderson 2008a,c; Interviews 2008–2010).

According to interviews, the regional popularity and acceptance (university soft power) of AUB in the 1960s and 1970s reflected the fact that the university was increasingly seen as an Arab-American institution with an Arab tone to it due to its predominantly Arab student body, staff, and faculty. It was regarded as more Arab than Lebanese and as one of the last vestiges of Pan-Arabist sentiments. The university had contributed to pan-Arabism through its education of students from all over the region and through its intellectuals such as Constantin Zureiq. Its attractiveness for students, faculty, and supporters, and its protection later during the civil war, was based on the idea that it exemplified the ideal of a great, liberal university, while also being respectful of Arab identity, politics, and culture. The university was not seen as a predatory, American intrusion, but as the best combination of American and Arab values. There was and is pride in AUB and awareness and appreciation of its great contributions to Arab state-building from the 1930s to the 1970s. In the years before the Lebanese civil war, AUB was exceptionally cosmopolitan in its faculty and student body (Interviews 2008–2010).

The Lebanese civil war, 1975–1990, exposed AUB to extreme security and financial pressures, which revealed both support (university soft power) in the Middle East and the USA and violent rejection of the institution in some quarters (absence of university soft power). AUB survived because all sides of the civil war acknowledged its value to Lebanese society. Protection of the university in West-Beirut by Leftist-Muslim, Palestinian, and later Druze forces demonstrated this acceptance. This protection was possibly a gesture of good will toward the USA (Hanna 1979; Oweini 1996; Interviews 2008–2010).

During the civil war, rising hospital expenditure in particular, along with the drop in tuition income, pushed AUB into deficits threatening its continued existence. As a measure of its soft power, AUB raised sufficient local, regional, and American financial support to survive (Munro 1977; Hanna 1979; Interviews 2008–2010). However, as noted above, there was also violent rejection of the university by some, showing the limitations of university soft power. Most prominently, in January 1984, President Malcolm Kerr was assassinated, presumably, by Islamic Jihad threatening that ''not a single American or Frenchman will remain on this soil,'' thus denying soft power to AUB (Oweini 1996; American University of Beirut 2005; Interviews 2008–2010).

The civil war forced the foreign students and faculty out of Beirut and made AUB an overwhelmingly Lebanese institution unlike its exceptionally cosmopolitan and pan-Arabist past. Because of its educational excellence and the superior life chances it offers, it is very attractive across all sects and ethnicities, and attracts Hizbollah students and others very critical of the USA. It is also a very attractive academic employer locally, but the Lebanese security situation hampers international student and faculty recruitment severely (Interviews 2008–2010).

AUC: Christian Limitation to Minorities followed by Secular Access to Elites

The founding of AUC in 1919 had many similarities with the founding of SPC/AUB and was inspired by the existing American Protestant missionary colleges in Beirut and Istanbul. The American actors and their soft power strategies and aims were similar to those of SPC/AUB (Murphy 1987). The soft power aims mirrored those of SPC/AUB as AUC sought to give a broad, humanistic, liberal arts education and character building through decidedly Christian lessons in moral and religious studies (Murphy 1987).

As with AUB, proselytizing limited university soft power. Christian and Jewish students were significantly overrepresented and would be even more so after

religious controversies in the early 1930s. These controversies sparked attacks on the university and caused it to downplay Christianity in its ethics teaching (Murphy 1987). In the 1960s, President Thomas Bartlett ended the missionary emphasis in ethics and teaching of religion completely. He strengthened the recruitment of students, staff, and faculty from the Muslim majority of Egypt and managed to spectacularly increase admissions. In 1960, the student body had been 50/50 Christian–Muslim, and it was 60% Muslim in 1969 (Murphy 1987). Egyptian politics has not allowed AUB-style student political activism at AUC, but according to interviews, AUC students have been nationalist, pro-Palestinian, and critical of US Middle East policy as Egyptian students in general (Interviews 2008–2010).

From the late 1950s to the early 1970s, the Egyptian government on several occasions considered whether to nationalize AUC or accept its independent and American nature. It always chose the latter, which illustrated the basis of AUC university soft power toward the Egyptian state. The 1958 Law 160 to ''Arabize'' foreign schools in the country, following the revolution in 1952 and Suez war in 1956 and a comprehensive national education policy, would have made the educational mission of AUC impossible. So the university made it clear to President Gamal Nasser that it was his choice whether AUC should stay in Egypt. Nasser made AUC the only foreign school exempted from the law because of the importance of the cultural ties with the USA provided by the university. Regime acceptance of AUC was amply demonstrated when President Nasser's daughter Mona studied at AUC between 1963 and 1967 (Murphy 1987; Interviews 2008–2010).

The 1967 war caused a major crisis for AUC, when it was sequestrated by the Egyptian state, but AUC also demonstrated sufficient political and financial support to survive. This crisis illustrates the university soft power of AUC toward the Egyptian state and others in Egypt and the USA. On June 8, 1967, the Egyptian government decided to sequestrate AUC under former Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Hussein Said. Dr. Said averted an anti-American mob attack on the campus arguing that the institution was under Egyptian control, belonged to Egypt, educated Egyptians, and only Egypt would suffer (Murphy 1987). Here, Dr. Said outlined some of the main features of AUC university soft power making AUC acceptable and attractive to Egyptian society.

Some weeks later, Dr. Said was asked by Nasser for his opinion on nationalization of the university, which was advocated by the media and the president's scientific advisor. Dr. Said answered at length that Egypt needed and benefited from having an alternative education system to its national universities. He added that the AUC graduates supplied necessary English skills not possessed by the national university graduates. In his view, nationalizing AUC would increase public educational expenses, while keeping it under American sponsorship allowed it to expand at no cost to Egypt. Nasser accepted these arguments, which illustrates AUC university soft power, and gave Dr. Said free reign at AUC (Murphy 1987).

In the 1970s, the Egyptian government gradually moved to full acceptance of AUC. Law 160 from 1958 was rediscovered in 1970, but the Egyptian government again chose to exempt AUC. The government and AUC came close to regulate the status of the university in 1971, but it was politically impossible to recognize AUC's degrees (Murphy 1987), showing limitations to university soft power. University soft power with the Egyptian state grew with improved relations with the USA. In 1974, the ministry of education recognized all AUC degrees except three, the sequestration was lifted in preparation for President Richard Nixon's visit, and the 1971 protocol activated. The protocol ensures minimum 75% Egyptian students and 45% Egyptian faculty, reflecting an Egyptian desire to accrue benefits for Egyptian society from AUC rather than regional influence. Suzanne Mubarak, wife of the then commander of the air force and Deputy Defense

Minister Hosni Mubarak, graduated from AUC in 1977, and the couple's two sons are AUC graduates, illustrating the attractiveness of AUC education among the Egyptian elite (Murphy 1987).

Today in Egypt, the university soft power of AUC on the one hand suffers from a reputation as being the preserve of an economically privileged and Americanized elite and inaccessible to broader groups. On the other hand, the university soft power of AUC benefits from a strong academic reputation with superior employment and income prospects compared with the national universities. The university is therefore very attractive to students and their families across Egyptian society, but financially out of reach for the overwhelming majority.

AUC is an attractive employer for Egyptian academics, including those returning from abroad. The extent of and limits to university attractiveness (university soft power) are displayed in the Egyptian comedy movie ''Sai''di at the American University in Cairo' about a gifted country boy who wins a scholarship to the AUC and stands out for not wearing American clothes or speaking English with fellow students, taking charge at a demonstration burning an Israeli flag, and criticizing American imposition of opinion in his graduation speech (Ḥamid, ıAdl, Hunaydī, Zakī, Saqqā, Lutttfī, Ramzī, and Aflām al-Nasssr 1998; Armbrust 2000).

Reverse University Soft Power in the American Society of Origin

A surprising finding of this study is how these universities hold unintended *reverse* soft power on their own behalf and that of their Middle Eastern host societies in their American society of origin. Reverse university soft power is desired behavior from the American society of origin based on attraction. This behavior has mostly been in the form of academic, moral, political, and financial support of the universities and their contributions to education, healthcare, and development in their Middle East host societies. These universities have also often been advocates of Middle East host society interests and political positions, even against those of the American society of origin.

This reverse university soft power was originally based on the proselytizing mission, which mobilized American missionaries, missionary societies, and philanthropies. However, this mission was ultimately unsuccessful in the Middle East. The universities adapted, secularized with missions of education, development, and bridge-building, and attracted new private and public support in the USA for this mission. This development reflects the secularization of American society, the discovery of educational soft power policy by the USA, and the emergence of the international development agenda. This reverse university soft power also benefitted from the strong American sense of mission in the late 1800s and early 1900s to modernize traditional overseas societies through the transfer for scholarship, science, and technology. First missionaries and later philanthropic foundations played key roles in this mission (Ekbladh 2010).

This reverse university soft power has also had its limits, which is reflected in refusal of moral, political, or financial support. The limitations of reverse university soft power have been particularly clear concerning possession goals of influencing US foreign policy, when AUB and AUC have been voices for Lebanese, Palestinian, or Egyptian interests. Here, the university communities were never able to influence US Middle East policy despite academic prominence and addressing US political leaders and influential media. Reverse soft power mirrors soft power in its limitations concerning policy-specific possession goals.

The reverse university soft power concerning the milieu goal of raising support from the American society of origin and informing this society about the Middle East has been much greater, but also not without limitations. The financial histories of the universities show their often precarious financial situation and their continuous struggles to raise sufficient funds to survive and develop (Khalaf

1977; Murphy 1987). The ability of these universities to educate and inform American society about the Middle East has largely been limited to academic, business, and government elites already concerned with the Middle East and with little reach to the broad populace.

The reverse university soft power is illustrated by how Middle East host societies and their states have attained elite connections to the USA. These host societies have also obtained alternative, quality university systems and a hospital heavily subsidized by the American society of origin and more recently by Gulf societies. The universities have built long-lasting, prominent bridges and networks between the American society of origin and the Lebanese and Egyptian host societies and the wider Middle East through their Boards of Trustees, sponsors, and alumni organizations. In competitive marketplaces for attention, these universities have mobilized resourceful and wealthy individuals, which illustrate reverse university soft power. In particular from the Boards of Trustees and the US government, and more recently from Gulf societies, they have raised large sums of money for research, higher education, healthcare, and development in their host societies.

To understand reverse university soft power, it is also important to notice that information travels in both directions between society of origin and host society through these universities and not only from the society of origin. These universities in Beirut and Cairo became part of an international *invisible college* (Price 1963; Crane 1971). They have developed academic reputations that attract scholars and students from the society of origin and elsewhere on a significant scale studying and learning about the host societies. They have also placed graduates and faculty at prominent American universities and in the American labor market. The bibliography of AUB (American University of Beirut 1967) together with university presses makes it clear that these institutions have produced and disseminated large amounts of knowledge about their host society for the wider world. This knowledge has been certified by these American-standard universities and in English.

AUB: From Proselytizer to Spokes-Institution for the Middle East

The founding of SPC/AUB in 1866 illustrated the reverse soft power of overseas missionary universities. Even before it was founded, SPC/AUB was successful in raising awareness and large amounts of money in the USA and Britain for its activities in its Levantine host society. This reverse university soft power was based on Protestant missionary aims shared by the early supporters in the USA and Britain. Between 1862 and 1864, Bliss travelled 16,993 miles in the USA, addressed 279 meetings, and raised 100,000 USD. A New York–based Board of Trustees was formed, which has throughout history included prominent and wealthy individuals and donated and raised large sums of money. In addition, Bliss raised 4,000 GBP in Britain. In the 1870s and 1880s, the Board of Trustees raised funding for buying the land and for building the campus and, around WWI, hospital facilities. In the Interwar years, the campus doubled and endowment grew sixfold based on American fundraising (Dodge 1958; Burns 1965; Penrose 1970; Munro 1977; Hanna 1979; Bliss et al. 1989; American University of Beirut 2005; Makdisi 2008).

With the secularization of AUB in the early 1900s, its reverse university soft power changed and the university managed to attract support from philanthropies and business for education, research, and development. In the late 1920s, the Rockefeller Foundation generously supported and advised especially the medical school, and AUB together with the Near East Foundation developed large rural development programs. After Lebanese independence, Rockefeller and Ford Foundations continued to be generous donors joined by American

and British industry as well as oil companies (Dodge 1958; Penrose 1970; Khalaf 1977; Munro 1977; Murphy 1987). This philanthropic support for science-based development and modernization clearly reflected, what David Ekbladh has termed, "the great American mission" to modernize developing societies through the transfer of scholarship, science, and technology (Ekbladh 2010).

AUB held and holds reverse university soft power with leading American academia, which is reflected in its ability to recruit faculty and administrators from prominent American universities and place graduate students and faculty there. This reverse university soft power has contributed to American research and teaching interest in the Middle East. This contribution is illustrated, for instance, by Lebanese-born Philip Khuri Hitti (1886–1978), who was educated at SPC/AUB, where he taught before and after a PhD from Columbia University. In 1926, Hitti received a chair at Princeton University where he created a department of Near Eastern studies and became a driving force in the creation of Arabic studies in the USA (Starkey 1971). The attractiveness of AUB (reverse university soft power) to American academia is also clear from its ability to recruit prominent professors from the University of California, Los Angeles (Malcolm Kerr), Princeton (John Waterbury), and the University of Chicago (Peter Dorman) and other highly qualified individuals as presidents (Interviews 2008–2010; American University of Beirut 2009).

In the post-WWII years, AUB was a pro-Arab/Palestinian voice, where America was increasingly pro-Israeli and anti-Arab. AUB had to balance carefully to maintain both local acceptance and continued US public and private support. The attraction of AUB waned in the USA before the civil war because of widely reported anti-American student disturbances and affiliations with Palestinian militant organizations fighting Israel. The university lost much attention and recognition in the USA during the civil war, which it is working to recover (Khalaf 1977; Munro 1977; Hanna 1979; Interviews 2008–2010). Today, the university attracts US public and private funding, along with Lebanese funding and private support from the wider Middle East based on its long-time academic standing. It has recently raised a record sum in excess of 170 million USD. Lebanon and the Gulf have greatly increased their share in the support, accounting now for over half of fundraising, which shows the regional university soft power of AUB (Interviews 2008–2010).

AUC: From Protestant Missionary to Educator and Advocate for Egypt

The initial reverse university soft power surrounding the founding of AUC was similar to that of AUB. The driving force behind AUC, Dr. Charles R. Watson, started fundraising in 1914 and organized a Board of Trustees from "an American cross section of learning, wealth and piety" in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New York raising pledges of 170,000 USD based on missionary aims (Murphy 1987: 1).

AUC educated Westerners in Arabic and on the Middle East from as early as 1921, when it took over the Cairo Study Centre, which had educated missionaries, as the School of Oriental Studies. The school established a Master's degree in Arabic language and literature for young foreign scholars from 1950. Since 1966, AUC has hosted the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad in a consortium with major American universities and funded by the United States Office of Education (Murphy 1987). AUC raised further American academic awareness, when it successfully applied for accreditation from the American Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools in 1981–1982, with high level visits from seven prominent American universities (Murphy 1987).

During the crucial years for the Middle East in the late 1940s, the AUC faculty sought in vain reverse university soft power on behalf of its host region. On the

founding of Israel, President John Badeau and other faculty members spoke out publicly against US policy and for Palestinian rights, which was publicized in Western and Arab media (Murphy 1987). AUC sought reverse university soft power—again in vain—in the run up to the Suez crisis, when President Raymond McLain characteristically defended Egyptian nationalization of the canal. During the war, AUC faculty supported Egypt to President Dwight Eisenhower, UN Secretary-General Dag Hammerskjöld, and in the *New York Times* (Murphy 1987).

From the outset, AUC has worked hard to raise philanthropic support with varying success. In 1925, it received a 100,000 USD private donation for extension activities. This success was followed by highly unsatisfactory fundraising in the late 1920s showing the limits to the reverse soft power of an American, Protestant missionary college in Cairo (Murphy 1987).

The Ford Foundation is one notable supporter of AUC motivated by a desire to contribute to development in Egypt. The foundation supported the establishment of the Social Research Center in 1951 with an 85,000 USD grant. When US fundraising collapsed after the 1956 crisis, the foundation was the first supporter with a 335,000 USD grant in 1958. The 1967 war threatened financial ruin for AUC, but the Ford Foundation together with, for instance, Mobil Oil and others supported the university adequately. However, in the US–Egyptian diplomatic crisis after 1967, again there was no US fundraising. In 1979, AUC got support to establish the Desert Development Center from the Ford Foundation, US, Canadian and Finnish development aid, the Near East Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme, and trustee John Goelet (Murphy 1987).

The ability (reverse university soft power) of AUC to attract the support of sought-after individuals and raise money in the USA, Egypt, and the Gulf was illustrated by, for instance, a major fundraising campaign in the 1980s. The US committee was chaired by a retired chairman of American Express and included the chairmen of Atlantic Richfield, Exxon, and Mobil, and two former secretaries of state. The Egyptian committee included the foreign minister, the minister of tourism, and the chairman of the Arab International Bank. The campaign had by 1986 raised 9.8 million USD in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, 7.2 million USD in the USA, and 1.5 million USD in Egypt, indicating the shift from USA to regional funding (Murphy 1987). Recently, AUC has raised more than 100 million USD from its Board of Trustees and others in the USA and abroad (Interviews 2008–2010).

The Universities and the US State

The universities hold significant reverse university soft power vis-à-vis the US government and have attracted significant financial support. At the same time, the USA supports these universities to gain national soft power in the Middle East. University soft power has contributed to the US national soft power in the Middle East, not the other way around. US foreign policy has been detrimental to university soft power. University soft power is distinct from US national soft power, a contribution to US national soft power and not an extension of the latter. It is not a case of the US state ''exercising'' soft power through the universities as discussed in *Introduction: Soft Power of Transnational Actors.*

To understand reverse university soft power with the US state, it is important to remember that the USA could have used its resources differently to pursue development and soft power goals, and strong bureaucratic voices have suggested so. The competition for such state funds and the lobbying efforts expended by the universities highlight their reverse university soft power. Reverse university soft power vis-à-vis the US government and US pursuit of national soft power through these universities are intertwined and not contradictory (see Scott-Smith 2005 for example of complementary US and European public diplomacy

policies). The USA continues to seek socialization of future leaders (national soft power). The universities can supply that socialization based on their academic quality, which is the basis of their reverse university soft power vis-à-vis the USA. If the universities did not have that educational quality and thus socialized future leaders, they would not receive this government support.

Too close relations with the US government have threatened university soft power when the USA pursued policies rejected by the Middle East host society. US Middle East policy and especially support for Israel has been a huge liability most clearly for AUB and has threatened to taint the large-scale US financial support. Student political activism at AUB clearly shows how the educational mission of the university was embraced *despite* US foreign policy.

AUB: Late Discovery of the University as a Soft Power Agent by the US government

AUB pursued US financial support at its founding when Bliss met President Abraham Lincoln, who only offered moral support (Burns 1965; Bliss et al. 1989). However, the US government sought SPC/AUB's advice when in January 1919, SPC/AUB President Howard Bliss was summoned to the Paris peace conference to advice on the Levant. Here, he urged holding plebiscites in Lebanon and Syria on mandate rule, which was an example of advocacy on behalf of the host society (reverse university soft power) (Dodge 1958; Penrose 1970).

WWII caused financial crisis for AUB as WWI had, but this time the US government supported the AUB for the first time through the Division of Cultural Relations of the Department of State (directed by a former AUC professor, William A. Eddy) (Dodge 1958; Penrose 1970; Murphy 1987). In the 1950s and 1960s, AUB was highly successful in attracting US government support. AUB was in a unique position to further American development and national soft power aims as a prestigious American university with regional reach. This government support became AUB's largest source of income. This income together with unpopular US Middle East policies was a great political liability for student acceptance as was clear from the intense student political protests. However, as mentioned earlier, students distinguished between unacceptable US Middle East policy and the quality of AUB education and intellectual freedom which they embraced (Khalaf 1977; Munro 1977; Hanna 1979).

Faced with the acute financial crisis during the civil war, AUB again demonstrated reverse university soft power toward the US government in securing extensive financial support. The US government and Congress perceived existential risk to AUB and increased support especially after the mid-1980s, which accounted for a third of the AUB budget. For the US Government and Congress, the work of the American Medical Center was an important humanitarian mission for Lebanese perceptions of the USA. More broadly, there was acknowledgment of the contribution of American education to the region and to the socialization of future leaders. AUB represented the best American values, had a long and respected history in the region, and was perceived by Arabs as their own institution. AUB and its contribution to US national soft power could not be recreated, if it was lost (Hanna 1979; Interviews 2008–2010).

AUB and AUC lobby the US Congress intensely for financial support and appropriations. The universities are successful in getting Congress to direct the administration to specifically support the universities. This policy is despite the desire of agencies for the flexibility to support indigenous universities for development reasons. The support in Congress is based on that AUB and AUC are perceived to promote American values in the Middle East, to form alumni who are understanding of and knowledgeable about and connected to the USA. These universities both create a positive image of the USA and build relationships between the Middle East and the USA (Interviews 2008–2010).

AUC: Late, but Large-Scale US Support of Liberal Arts Education for the Egyptian Elite

AUC has pursued US government support, and the US government has pursued national soft power and development aims in Egypt and the Middle East through AUC since 1958. The USA has supported a distinctively American liberal arts education which has become increasingly attractive to the Egyptian political and economic elite, most clearly illustrated by the alumni status of both of former President Hosni Mubarak's sons.

As with AUB, there was no US government involvement in the founding of AUC. During WWII, various AUC affiliates worked with the US government, notably William A. Eddy, the first head of AUC's English department, who directed the Department of State's Cultural Relations Division. The war opened up the prospect of US government support for AUC, which older, conservative, religious trustees rejected to protect the independence of AUC. Out of necessity, they accepted this support in 1958 while emphasizing the independence of AUC (Murphy 1987).

The appointment by President John F. Kennedy of former AUC President Badeau as ambassador to Egypt in 1961 was an example of the reverse university soft power of AUC toward the US government (Murphy 1987). After the disruption of diplomatic relations with the USA in 1967 and with no US embassy in Cairo, AUC attracted many prominent guests and delegations, and increased US public support of AUC also led to increased interest from Congress (Murphy 1987). AUC faced increased competition for US public funds and attention after the restoration of diplomatic relations in 1973, but US public support was still the main income in the 1970s, peaking at 70%, despite doubling of tuition (Murphy 1987).

Since 1955, the USA acquired large holdings of non-convertible Egyptian Pounds (LE) from selling surplus agricultural product. These LE holdings were available for aid projects. AUC has through intense lobbying gained access to these holdings. In 1969, the university obtained the decision of a 25 million LE endowment fund of such holdings, which was implemented in 1975. In 1981, the university managed to secure another 18.75 million LE contribution together with the continuation of USD grants. In 1985, US Senator Robert W. Kasten Jr. sponsored a 500 million USD appropriation bill for Egypt with the condition that Egypt reciprocated with 50 mio LE to sponsor AUC, which Egypt accepted. Senator Kasten later joined the AUC Board of Trustees (Murphy 1987). In 2008, AUC opened its new suburban campus, for which it raised a quarter of the 400 mio USD budget out of US LE holdings (Interviews 2008–2010).

University Soft Power and US National Soft Power

The two universities in this study show how successful transnational actors can contribute to the national soft power of their country of origin, here the USA. (They also contribute to the national soft power of their host countries, which is hinted at concerning reverse university soft power, but that is outside the scope of this article.) The universities contribute to milieu goals of attraction to norms, skills, and knowledge beneficial to the USA. These universities have contributed to the educational attractiveness of the USA, and they have socialized and educated local and regional elites according to American educational norms and traditions. They have ensured English-language professional proficiency among elites and understanding of American society as well as elite connections with American society. This contribution to national soft power is enhanced by arms-length government support, but it is not dependent on this support if there is sufficient private support.

It is also important to be clear about the limitations to the national soft power contributions of these universities. These private foreign-affiliated universities

have not contributed to possession goals of creating acceptance for unpopular US foreign policies in their host societies, which has also not been the aim of the universities or the US state and is judged unrealistic.

AUB became academically perhaps the most prominent university in the Middle East. It held university soft power even among the strongest opponents of US Middle East policy, Palestinians, based on its educational quality and its successful merger of American and Arab culture and identity. It is clear that AUB contributed significantly to the attractiveness of American education in particular and American society in general and therefore to US national soft power. The university has educated elites who become fluent in English, knowledgeable about American society, and steeped in American educational philosophy and tradition. The extent and limitations of the contribution of AUB to US national soft power was particularly clear from the student activism in the post-WWII years. Students, including many Palestinian militants, sought and embraced AUB education and liberal norms as individualism, secularity, democracy, critical thinking, and gender equality while strongly opposing US Middle East policy.

As with AUB, AUC has contributed to US national soft power through its academic quality and cultural bridge-building. AUC both benefits from and contributes to the educational attractiveness and prestige of American society. The university supplies a distinctively American liberal arts education to students from the economic and political elite of Egypt. It has thus contributed to broad milieu goals of attracting Egyptian elite youth to liberal arts norms such as independence, leadership, team work, critical thinking, and gender equality. However, the impact of AUC is hampered by the size of the Egyptian population, where AUC educates and touches a much smaller proportion of society than AUB does in Lebanon. Also historically, the student body at AUC has been more national and less regional than at AUB.

Egypt has been a politically closed society compared with Lebanon, which is reflected in the much lower level of student political activism at AUC than at AUB. So, there has not been the clear contrast between embracing the liberal mission of the university and rejecting US foreign policy at AUC as at AUB. However, according to interviews, AUC students have been pro-Palestinian and critical of US Middle East policy like other Egyptian students (Murphy 1987; Interviews 2008–2010).

Conclusion

Nye and other authors have pointed out how the soft power of nations available to their governments is to a large extent produced by nonstate actors beyond the control of the state. However, literature on soft power has not sufficiently analyzed the soft power of nonstate actors and how it interacts with the state and contributes to national soft power. This article addresses these questions through a structured, focused comparison of AUB and AUC. The two universities are crucial cases for transnational actor soft power and contributions to national soft power: they are leading universities in the Middle East of distinctively American origin and have received support from the US government since the 1950s.

The comparison shows the extent and limitations of the university soft power with the Middle Eastern students and host states. This soft power and its basis have been remarkably stable throughout the existence of the universities. Students and their families have been attracted to quality education and language skills for better life opportunities. Students and society have embraced the universities for their intellectual freedom, as mutually respectful meeting places of Arab and American culture and for their important contributions to healthcare, development, and state-building. Host states have tolerated the universities

because of their contributions as elite bridges to the USA and to human resources, healthcare, development, and state-building.

It is equally clear how the original missions of religious proselytizing severely limited the attractiveness or soft power of the universities in their host societies. Students and their families rejected conversion to American Protestantism. Unpopular US Middle East policy, such as support for Israel, has also been great liabilities for the universities.

A surprising finding in this article is the unintended reverse university soft power in the American society of origin on behalf of their Middle Eastern host societies as opposed to the originally intended university soft power in the Middle East. University faculty and leadership have defended Middle East positions and interests against US policy. The universities have attracted important moral, political, and financial support for education, healthcare, and development in the Middle East from private and public American supporters. This reverse soft power was originally based on their proselytizing mission and later on their secular missions of education, development, and intercultural bridge-building.

University relations with the US state have both significantly contributed to university soft power and threatened this university soft power. US financial support has contributed significantly to the academic quality, healthcare, and development efforts at the basis of university soft power. Too close an association with the US state and unpopular Middle East policies have tainted government support for the universities and threatened university soft power.

The USA has supported these universities for development and national soft power reasons. Reverse university soft power vis-à-vis the US government and US national soft power use of these universities are intertwined and not contradictory. The USA seeks access to and socialization of future leaders (national soft power). The universities can offer this access based on their academic quality, which is the basis of their reverse university soft power vis-à-vis the US government.

It is clear that the two universities contribute to the national soft power of the USA concerning milieu goals of norms, skills, and knowledge. The universities have attracted Lebanese, Egyptian, and wider Middle Eastern elites to liberal norms of American education, such as individualism, critical thinking, gender equality, and personal and political freedoms. They have equipped these elites with English proficiency as well as familiarity and connections with American society. The limits to the university contribution to national soft power are also clear: the universities did not create support for unpopular US foreign policy, which was also never a goal for the universities. University soft power has been despite unpopular policies such as US support for Israel.

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