



Association
of Arab Universities



The Scientific Society of Arab
Universities Faculties of Arts

Association of Arab Universities Journal for Arts

A Biannual Refereed Academic Journal

Published by The Scientific Society of
Arab Universities Faculties of Arts at
Universities Members of AARU

Vol. 20

No.2

Oct. 2023 / Rabeii 2AD 1445 H

ISSN 9849 – 1818





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Society of Arab Universities Faculties of Arts

Vol. 20

No.2

Oct. 2023 / Rabei 1445 2 H

Qatar's Rising Soft Power: From the 1996 Failed Coup to the 2022 World Cup

<https://doi.org/10.51405/20.2.9>

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Vol.20 No.2 2023, pp.557-582

Date of Submission: 25/8/2022

Date of Acceptance: 19/10/2022

Abstract

This paper examines Qatar's use of soft power by shedding light on national imperatives for adopting a soft power approach to foreign policy-making. The paper approaches soft power from an interdisciplinary perspective to show how the State of Qatar has developed a finely-tuned foreign policy since the failed coup in 1996.

Being a small state in the Arabian Gulf, Qatar has focused on proving itself on the world stage. The rise in power for Qatar indicates how a small country can overpower challenges and become successful by adopting soft power. Qatar's soft power policies utilizes academics, the military, foreign aid, sports policy, and media influence. Within this paper, I discuss how Qatar's soft power policy's sustainability and viability are of concern, how the country is applying the soft power approach in its international relations, and the prices Qatar paid for its soft power policy.

Keywords: Soft power, Qatar's foreign policy, Qatari culture, Policymaking in Qatar, Cultural policy, Qatari Identity, Qatari museums.

Literature Review and the Importance of this Study

Several studies have looked into Qatar's soft power policy. However, these studies focused on analyzing the reasons and attempts of Qatar to host sports mega-events, such as Asian Gyms, Arab Cup FIFA 2022, and so on. The hypotheses of these studies concentrate on sports diplomacy as a primary tool, which Qatar depends upon in its soft power policy to formulate its foreign policy goals. Thus, scholars try within their analysis to highlight the relationships between sports mega-events in Qatar and its soft power policy¹. In addition to that, scholars also argued that Qatar uses an approach of attraction and carrots in its soft power practices. The interest is its political stability, gained through its vigorous military, the fairness in distributing the state's wealth among its citizens, and the country's luxurious

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2 - Humanities Department, College of Arts and Sciences, Qatar University, Qatar.

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lifestyle². On the other hand, the carrot is seen in the influence that Qatar is trying to have through Al-Jazeera Network, sports mega-events, and substantial overseas support³.

This paper, however, highlights what factors the soft power policy of small states like Qatar demanded as a holistic approach that considers the concrete and abstract elements of soft power with an adequate appreciation of geo-political, socio-economic, and cultural aspects in foreign policy-making. Therefore, the study will examine the conceptual quality of Qatar's soft power, such as culture and education. The concrete elements of soft power are tangible sources, such as geographical location. Finally, abstract aspects of soft power are intangible sources. Such as national morale and the impact of soft power on social change.

The paper aims to highlight the impact of such a policy over the state in the long term. Thus, it raises several questions. What price did Qatar pay for its soft policy? How Qatar approaches its soft power policy? Did the country receive any outcome from its soft power so far?

Introduction

Power refers to influencing others to act according to one's preferences which could be achieved through persuasion, attraction, payment, or coercion. Soft power achieves preferred outcomes through interest rather than through force or payment.⁴ Notably, soft power has become a fundamental instrument in politics. The use of power is more efficient and effective in world worldwide politics because of its sustainability and endurance.⁵ Soft power does not use money to enhance cooperation; instead, political leaders in global politics use shared values to contribute to achieving perceived outcomes. Examples of soft power applicable in international politics include intercultural exchanges and volunteering, which positively impact individuals' lives. Although hard power could contribute to significant outcomes for politicians, it can produce enhanced results if accompanied by soft power. For instance, Yasser Arafat failed to choose soft power like that of Martin Luther King over the hard power he decided; he failed to attract the Israelites and hence did not have the Palestinian state. After the cold war, soft power has been extensively used in discussing foreign policy in the United States and China recently. Qatar and Turkey are among the countries trying to focus on the complexities of describing interregional politics.

Soft power is beneficial in politics. Politicians manipulate people and citizens through complex control to get what they want. However, it is possible to use tangible payoffs and threats to change people's perceptions and derive perceived outcomes. A nation or country may achieve the results it perceives in global politics because other nations admire its values, such as the need to emulate its openness and prosperity. Soft power co-opts rather than coercing. Soft power is instrumental in current politics; leaders can achieve their preferences without using sticks or carrots to make them do what they want. The ability to create choices is associated with moral or legitimate authority policies, political institutions and values, culture, and an attractive personality. It is always cheap to lead when the political leaders represent values that the citizens want to emulate. Qatar, for example, builds its soft power around the value of fairness by picturing itself as a peacemaker that believes in the necessity

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of stability and security of nations. Besides, soft power significantly impacts the decisions made by governments. The primary thought leader in global soft power, Joseph Nye, stipulated that soft power is fundamental to the success of world politics for those who know how to utilize it.⁶ For instance, volunteering has enhanced Americans' measurable well-being and security in America.⁷ The volunteers contribute to respecting human rights, democratic governance, social capital, and capacity building, making the world an excellent place for Americans abroad and at home.

The Qatari politicians recognized that a nation using soft power would allow the country to promote itself as a good place for people to visit and create a good reputation for its quality services and goods. Additionally, a government can raise its esteem to its neighbours, compose its international image and market its resources effectively. Also, soft power benefits the home country, promoting domestic trade, tourism, and domestic services and goods rather than imports and exports.⁸ Soft power also impacts individuals positively, making them feel better about their country. Therefore, soft power benefits are massive, internationally and domestically, for its citizens and the nation. However, we shall ask here what price Qatar paid to raise its international image, and how did it affect its relationships with its neighbours?

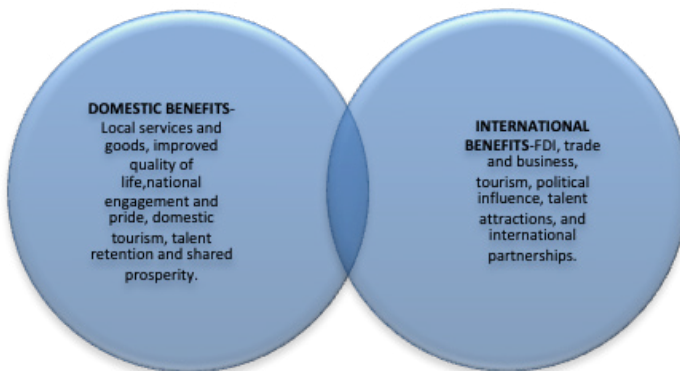


Fig. 1. Soft power Benefits: A robust international and domestic nation brand.

The Development of Soft Power Strategy in Qatar

Being a small state in the Arabian Gulf, Qatar has focused on proving itself on the world stage. Qatar has been among the countries in the Middle East experiencing a rise in power, noted by Felsch (2016) as a "shooting star" in global politics in the 21st century. The economic success in Qatar has been reinforced through foreign policy.⁹ However, cultural development has arisen at a low pace. The growing emergence of Qatar as a regional actor was influenced by the 1995 incoming leadership who aimed at fast-tracking the nation's vast resources of natural gas and the soft power projection concept.¹⁰ However, the country needs help with policies moving into the future. Besides, the uprisings by the Arabs have changed the perspective in which the Arab world operates. Although some traditional states

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have lost influence in the Middle East because of security issues, countries such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Qatar have taken advantage of the regional mayhem. Qatar has strategically utilized its favorable security and financial situation to improve its worldwide influence.¹¹ Within its exercise of soft power, the state focused on elements that would ensure having an influential practice of a high-quality standard.

The Conceptual Quality of Qatar's Soft Power: Cultural Factors

A country's soft power is based on culture, foreign policies, and political values. The focus delves into soft power in Qatar based on culture, which is attractive for other communities for efficiency in realizing foreign policy objectives.¹² Culture refers to values and practices that are meaningful to society. Qatar's high culture is education, while popular culture is based on fashion, music, and films. Qatar has fundamentally defined education culture goals, including establishing an effective scientific research funding system shared among the private and public sectors and driven by international research centers and institutions. A robust global cultural activity and role is also in a scientific investigation.

In Doha, the Qatar Foundation, well-known for Barcelona shirt sponsorship, invests massively in the Doha campus, an investment called the "education city" with six university branches, a French and a British University. The reasonable efforts behind the higher education improvement are purposed to enhance the reputation of Qatar and legitimacy globally. Therefore, Qatar aims to increase its soft power. The quality of the soft power regarding education has improved the number of foreign learners. Felsch (2016) stipulated that data gathered and reported by UNESCO's Institute of Statistics showed that Qatar 2005 hosted 1,170 learners in 2010, 4,544 learners in 2010, 5,418 and in 2012, 7,154 students. The results provide remarkable statistics for a country of such a small size. However, the statistics raise concerns about whether Qatar has an attractive culture. International students in Qatar would most likely have gone to other countries if learning environments were similar. Qatar's colossal education financial investments are fundamental factors leading to the attraction of international students to Qatar. If there are no international students attracted to the country, there could be no consideration of soft power in Qatar.

Qatar strategizes to attract foreign learners for education to enhance the diffusion of its culture. The contacts and exchanges would create mutual understanding and familiarity among the foreigners, indirectly impacting political states' cooperation and reducing the likelihood of armed conflicts. Based on the exchanges with the United States students, the exchange programs in the US could lead to the dispersion of liberal values across the authoritative county's borders. The massive number of migrant workers in the country also enhances cultural attraction in Qatar. The most significant percentage of the labor force in Qatar are foreigners, with the nationals taking less than 10% of the workers. Another fundamental strength of Qatar's soft power is the win for hosting the 2022 world cup rights. Qatar believed it was significantly successful in enhancing its global reputation abroad through worldwide media attention while boosting the tourism sector.¹³ By winning the bid, Qatar was assured of getting respected internationally. The bid for the 2022 World Cup is the most fundamental success realized of a tremendous national strategy for making investments in sports for politics.

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The country also uses the museums' architecture and well names to design the places. Qatar's culture is also influenced by globalization, creating positive impacts on its culture, especially education and promotion of women's rights. The museum architecture, especially the National Museum of Qatar, is located at the South end of Doha's Corniche, enhancing travelers' visibility at the airport. The museum architecture explains the history of the country's people and cultural heritage, explaining the community's vibrant future aspirations moving into the future.¹⁴ The National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) gives an active voice to the nation's dynamic cultural heritage, demonstrating the massive network ties that the country has with other nations globally. The museum architecture provides a place where people from different communities meet and share Qatar's present, future, and past. The museum architecture is also fundamental for students providing them with research centers and access to digital collections. Broome (2019) explained that the museum is setting itself as a significant emblem for Qatar as it tries to search for a fundamental identity to prove itself, especially in its preparation to hold the 2022 World Cup event.¹⁵

Qatar also developed the city of Msheireb, where primary traditional architecture was transformed into museums. The subjects of each museum present the occupations and history of those who lived there in the past, making those ideal mouthpieces of Qatari culture and history. The Mohammed Bin Jassim House is where the first pharmacy, bank, and hotel were established, indicating how the oil wealth impacted daily living among the Qatari.¹⁶ The Radwani House represents the domestic life for well-off Qatari families through the 20th century. Qatar is not a country that would shy away from its brutal pasts, such as slavery. Despite other countries failing to disclose their complicated pasts, a slave museum, Bin Jelmoed, was established to exhibit the economic, cultural, and social enslaved contribution to human civilizations development.¹⁷ The Company House was set to indicate how the first-hand men accounted for laying a foundation for the Qatari nation and labored to provide for their families.¹⁸ Islamic Art museum promotes Islamic culture and art internationally and locally. The museum offers visitors a perspective of Islamic civilization through dialogue and contemporary art between the Jewish and Arab cultures.¹⁹

The names used to design the places in Qatar have also enhanced the cultural context of the county. The naming of the Qatar districts reflects the characteristics and geographic traits of the tribes who have moved and lived in the country.²⁰ The naming represents significant representations of the cultural diversity in the country, recognizing all tribes associated with Qatar. The buildings in Qatar reflect the Islamic culture in the country, promoting the Islamic culture for the Muslim community globally among the visitors and those who live there.²¹ Additionally, globalization in Qatar has significantly impacted the enhanced quality of education and the availability of increased university institutions.²² Economic advancements and women's rights culture have also been enhanced through globalization in Qatar.

The historical sites are core to the cultural heritage of Qatar. Cultural survival is enhanced by maintaining economic, environmental, and social-cultural characteristics. The grand souks, palaces, mosques, and towers are used to observe the cultural heritage of Qatar.²³ Walking along the Doha corniche allows tourists and locals to experience an impressive skyline and wooden dhows through

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the Doha Bay Shore.²⁴ The dhows represent the pre-oil era of the country, while the towering skyscrapers represent modern invention architecture. Crossing to Souq Waqif is a traditional market with shisha lounges, restaurants, and shops selling souvenirs, clothes, and other commodities.²⁵ The downtown scenery represents how the traditional and modern coexist in a small oil wealthy nation. Despite modernization and rapid development leading to changes in the social fabric and culture, Qatar prides itself on preserving its cultural heritage industry through cultural institutions such as renovated buildings, traditional markets, museums, and cultural festivals. Qatar's goals of preserving its cultural heritage are enhanced by the architectural and archaeology conservation departments that protect, conserve and manage the archaeological practices in the country.²⁶

The Concrete Elements of Soft Power in Qatar: Tangible Sources

Geographical location

Qatar's geographical location and population size are fundamental drivers of international standing and state power. The small size and its small size are salient factors influencing the proper understanding of Qatar.²⁷ The geographical location of Qatar between the East and the West positions the country as the primary pivot in which the rebalancing of global interactions occurs.²⁸ Qatar is located near critical maritime boundaries, which enhances its recognition and interactions with the neighbouring states. Qatar is located on the Northern Peninsula of central Bahrain Island, only 1.5 kilometers from the coast of Qatari.

Another significant boundary is that it cuts through the largest global natural gas field resource, meaning 60% of Qatar lies near the territorial waters.²⁹ The remainder of the field is under the control of the Iranians. Islands surround Qatar's mainland, the most significant being Halul Island, which acts as a storage and loading terminal for neighboring offshore oil fields. The existence of the Islands makes it the closest inhabited island to the UAE maritime border. Besides, the country is a flat desert covered with loose sand and rocks. The inland sea is highly inhabited, serving as the country's primary natural tourist attraction site.

Population and labor

When combined with massive wealth resources, Qatar's small population gives the country officials room to free and maneuver through the economic pressures that afflict the neighboring countries.³⁰ Consequently, the population factors enhanced the reserve for soft power bolstering its global reputation.³¹ Also, the integration of revenues and the small population in Qatar has made the country portray itself among countries with the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, foreign migration increased the Qatar population massively by 40% in 2010, as explained by.³² In 2016, the populace was estimated to be 2.6 million, with most people living on the peninsula's East Coast. Al Rayyan is the second inhabited city located in the significant industrial localities, promoting trade and where most Qatar residents work. The neighbouring towns are home to gas and oil products,

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enabling the manufacturing industry.³³ Most households are also located in Al Rayyan Municipality, Doha, indicating that most people prefer living near the capital. Population growth in Qatar is expected to rise because of the enormous augmentation of the non-national labor force.

Dependence on globalization ensures that Qatar has an ample supply of labor. However, overdependence on imported labor exposes the country to economic pressures as more population growth is experienced.³⁴ Qatar supplements its small population through the increased labor force, significantly impacting politics, economy, and social structure.³⁵ Besides, the supplementation of the labor force has also influenced the government of Qatar and the community in numerous foreign affairs, contributing to negative socio-economic and cultural consequences. Despite the foreign labor force not creating significant negative implications for the country, several tensions and conflicts have emerged because of some political and economic interests of the government, such as the issues that arose regarding the rights of the workforce after Qatar won the bid to host the 2022 World Cup matches.³⁶ For instance, various disapprovals and accusations from global media have been raised against Qatar regarding some key disputes linked directly to construction projects that Qatar is undertaking for the future tournament. Such as laborers' living conditions and management are the primary focus of this campaign. In March 2014, the International Trade Union Confederation issued a report proposing constructing the World Cup 2022 facilities to kill many labors.³⁷

Natural Resources

Qatar is among the wealthiest countries globally because of the massive natural resources that contribute to the country's GDP. Qatar is engulfed with natural oil and gas reserves; it has become third as the world's largest reserve for natural gas, after Iran and Russia. The country's confirmed natural gas reserves stand at roughly 25 trillion m³, which makes it command almost 14 percent of the world's total natural gas reserves.³⁸ Pearl hunting and fishing are also part of the Qatari economy and large helium producers.³⁹ Consequently, Qatar depends on exploiting natural resources instead of human capital to derive its wealth,⁴⁰ contributing to the country's high GDP, estimated at around \$ 69,026.47 per capita.⁴¹

As O'Bright (2017) cited, Qatar practices hegemonic control of natural resources, termed as the country's soft power elements.⁴² The approaches have enhanced the sovereign policy in Qatar in Qatari, which has improved the maximization of profits from the natural resources contributing to domestic development. O'Bright (2017) explained that Qatar evolved economically from its first branding of the emerging natural gas and oil powerhouse to a state that recognizes the significance of developing resources abroad and at home, as stipulated in the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Abstract Elements of Soft Power in Qatar: Intangible Sources

National morale

Qatar aims to achieve progress and prosperity among its citizens with the Qatar National Vision 2030 to change Qatar into an advanced community capable of realizing sustainable development and

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securing a high standard of living for its citizens and future generations.⁴³ The Qatar National Vision 2030 aims to stabilize and ensure equal opportunities, protect personal and public freedoms, and protect moral and religious traditions and values.

The Quality of Qatar Diplomacy

Qatar reflects its soft power through public diplomacy. Public diplomacy in Qatar influences public attitudes based on the execution and formation of foreign policies, encompassing international relations. Cherkaoui (2018) asserted that Qatar aimed to create a comparative advantage through public diplomacy.⁴⁴ Diplomacy helps the country in terming it as a distinctive country to brand its image distinct from the natural quasi-anonymous gas producer to international society. Qatar had visible humanitarian roles in intervening in the post, and conflict-affected environments, focusing on the African, Islamic, and Arabs state crises.⁴⁵ From a traditional perspective, the Qatari humanitarian diplomacy aimed to aid the refugee camps, including constructing more camps and medical assistance provisions.

Besides, large funding grants have been implemented to prevent crises, stabilize economies and the government. An example of quality diplomacy activity was Qatar and Yemen's support to Jordan and the UAE and Saudi Arabia's support to Sudan.⁴⁶ Qatar emerges as actively involved in mediation activities regarding the Gulf States, especially during conflicts that they determine to gain broader strategic objectives and moral obligations. Based on the country's aim, Qatar believes that providing resolution and assistance in armed conflicts helps uphold ethical standards based on peace commitment, religious conviction, and stability.⁴⁷ Qatar's diplomacy commitment is portrayed in 2003 Article 7 in the constitution, which determines that the country's foreign policy is based on promoting security and peace mediation in international conflicts. The focus of Qatar's mediation of disputes forms its primary global engagement, which it strives to maintain among its strong neighbours, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Other countries with diplomatic relations with Qatar include the Maldives, Bahrain, Yemen, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.⁴⁸ Despite the pressure, Qatari diplomacy is characterized by autonomy in sovereign international relations and politics. The financial and internal stability enhances Qatari's ability to accept greater risk in mediating against conflicts.

Putri and Surwandono (2019) also asserted that Qatari diplomacy is clean since it is based on fundamental moral standards used as policy reforms, which are measurable, integral, and open. Therefore, conflict negotiations and mediation are conducted openly, fairly, and transparently. Qatar being referred to as an honest broker increases its legitimacy in the global arena. Qatari diplomacy aims to benefit the parties involved in the mediation processes regarding the conflicts. The Qatari government considers clean diplomacy a rational choice by the government considering itself among small countries that face the interests of their significant power.⁴⁹ Qatari diplomacy is practiced to ensure the country is free of pressure and threats from nations with more enormous capabilities. The measurable Qatari diplomacy and its reliance on international law also contributed to the amicable resolution of the Gulf crisis.⁵⁰

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The Quality of Government

H.H. The Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani is the current Qatari Ruler who took over from H.H. The Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani in 2013. H.H. The Amir has contributed significantly to Qatar National Vision 2030. He oversaw the launch of Qatar's national day and sports day as he believed in the health and well-being of every citizen of the country. H.H. The Amir also played a crucial role in unifying political parties in Qatar by holding effective dialogues at Doha. Based on the ruling of Sheikh Tamim, Qatar has seen developments in low employment rates, gross domestic product per capita, legislative and political areas, and capital flows.⁵¹ Other rulers associated with the achievements realized in Qatar are Sheik Mohammed Bin Thani, Sheik Jassim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani, Sheik Abdullah Bin Jassim Al Thani, Sheik Ali Bin Abdullah Al Thani, Sheik Ahmad Bin Ali Al Thani, and Sheik Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani. The achievements recognized by all the Qatari rulers include health, economy, infrastructure, social and cultural field, investments, cultural areas, education, communication and media, foreign policy, and the Qatar National Vision 2030.⁵²

The government provides medical and healthcare services through its funded programs. The government also sponsors cultural and recreational facilities and clubs for the youth as part of the youth welfare program.⁵³ Adult literacy is also a government goal realized through the provision of adult schools and classes. Equality is enhanced since most of the population in the country is literate, with almost equal proportions of females and males. This homogeneity and fairness contribute to the political stability of Qatar.⁵⁴

The justice system comes from the European civil, Islamic, common law, and, in some instances, Ottoman law. No political parties are prevalent in Qatar, and everyone aged 18 years and above is allowed to participate equally in voting. Since the primary goal of the Qatari government is to maintain peace by offering mediations in conflicts among countries, its military expenditure in 2010 reached around \$2165 million, which is the most expensive, with the GDP expenditure in the sector accounting for five times that of the global average more than any other country.⁵⁵ The Qatari government has also tried to preserve the music culture of the Namah music (shanty). Namah was a performance art known among pearl divers in Qatar; it declined with the decline of the pearl industry. However, the Qatari government tried to preserve this art through cultural festivals and events.⁵⁶ Additionally, the government of Qatar promotes radio broadcasts from the neighbouring Gulf States to promote news reception globally.

Community's Pressure: Impact of soft power on social change

The use of social media is gradually changing the dynamics of soft power globally, and most politicians are using digital diplomacy in their practices. Global connections are, therefore, more accessible but, at the same time, becoming complex in some instances. Facebook platforms, for example, act as sources of information. Global power is all about data; hence modern forms of communication are significant in spreading the news to more expansive areas than before.⁵⁷ Most populations have Facebook accounts through which they communicate with their citizens. Social media platforms are

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also platforms that are used for public debates. Unsurprisingly, politicians, political institutions, and parties are active on Facebook to initiate conversations with their citizens.

In Qatar, social media is massive as internet penetration in the country is high, approximately 85%.⁵⁸ News is the most prevalent service where the internet is used; hence would be a powerful platform where politicians would communicate their opinions. The conversations in social media are in Arabic, either from the government or other individuals.⁵⁹ Community individuals could use social media to raise awareness of issues impacting the community to influence the government. The rising economies, nation-states, and global ambitions are adopting purposeful communication mechanisms with audiences globally to enhance the positive image of the countries while enhancing goodwill. Effective communication calls for the rise of social media usage to promote communication among the population.

A research report by the Ministry of Transport in Qatar indicated that government institutions have widely adopted ICT. Based on the Ministry of Transport and Communications (2016), the Qatari government uses social media to engage with external stakeholders and promote deeper engagement while improving service delivery.⁶⁰ Social media is also used to engage policy-makers and deliver services to the government. Qatar is trying to ensure that every service is conducted online in the future. People living in Qatar also use social media to promote entrepreneurship, which impacts businesses nationwide and globally. As cited, Qatari is among the countries in the Middle East which use well-constructed social media platforms to showcase their nation to other countries globally.⁶¹

The reward of social media for community use is not a threat but a benefit. The use of social media has been a game-changer for the government and has changed how things happen to a greater extent.⁶² Through social media, people can engage in active dialogues with civic politicians and entire agencies in the government. The government could use social media to communicate about crises and fundamental updates significant to any country's population. Given that many people are also glued to televisions, they can get the wrong contexts of irrelevant information. Only the government can provide precise information that is professionally delivered.

Social media usage would also promote citizen engagement, where the government could communicate relevant policy issues that matter to them. Yael Bar-Tur (2020) also mentioned a Next-door app through which local governments communicate essential safety issues while engaging community groups. Government officials could also use social media to communicate and test their messages with the citizens by influencing feedback. Negative feedback would mean that the people could have been more satisfied with the information, while the positive impact is that society members appreciate it. Social media also acts as a rallying, campaigning, and fundraising toolkit. The government also identifies how social media is becoming fundamental in influencing policy processes and political

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agendas.⁶³ Most of the issues discussed on social media include political unrest, disaster emergencies, and political campaigns.

Public opinion matters in the Qatari government policies implementation. According to Ulrichsen (2014), during the Arab Spring, Qatar moved from its traditional foreign policy in 2013 to embrace the new change in the Middle East to support the transitioning states. The policy implementations adapt to changing to further foreign policy that received fallout from the public policy, especially the Islamists. Hence, public opinion matters on how the government adapts to foreign policies as they entail the well-being of the citizens.⁶⁴ Ros (2021) asserted that Qatar should seek a middle ground with the other Arab states. When a country accepts some opinions from their neighborhoods, they develop the most appeal in prospective compromise.

Despite its importance, soft power is less effective than hard power when a country wishes to implement foreign policies. Soft power relies mainly on foreign countries hence the unreliability. Summing up the cultural, demographic, and government budget capabilities and facilities helps identify a nation's soft power capability to implement policies.⁶⁵ Analysis of foreign relations committees and relations regarding ongoing discussions with other countries about the tools of foreign policies with strategic partner countries creates a relevant picture regarding why foreign policy decision-makers made the specific decision regarding the choice of foreign policies. When policy decision-makers in foreign states have functional and precise soft power capabilities, they are not limited to war choices.⁶⁶ A country's use of high soft power capabilities helps the nation identify and provide insights into the analysis of foreign policies.

Government's Use of Soft Power Internally and Externally

Qatar has developed education, sports, and culture policies internally and externally. Based on education, Qatar has adequate financing for developing and increasing universities in the country to attract international students while ensuring that students have access to good education and attend college until completion.⁶⁷ Education in the high culture in Qatar also entails the establishment of research centers and laboratories. Failure to attract international students would not significantly promote soft power in Qatar. Education fosters the diffusion of the Qatari culture globally.

Qatar also won the bid to host the 2022 World Cup football match, significantly enhancing the Qatari culture as footballers worldwide would meet and play as they interact. Qatar hosting the 2022 world cup matches would boost the tourism sector.⁶⁸ Football bid is one of the most prominent sports for political investments. The decision to award Qatar the offer would significantly impact the Gulf estate. The world cup bid permits the environment to address societal issues based on values and norms.⁶⁹ Hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup represents crossing one of the most civilizational bridges left in global sport. Qatar will portray its international image in the sport. Cultural heritage is also expressed through architectural museums, well-renowned names, and globalization. Globalization helps promote the Qatari culture worldwide through the visitors who visit the country for tourist attractions.

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Qatar aims to promote culture during the 2022 FIFA World Cup by ascertaining that cultural festivals will be held during the matches by the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC). The cultural stakeholders will conduct the Qatar Foundation's cultural festivals, the Qatar Museums, and the Qatar Tourism Authority.⁷⁰ The stadium designs will promote the Qatari culture, established by various architects, including the Zaha Hadid Architects, Fenwick Iribarren Architects, and Ibrahim M Jaidah, the Qatari architect. All stadiums are built to promote Qatar Culture; for instance, the Bayt stadium was built to resemble the tents the nomads of the region used.⁷¹ The Al Janoub stadium roof is designed like a dhow boat, an Arab sailboat that navigates across the Gulf of Persia. Education City Stadium is shaped like a diamond to be the Jewel of Qatar. The Lusail Stadium will emulate the decorative designs in crafts and bowls of the region.⁷² Al Thumama draws its architectural design from the traditional hat "Gahfiya," which is famous for the men from the area.

Qatar uses community development initiatives to provide excellent opportunities to the community members for excellence in research and education to fully engage the communities to develop the nation. Qatar also uses remembrance of the past to build on the future. The Qatari believes in preserving and sharing their language, religion, and culture.⁷³ Several initiatives have hence been formed to celebrate and safeguard the Qatari heritage. Several initiatives have also been developed to allow people of all ages to showcase their creative skills through multicultural orchestras.

The sustainable Qatar National vision goals for 2030 call for adequate social protection among the Qataris, the building of strong, cohesive families, and efficient, strong institutions; the aims of the humans and the social elements are critical and could be thought to contribute to the 2030 sustainable development goals. Social policy integration in Qatar must ensure that all human and social aspects of Qatar National Vision 2030 are aligned and that they live towards realizing the primary goal of sustainability. In Qatar, the major forms of social policy are legal provisions, social society provisions, and supporting livelihoods.

Qatar's soft power emerged from its economic capabilities and how they are used.⁷⁴ However, more than the wealth from natural resources is needed; hence, status-building and domestic nation-building activities promote entrepreneurship globally. Ennis (2018) cited that the economic capabilities between the UAE and Qatar allow the countries to build their image abroad and at home. The countries are united by their similar interests in making their status regionally and internationally. Al-Maatouk and Kama (2017) asserted that Qatar's foreign policy roles depend on its economic resources. Qatar has used oil resources and natural gas within its policy to enhance global integration in the worldwide market. The financial capabilities have also aided the country in numerous mediation cases in various conflicts. In the mid-2000s, Qatar became a peacemaker across the Middle East and part of Africa. Notably, the government played a significant role in mediation efforts in Lebanon, Sudan, Yemen, Palestine, Djibouti, and Eritrea. Insofar, Qatar has created an image for itself as a trustworthy broker concerned with peace and steadiness.⁷⁵ Qatar is motivated by its size as a small country that desires to survive and the prestigious image the state intends to build among the international community.⁷⁶ Thus, the courses use a government-pronged mechanism approach within these mediation efforts—

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first, intense diplomacy and engagement. In addition to direct promises of enormous financial investments once the Disputes or conflicts are settled.⁷⁷ In the early 1990s, Qatar decided to build up its energy infrastructure. This, in turn, exploits the state's vast reserves of natural gas, allowing the country to project considerable images of soft power—no doubt signing the contract for liquefied natural gas tied the country with external allies. Meanwhile, wealth growth was invested in Qatar and abroad through high-profile investments. Therefore, Natural gas investment allowed Qatar to diversify and expand its international relationships.⁷⁸

Qatar has recorded massive economic growth, with the oil and natural gas resources at the forefront of contributing to GDP growth. 2012, for instance, the revenues derived from natural gas and oil were more than half those of the country's revenues.⁷⁹ The International Monetary Fund attributed Qatar's success in economic growth to the favorable policies and strategies that included developing institutions in the country, public tourism bodies, urban development and planning, optimal exploitation of the state's wealth, and massive improvements in oil production. Qatar adopts the free economy policy and updates and enacts legislation continuously to support and establish economic affiliations with other countries around the globe.⁸⁰ Qatar has significant elements which help it attract foreign investments, primarily political and social stability. Qatar has established policies that do not allow for charging on financial transfers and for the exit and entry of capital in the country. Qatar uses its oil wealth as the pillar of its political role. The economy contributes to foreign policy effectiveness and independence.

The foreign policy also relied on the Qatari culture based on the good relationships with the neighboring countries. Even though, at some point, such political policy has deteriorated Qatar's relationships with its neighbouring countries. As of 5th June 2017, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt severed their relationships with Qatar. The dispute ended on 5th January 2021 despite the fluctuating geopolitical incident. Despite their disagreements over the years, the Gulf countries have always collaborated on issues related to their economic interest and mutual security.⁸¹

The cultural policy-makers in Qatar have championed international artists.⁸² Cultural policies, including education-related ones, also regulate the museums in Qatar. Prominent artists enjoy recognition in Qatar with various institutions concerned with their arts, including social, cultural, and educational institutions.⁸³ The artists assume the role of community activists than it is for architecture. An example of culture in action is depicted in the Sculpture Chicago exhibition curated by Mary Jane Jacob, pioneering socially, public, and site-specific art.⁸⁴ Damien Steven Hirst's work of a giant embryo at the entrance of Sidra Medicine reflects the healthcare mission to improve the health and well-being of children and women.⁸⁵ The Three Monkeys by Subodh Gupta raises awareness about the horrifying nature of warfare and is located in the cultural village of Doha.⁸⁶ The three monkeys represent, hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil. Qatar promotes various cultural contexts presented by the work of Sarah Lucas and Perceval.⁸⁷

Sports diplomacy is also significant in enhancing the nation's soft power, which helps countries build their image internationally. The Arab Gulf has developed to be an effective competitive center

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for sports. It acts as a branding and marketing strategy for its major cities, including Doha, Manama, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai.⁸⁸ The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states have comprehended the significance of events such as the World Cup and F1 for public diplomacy and soft power. Hence, GCC states have sought to pursue more Olympic medals and higher FIFA rankings.⁸⁹ Notably, Qatar has become a leading destination for athletes and sports to prepare for training camps and international competitions during winter break.

The External Impact of Soft Power Policy

The rise in power for Qatar indicates how a small country can overpower challenges and become successful by adopting soft power. Qatar's soft power policies are utilized in academics, the military, foreign aid, sports policy, and media influence.

Qatar can play an influential role in moderating groups that United States officials cannot directly reach and have constructive benefits in the political realm. Soft power would also enhance mediation placement at the core of Qatari policymakers' primary objectives. This move would create an opportunity for autonomy on the international and regional stage.⁹⁰

However, this political approach moves forward slowly, reflecting on our earlier question, What price did Qatar pay for its soft policy? Qatar's soft power policy's sustainability and viability are of concern.⁹¹ Qatar's policy recently suffered empirical setbacks as it only sometimes contributes to envisaged outcomes. However, Qatar's policy has various positive advantages, such as raising the country's profile globally. Conversely, Qatar also faces additional risks with its neighbouring countries. As of 5th June 2017, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt severed their relationships with Qatar. The blockade resulted from tensions that had been building for many years between Qatar and its neighbors, who were anxious the country was adopting too autonomous a role in its foreign affairs.⁹² This tension continued for almost four years until, in January 2021, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates announced the end of their blockade of Qatar and resumed ties with Doha. The tension began with the establishment of the Al-Jazeera Channel in 1996, which exposed Qatar hugely to the globe. Without a doubt, any country can exercise soft power influence by utilizing a weapon of media, from where a government can promote its desired values and ideas to its audiences. Aljazeera succeeded in establishing itself regionally and globally by building a large base of audiences who trusted its news and information. Consequently, it influenced global political views, minds, and attitudes. Hillary Clinton described Al-Jazeera's strategy as practicing an "information War"⁹³. Furthermore, Clinton added that the number of audiences in the United States who rely on Al-Jazeera as their trustworthy media is increasing, making it a leader influencer in people's attitudes and political beliefs⁹⁴. Such influence did not satisfy Qatar's neighbors, especially with the role that Al-Jazeera played during the Arab Spring when it applied its strategy of information war and influenced the revolutionaries' political views and attitudes. Thus, managing aggressive and assertive neighboring countries has become the most significant Qatari policymakers' objective. The return of a backroom diplomacy policy is essential in strengthening the credentials of Qatar to be effective in dispute resolution, which cannot be resolved quickly via direct dialogue.⁹⁵

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Conclusion

Throughout this article, I examined Qatar's use of soft to formulate foreign policy. Since the failed coup in 1996, the state has successfully turned its foreign policy by developing its cultural aspirations through sport, education, and other cultural aspects externally and internally. Through this discussion, I highlighted different elements and factors that Qatar rely on in its soft power policy as a holistic approach. The concrete and abstract aspects of soft power are all integrated. Thus, giving reasonable consideration to soft power's conceptual quality and tangible elements.

Qatar has set adequate financing and investments for developing universities to attract foreign learners to the country. The country also ensures that every learner can access college and university education until completion. Research centers and laboratories are also developed to promote the high education culture in the country. The winning of the FIFA World Cup football bid for the 2022 matches is also a significant cultural promotion in Qatar. Qatar's designation of the stadiums aims to promote the country's culture with stadiums such as Bayt Stadium designed to resemble the tents the nomads of the region used. Various architects, the Zaha Hadid Architects, Fenwick Iribarren Architects, and Ibrahim M Jaidah, are designing the 2022 world cup football stadiums to enhance the country's culture. Cultural festivals are also set to be performed during the matches. The architectural museums promote the cultural heritage of Qatar. Additionally, the economic capabilities between the UAE and Qatar allow the countries to build their image abroad and at home. Qatar proved itself on the world stage as a small state by overcoming challenges and successfully adopting soft power approach policies.

قوة قطر الناعمة الصاعدة: من الانقلاب الفاشل عام 1996 إلى كأس العالم 2022

مريم إبراهيم الحمادي، قسم العلوم الإنسانية، كلية الآداب والعلوم، جامعة قطر، قطر.

ملخص

تبحث هذه الورقة في استخدام قطر للقوة الناعمة من خلال تسليط الضوء على الضرورات الوطنية لتبني نهج القوة الناعمة في صنع السياسة الخارجية. تتناول الورقة القوة الناعمة من منظور متعدد التخصصات لإظهار كيف طورت دولة قطر سياسة خارجية محكمة منذ الانقلاب الفاشل في عام 1996.

كونها دولة صغيرة في الخليج العربي، ركزت قطر على إثبات نفسها على المسرح العالمي. يشير صعود القوة في قطر إلى كيفية تغلب دولة صغيرة على التحديات، وعلى تحقيق النجاح من خلال تبني القوة الناعمة. تستخدم سياسات القوة الناعمة في قطر مجالات متعددة ومتنوعة منها المجال الأكاديمي والعسكري والمساعدات الخارجية والسياسة الرياضية والتأثير الإعلامي. في هذه الورقة، أناقش كيف تثير استدامة سياسة القوة الناعمة لدولة قطر قلقاً لدى بعض الدول، وكيف تطبق الدولة نهج القوة الناعمة في علاقاتها الدولية، والنتائج التي دفعتها قطر مقابل سياسة القوة الناعمة التي تنتهجها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القوة الناعمة، السياسة الخارجية لدولة قطر، الثقافة القطرية، صنع السياسات في قطر، السياسة الثقافية، الهوية القطرية، المتاحف القطرية.

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