**WHAT COUNTRY IN MODERN TIMES HAS BENEFITED ESPECIALLY FROM SOFT POWER? A QATAR CASE STUDY**

# 1.0 Introduction

Soft power is "the capacity to influence others to get the results one desires by attractiveness rather than force or payment," according to Nye (2004). According to Nye (2004), "there are three major ways one can influence the conduct of others: coercive measures (sticks), inducements and incentives ('carrots'), and allure that causes others to crave what you are seeking. In addition, soft power depends on three major sources: cultural - environments where it is appealing; political ideals - when the advocate upholds them at both locally and globally; and foreign policies - seen as valid and morally authoritative (Ohnesorge, 2019). In this sense, this article contends that Qatar focuses on enticement and "carrots" in its application of soft power. Within its area of operation in the Middle East, Qatar's remarkable political stability in a volatile region, gained from a powerful military partnership with the U.S., and the efficient dispersion of income among its inhabitants, are a big draw. Thousands of individuals in the region are also being influenced by the Aljazeera television network's reputation as the voice of the weak and a modern higher education structure. The amount and extent of Qatar's international donations, sports ventures, and other diplomatic "carrot" initiatives provide a significant push for its endeavor at soft power (Heing, 2019).

# 2.0 Soft Power by Attraction

## 2.1 Dividends of U.S./Qatar Military Alliance

Qatar has certain indirect hard power that renders it appealing within its zone of power in the Middle East, despite the fact that it is not a liberal democracy and is therefore scarcely a practical representation of liberal representative democracy principles that is deserving of international acclaim and attractiveness. This is due to the statement that "Military strength can also be an appeal to individuals who seek to be on the victorious team - or at least desire to prevent being on the wrong side (Larsdotter, 2020, p. 39). Military forces may be employed in humanitarian assistance. In this sense, Qatar has improved its reputation in the continent to the point of serene attraction and amazement, which comprise soft power, as a result of its military partnership with the United States and its hosting of the American military installation, CENTCOM (Gold, 2019, p. 52).

For instance, the military partnership between the United States and Qatar allowed Qatar to participate in a NATO humanitarian mission in Libya in tandem to its hard power involvement in the fall of the Gaddafi dictatorship. Additionally, it protects Qatar from any potential regional threats and maintains the sovereignty and sway of the Al-Thani family because any potential troublemakers would have to face the complete strength of the only global superpower that has a strong interest in Qatar's defense and economy. Second, Qatar can utilize its privilege to assert soft power influence in areas where it can serve as a middleman involving the United States and its Muslim2 and Middle Eastern2 partners who are wary and doubtful of American motives. This is made possible by the military alliance with the United States, which enhances Qatar's public image as a strong sovereign country with the backing and ear of the one and only Major power (Gold, 2019, p. 52).

## 2.2 Progressive Higher Education System

Robust and respected higher education systems that draw multitudes of students to study in U.S. and various western educational establishments are one of the largest causes of appeal that have historically allowed the U.S. and its allied nations to exert soft power. The United States has provided several scholarships to people of other nations over the years through administrative initiatives like the Fulbright and Marshall Programs (Dougherty, 2020). These educational possibilities for host administrations have incalculable advantages in terms of international policy. First, universities of higher learning provide a non-controversial way to mold the thoughts and sentiments of prospective leaders from other nations who will hold prominent roles in their own nations. These elites are more apt to have developed close relationships with their peers in the educational institution where they earned their schooling and are more receptive to negotiation than conflict (Hill & Burke, 2020, p. 21).

Qatar strives to make significant investments in the enhancement of education due to its considerable oil and gas earnings, rendering it the leading country in regard to the proportion of GDP allocated to education.  Furthermore, 93 percent of the population is literate, and the largest proportion of females in the Arab world—88.6 percent—can read and write (Mustafawi et al., 2021, p. 112). The past few decades have seen Qatar actively courting prominent American colleges to create branches there, where they will grant the same diplomas as their American parent institutions. In an attempt to bring in more international schools, Qatar has created an education metropolis that will house all of its academic institutions in one location. Among such institutions are, Carnegie Mellon2, Georgetown22, Virginia Commonwealth22, Weill Cornell22 Medical College, and Texas2 A & M University2 are prominent exceptions (Alrefai, 2018, p. 45).

Since it is evident that these academic institutions would need to reach beyond the limited pool of potential applications from Qatar and rather look to the larger Middle East for possibilities, they have gained a lot of popularity across the Middle East. Within this resides Qatar's soft power influence on Arabic nations and other outsiders drawn to the abovementioned Qatari institutions (Azaz, 2012, p. 25). Since numerous Middle Eastern scholars will be members of the ruling classes in their home nations, the connections they develop with Qataris and other overseas students as well as their time spent residing in Qatar will make them considerably more accepting of Qatari diplomatic policy in the future. Also, Arabs who are afraid to seek university education in Europe due to visa constraints or cultural influences might turn to the universities in Qatar's education metropolis as a respectable substitute. This increases Qatar's standing in the region and its capacity to influence the thinking of prominent Muslims and Middle Easterners in both the present and the future. It is also essential to observe that the majority of the professors at these colleges are Westerners, who are well-positioned to mold the thoughts and emotions of prospective Arab authorities toward tolerance, an aim of Qatar's international relations (Al-Maadheed, 2017, p. 178).

By attracting scholars to seminars that concentrate on the top concerns of the Qatari administration, Qatar not only aids in the development of the prospective authorities of the Middle East but also shapes the diplomatic strategy of the area. For instance, H.E.  Ali-Al Thani hosts yearly conferences in Doha to debate cutting-edge concepts in innovations, discoveries, and technology in his role as Chairman of the Qatar Foundation. The inaugural summit's subject in 2009 was worldwide education and how individuals should work together to accomplish great things. Delegates at these conferences represent both established and up-and-coming speakers from their nations, and they are open to the arguments put out by their Qatari hosts as well as those of like-minded individuals (Qureshi et al., 2022, p. 56).

## 2.3 Aljazeera Media Influence

Qatar was until lately a fairly obscure nation, in contrast to the United States and other significant European countries that are well known for holding particular ideal insights and principles that allow them to exercise soft power dominance throughout the globe. However, the founding of the Aljazeera news corporation by the Qatari authorities in 1996 has provided the nation a level of global exposure never before achieved, as Qatar is now linked with the renowned Aljazeera trademark, which is now instantly identifiable (Arif & Hayat, 2018, p. 84). Any nation's ability to persuade people to adopt its concepts or values largely depends on its ability to emphasize the value of the suggested principles through a medium that the target audience either believes or depends on for information. Through their supremacy of prominent news outlets like CNN, BBC, and Voice of America, to name just a few, the United States and UK have achieved great accomplishment over the decades in spreading their ideologies around the worldwide. Aljazeera, nevertheless, has been a factor in shaping Middle Eastern individuals ideas and thoughts since its founding in 1996, breaking the duopoly of American and British Broadcasting supremacy (Arifianto et al., 2022).

Actuality, Hillary Clinton argued for greater US. Congress funds to carry out what she called the "information war"—which she claimed the U.S. was losing—in a House statement on March 2, 2011, citing the growing impact of Al Jazeera. She acknowledged Al Jazeera's soft power impact by saying that it has been a pioneer in initiatives that are genuinely altering individuals’ perspectives. She stated that “And whether you love it or loathe it, it works pretty well. Al Jazeera's American audience is actually growing as a result of its 'reliable news' content. You might not concur with it, but it makes you believe like you're receiving actual news all the time rather than a ton of advertising, debates amongst political pundits, and other things we do on our media that aren't really very interesting to us, or to people from other countries” (National Public Radio, 2011).

As encapsulated by its tagline, "The View2 and the Other Point2 of View," Aljazeera has been offering its viewers many viewpoints on the "hot button" global problems that contrast the storyline of the western mainstream press. Aljazeera has also developed notoriety for defying Arab press conventions, which refrain from criticizing or challenging authority. Rather, the network is lauded for providing a platform for opposition figures to denounce their oppressive regimes (Pujasari, 2022, p. 198).

Owing to Aljazeera's reporting of the Arab Uprising, Qatar's global prominence has significantly increased, especially in the Middle East. Since its media organization tells and displays the globe's battles for liberty and justice, the typical person on the sidewalks of Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria is most apt to see Qatar as supporting the weak. To support this assertion, Al Jazeera currently gets worldwide praise for its innovative reporting on various issues in the Gulf. It has been the sole Arab broadcasters to successfully engage viewers in the West, debunking the myth that internationalization inevitably entails Western influence (Seib, 2011).

In addition to its internationally distinguished English-language current-events station, which boasts a group of top-tier Western correspondents, Aljazeera has expanded its programming to include sporting events, biographies, local programming, and children's shows. Whereas the network may be well-liked at the State Department canteen in Washington, it has been unjustly accused in some circles of American community of being a jihadi propagandist, which has restricted its growth in the country's media environment. But Aljazeera now has the opportunity to add around 40 million US viewers to its planned Aljazeera America Channel owing to its new takeover of Current TV. Aljazeera's capacity to transmit into the households of millions of Americans2 may significantly alter Americans' perceptions of Muslims2 and the Middle East in particular. If this occurs, it will be unusual in that it will be the unprecedented case in which a smaller nation uses the dominance of its news corporation to sway the global superpower through soft power (BBC, 2013).

# 3.0 “Carrots” for Soft Power

## 3.1 “Carrot” Diplomacy

To raise its regional and global prominence, Qatar exploits its huge wealth from energy and oil resources as an instrument for its diplomatic relations. Qatar, nevertheless, lacks the natural authority that other nations wield over others, among them the religious dominance of Saudi Arabia, the democratic weight of the United States, and the economic impact of China. As a consequence, Qatar is leaning more and more on its socioeconomic strength when negotiating disputes by offering to pay out enormous quantities of money following a peaceful resolution to develop infrastructures and other things (Bayoumy, 2016, p. 7). I term this “Carrot Diplomacy.” For war-torn2 and cash-strapped2 regions, Qatar's offering of "carrots" for reconciliation is a righteous endeavor. Qatar pursues its foreign objectives through two different types of diplomacy. First, there is diplomatic mediation, which attempts to present Qatari as a dependable, unbiased arbitrator who cares about the stability and development of the gulf countries.

Qatar utilizes diplomacy to further its objectives and authority in regions such as Beirut, Palestine, Yemeni, and Sudan, which have historically been dominated by Saudi Arabia, therefore upturning the baton of control and sway of a powerful regional imperial power. Public diplomacy using the press, whereby Aljazeera is positioned as the representative of the general populace and a free outlet for the oppressed, is the second method of diplomacy used by Qatar. Public diplomacy2 and diplomatic efforts are frequently combined, with Al Jazeera emphasizing problems that Qatar resolves. The majority of Qatar's diplomatic efforts try to diffuse crises or reduce tension rather than ultimately end the dispute (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2018).

Nonetheless, the Arab Spring is putting Qatar's strategy to the test, forcing it to forgo its disguise of neutrality and choose a side. As a result, Qatar has developed a reputable regional and global image that belies its tiny size and modest military power owing to a purposeful approach in which it employs both incentives and sticks to influence others (Eddin & Rahma, 2021, p. 94).

## 3.2 Sports

Sports are non-controversial2 instruments that unite people from different cultures and improve the standing and prestige of states that succeed at them or organize spectacular tournaments. For this reason, numerous nations have long made significant investments in the training of their athletes for important international sporting competitions (Vogan, 2018, p. 65). For instance, during the peak of the Cold War, the Olympics turned into a battleground among the East and the West to the extent that certain Eastern Bloc nations, like East Germany2, felt it essential to drug their athletes in an attempt to show that they were more athletically exceptional to their Western2 German peers and, consequently, more ideologically superior (History, 2022). Even though several host nations are unlikely to recover all of their monetary expenditures after organizing these tournaments, the competition to host big sports competitions like the Summer Olympics and the football tournament is tremendous. The international reputation and prominence acquired by effectively hosting large sports competitions is an intuitive and immeasurable factor driving the strong contest to organize these significant sporting occasions. This has a significant impact on how appealing the host nation or the athletically accomplished nation is to other nations, which is an important victory for soft power (Vogan, 2018, p. 65).

Qatar has been actively pursuing out and effectively organizing major athletic events, despite the fact that it is a considerable distance from becoming a prominent global force in any sports. In 2006, it organized the XV Asian Championships with excellent results, and most notably, the 2022 World Cup, despite accusations of vote-buying that threatened to derail this outstanding achievement. Much as South Africa's organization of the World Cup in 2010 was a significant feeling of accomplishment for the whole African landmass, obtaining the privilege and organizing the World Cup has significantly improved Qatar's status and credibility in the Gulf Region as well as among Muslims worldwide (Amara & Bouandel, 2022, p. 243).

The best of a country’s culture and generosity are on showcase when it hosts major sporting tournaments, and based on how appealing it is, it should substantially improve the reputation of the host country. The significance of the spellbinding fire performances and acrobatic performances at the Beijing2 Olympics as well as the Queen of England's2 James Bond-themed2 appearance at the London Olympics2 cannot be understated. According to Joseph Nye, one of the major contributors of soft power, especially in locations where it is appealing, is culture (The Peninsula, 2023).

With commercial agreements with renowned European sporting heavyweights and the full acquisition of significant European football teams, Qatar is also utilizing sports to increase its soft power outside of its borders. By accepting a $190 million advertising jersey endorsement deal, FC Barcelona, for instance, embraced the Qatar Foundation badge as a replacement of the UNICEF insignia in 2010, breaking with more than a century of heritage. Qatar also acquired Paris Saint-German2, a renowned but struggling French football team, in 2011, and they have invested heavily to make them one of the Europe's great clubs. As a result, Qatar is discreetly raising its international reputation through football diplomacy by employing its vast financial capabilities to fund in an enormously renowned international sport (Azzali, 2016, p. 95).

# 4.0 Challenges to Qatari Soft Power

## 4.1 Qatar’s Questionable Friends

With numerous Islamist organizations around the Middle East, Qatar has developed close ties and exerts significant sway, mostly by offering "carrots" to them. These organizations comprise Hamas2 in Gaza2 and Muslim Brotherhood affiliates in Egypt, Tunisia2, Libya, and to a lesser degree Turkey. To the chagrin of these nations, Qatar also hosts a number of Brotherhood/Islamist2 dissidents from nearby Gulf nations including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Given that Qatar openly supports regional Islamist states financially and morally, any violation of democratic principles by those governments will seriously harm Qatar's reputation abroad and undermine their ability to use soft power (Mohtar, 2014, p. 49).

Qatar's reputation will be improved throughout the gulf and become a key source of appeal, if Qatar's Islamist partners are successful at strengthen democratic principles and fulfill the expectations of their population. But , past headlines in Egypt, where masses of Egyptians flocked to the roads to protest the ouster of Muslim Brotherhood ruler Morsi for giving up on his goal for democratization, do not bode well for Qatar's standing in Egypt and internationally. Regarding this, Nye cautions that "The prestige and trustworthiness of a nation or organization aiming to wield soft-power sway is essential, notably due to the "conundrum of plenty". So, material that is considered manipulation may not only be received with disgust but may also be ineffective if it damages the image of the information's source (Mohtar, 2014, p. 49).

# 5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, In order to impose its presence in the region and the world, Qatar has employed "carrots" and enticement as its main soft power strategies. The country's soft power attractiveness in the Mediterranean is mostly due to its robust military partnership with the United States, efficient redistribution of income, progressive educational structure, and Aljazeera news organization. Moreover, Qatar has expanded its domain of control outside the Middle East through bilateral talks, expenditures in sports, and global charity.

Furthermore, Qatar's soft power has been significantly boosted by its success in organizing the 2022 World Cup. The competition has given Qatar the chance to present its culture, heritage, and technology accomplishments to an international audience. Also, it has resulted in favorable media attention, enhancing Qatar's standing abroad. Additionally, the World Cup has given Qatar the opportunity to develop and establish new diplomatic ties, solidifying its standing as a major actor in the gulf and beyond.

Furthermore, Qatar will benefit more from maintaining its key points of interest if it wants to keep using soft power to influence others inside its circle of sway. In this context, it should reconsider its assistance for Islamic organizations that the U.S. is wary of or opposes in order to reconcile its local international policy objectives with those of its main security donor. Qatar should speed up the implementation of the country's long overdue2 democratic2 reform measures in order to be considered legitimate as an advocate of the progressive change movement2 that is presently engulfing through the Gulf. At the very least, it should allow elective2 municipal and legislative elections2 with real constitutional powers and release all political dissidents2.

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