

Research Article

Soft Power and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar

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Abstract

A growing body of literature recognizes the significance of soft power in Qatar's foreign policy. There is, however, limited research on the long-term impact that occurs from the over-dependency on the soft power. The popular rhetoric in most literature expresses that Qatar uses its soft power, often in the form of sports diplomacy, to meet its foreign policy objectives. The review paper attempts to identify to what extent the 2022 World Cup can be understood from the soft power perspective, and the role it plays in Qatar's foreign policy formulation and implementation, as well as the significance of soft power in comprehending Qatar's mega investments in the sporting sector. The first section elaborates into sport diplomacy functions and its origins. The second section elaborates on Qatar's involvement with International Sports. The third and arguably the most important section deals with soft power and sports diplomacy. The paper offers an up-to-date review of current studies about Qatar's international strategy for sport, whether for investment and diversification of state revenues or political and policy diplomacy motifs.

Keywords: Soft Power; Mega-Sporting Events; World Cup; Review; Qatar; Sports Diplomacy

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مقالة بحثية

القوة الناعمة وكأس العالم 2022 في قطر

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ملخص

يرى عدد متزايد من الأدبيات أهمية القوة الناعمة في السياسة الخارجية القطرية. غير أن هناك دراسات محدودة تتعلق بالتأثير طويل الأمد للاعتماد المفرط على القوة الناعمة. والخطاب الرائج في أغلب الأدبيات أن قطر تستخدم قوتها الناعمة، في شكل دبلوماسية رياضية أحياناً من أجل تحقيق أهداف الدبلوماسية الخارجية. تحاول هذه المراجعة معرفة كأس العالم 2022 من منظور القوة الناعمة، والدور الذي تلعبه هذه الأخيرة في تشكيل وممارسة السياسة الخارجية القطرية، بالإضافة إلى دلالة القوة الناعمة في فهم استثمارات قطر الضخمة في القطاع الرياضي. يبحث القسم الأول في الدبلوماسية الرياضية ووظائفها. ويتناول الفصل الثاني انخراط قطر في الرياضة الدولية. القسم الثالث الذي يمكن اعتباره الأكثر أهمية يتعلق بالقوة الناعمة والدبلوماسية الرياضية. تُقدم الورقة مراجعة حديثة للدراسات الحالية المتعلقة بالاستراتيجية القطرية للرياضة، سواء المتعلقة بالاستثمارات وتنوع إيرادات الدولة أو المرتبطة بأهداف السياسة والدبلوماسية الخارجية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القوة الناعمة، الفعاليات الرياضية الضخمة، كأس العالم، الألعاب الأولمبية، قطر، الدبلوماسية الرياضية

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© 2021، جيمس، الجهة المرخص لها: دار نشر جامعة قطر. تم نشر هذه المقالة البحثية وفقاً لشروط Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). تسمح هذه الرخصة بالاستخدام غير التجاري، وينبغي نسبة العمل إلى صاحبه، مع بيان أي تعديلات عليه. كما تتبع حرية نسخ، وتوزيع، ونقل العمل بأي شكل من الأشكال، أو بأية وسيلة، ومزجه وتحويله والبناء عليه، طالما يُنسب العمل الأصلي إلى المؤلف.

1. Introduction

Qatar, in recent years, has been investing billions in global sports. In this review, soft power and sports diplomacy theories are studied and elucidated, equally indispensable to identifying the rationale to utilize sport as a functional instrument in their foreign policy approach.

American political scientist Joseph S Nye initially created the term soft power. Nye highlighted the United States as the lone superpower in a post-Cold War world. Nye contends deep-rooted dependence on martial might and fiscal affluence is inadequate alone to realize a nation's foreign policy objectives¹. New forms of power resources are necessary in a progressively globalized world governed by quick changes and developments in technology and infrastructures. Due to these advances, Nye reasons that nations should amend themselves to novel trials that the information age holds.

Instead of simply intimidating other nations to act against their will via military intimidations or financial sanctions, this should be considered. Nations must pursue power through attraction. Nye labels it as soft power. The "ability for one country to get other countries to want what it wants"². It is possible to impact others in different ways; firstly, it is by threats of coercion, secondly by incentives and payments, and ultimately, via the power of attraction. Soft power convinces the opposite party that they would like the very desires and objectives corresponding to the host nations via peaceful methods instead of intimidation. Consequently, the objective is to realize approbation and create an appeal of the host's ethics, philosophy, and strategies. A nation uses soft power to sway the behavior of others³.

Therefore, this review paper will attempt to elaborate on the notion of soft power and why it is vital to comprehend Qatar's significant investments in the sporting sector.

Sports can be a foundation of soft power. By holding sporting events, particularly mega-events like the Olympics or the FIFA World Cup, nations receive significant global attention. Through this they may platform appeal via the collective cultural values of sport⁴. It can be considered a method of public diplomacy as a nation attempts to generate a favorable imprint and gain recognition amongst foreign spectators⁵.

Since 1993, Qatar has held more than 450 international tournaments⁶. It includes regional competitions, including the 2006 Asian games and notable global events like the UCI Road Cycling World Championships in 2016, the World Athletics Championship in 2019, and the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Therefore, Qatar is now a dominant center for global sports events alongside modern venues and educational amenities. Qatar identifies the hosting of global competitions as a root of soft power and

1 - Nye, Joseph S. "Soft power." *Foreign policy* 80 (1990): pp. 153-171.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

4 - Grix, Jonathan, and Donna Lee. "Soft power, sports mega-events and emerging states: The lure of the politics of attraction." *Global society* 27, no. 4 (2013), pp. 521-536.

5 - Ibid.

6 - "Sport in Qatar." Government Communications Office, 29/7/21, accessed on 3/2/21 at: <https://www.gco.gov.qa/en/focus/sport/>.

action towards their economic diversification process⁷.

By accommodating sport mega-events, nations may highlight their distinctive cultural, social, and political principles globally via the framework of sport. The FIFA World Cup in 2018 in Russia had more than 3.5 billion spectators⁸. This presents an exceptional prospect for nations to platform their appeal for international spectators. It may also present an occasion for nations to amend deleterious stereotypes and misunderstandings regarding their nation via presenting its definite cultural, social, and political principles⁹.

2. Sports Diplomacy Explicated

The political usage of sports by nations is a space in International Relations, which has been disregarded based on the survey of the literature in this review. The majority of the literature concerning the association between sports and international society was by specialists in history, sociology, sports, economics, and law. Levermore contends in “Sports and International Relations” that there is sustained negligence of the influence of sports on a global scale by researchers of I. R.¹⁰. Murray contends that usage of sport-diplomacy has optimistic potential; however, it is fundamentally neglected as a range of theory and practice in diplomatic scholarships¹¹. In a progressively globalized realm, nations are contending for attention and authority with numerous actors, and hence sports diplomacy should be utilized as an asset in a nation’s armory of foreign policy apparatuses.

Traditional diplomacy may be defined as “the conduct of relations between sovereign states withstanding in world politics by official agents and by peaceful means”¹². The custom of diplomacy is to attain a nation’s foreign policy objectives via passive methods. The cornerstone of traditional diplomacy is grounded on advancing and developing a state’s fundamental ethics and principles. Diplomats function as a crucial part in upholding associations and decreasing conflict amongst nations in a chaotic and belligerent geopolitical scenario¹³.

There are acute inconsistencies amid sports and diplomacy to indicate the same. While diplomacy attempts to diminish conflict and preserve affairs between states, a dominant component of sports is contending and being the victor¹⁴.

It is contended that sports promote conceptions of tribalism and nationalism; contrastingly, it can

7 - “Sports Sector Strategy 2011-2016.” Qatar Olympic Committee, July 2011, accessed on 3/2/21 at: https://blogs.napier.ac.uk/qatar2022/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2015/06/sports_sector_strategy_final-English.pdf.

8 - Grix, Jonathan, and Donna Lee, Op.cit.

9 - Grix, Jonathan, Paul Michael Brannagan, and Donna Lee. “Qatar’s Global Sports Strategy: Soft Power and the 2022 World Cup.” In *Entering the Global Arena*, pp. 97-110. Palgrave Pivot, Singapore, 2019.

10 - Budd, Adrian, and Roger Levermore, eds. *Sport and international relations: an emerging relationship* (Routledge, 2004).

11 - Murray, Stuart. “The two halves of sports-diplomacy.” *Diplomacy & statecraft* 23, no. 3 (2012): pp. 576-592.

12 - Bull, Hedley. *The anarchical society: a study of order in world politics*. Macmillan international Higher education, 1977. p. 156.

13 - Ibid.

14 - Murray, Stuart. Ibid.

also be assumed that the communal models, culture, and ideals of transnational sports may unite global audiences, creating an enhanced understanding amongst people globally (DeLay, 1999)¹⁵.

Consequently, sports diplomacy is an added method for a nation to accomplish its foreign policy goals. Murray (2012) asserts seven explanations for nations to practice sport-diplomacy. Sport-diplomacy provides a novel and advanced method for nations to touch the community domestically and internationally. Traditional diplomacy is condemned for maintaining antiquated, selective approaches to the general public. Sport-diplomacy proposes unique and positive modes to involve the community and validates that the state is following a contemporary form of diplomacy. Mega-events like the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup draw billions of spectators globally.

The drive regarding public diplomacy has shaped fresh opportunities for diplomacy, and novel hybrid systems have materialized. Sport-diplomacy is such a hybrid. Murray outlines sport-diplomacy as “the use of sportsmen and events to engage, inform and create a favorable image amongst foreign publics and organizations to shape their perceptions in a way that is more conducive to achieving a government’s foreign policy goal”¹⁶.

The presenting of such prestigious functions and missions permits nations to platform their cultural, communal, and political values and generate advantageous imprints among transcontinental audiences. It may be utilized to modify deleterious stereotypes concerning a nation.

The Beijing Olympics in 2008 and the FIFA World Cup in 2006 in Germany and are instances of immensely prosperous mega-events when the host-states utilized a robust and soft power approach. Germany positively utilized the World Cup as a public diplomacy instrument to amend Germany’s unenthusiastic stereotypical appearance by presenting their nation as a welcoming and hospitable state. The state presented numerous effective promotions throughout the World Cup, intending to construct affirmative imageries of Germany nationally and globally, which spawned nationwide contentment¹⁷.

3. Soft Power and Sports Diplomacy

Qatar’s sports stratagem will be placed in a broader framework of soft power and sports diplomacy concepts. Qatar’s government utilizes sport as an instrument in their diplomatic policies, as the goal is to create an appeal among foreign audiences via the collective beliefs of sport.

Qatar’s investment and participation in international sport is an essential component of its foreign policy, as the pursuance of soft power is essential. Soft power can influence beings to have very desires similar to the host via attraction (Nye, 1990). Qatar investing in sports needs to be observed in a more extensive foreign policy framework¹⁸.

15 - DeLay, Jeanine A. *The curveball and the pitch: Sport diplomacy in the age of global media*. Ann Arbor, MI: Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 1999.

16 - Murray, Stuart. “The two halves of sports-diplomacy.” *Op.cit.*, p. 581.

17 - Grix, Jonathan, and Barrie Houlihan. “Sports Mega-Events as Part of a Nation’s Soft Power Strategy: The Cases of Germany (2006) and the UK (2012).” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 16, no. 4 (2013): pp. 572–596.

18 - Nye, Joseph S. “Soft power.” *Foreign policy* 80 (1990): pp. 153-171.

Due to its petite proportion of the populace and nation, Qatar is distinctly conscious they do not possess the aggregate power aptitudes to protect the nation from external threats on their own. Consequently, Qatar has, through significant efforts, created a solid diplomatic relation with a plethora of nations. Their military cooperation with the U.S. and having the most notable American naval base in the Middle East, CENTCOM, allows military security to correspond to regional danger and preserve the influence and ability of the monarchy¹⁹. The Qatar-US union is also a reservoir of soft power in the regionally and universally, for it appears to be a secure and pacific nation with the consent of a global superpower. This allows Qatar to perform the role of a mediator among the U.S. and different nations in the region.

Qatar identifies as a nonpartisan character within the Middle East and hence maintains excellent relationships with numerous states and groups. Due to its commendable ties, Qatar is frequently a mediator in disputes and struggles in the area, therefore enhancing its political position and soft power in the region. It is represented as a center for discourse and reconciliation among the Taliban and Afghan régime. Qatar's media network Al-Jazeera is also an imperative instrument in their public diplomacy. The network maintains a decent standing locally and on the international front. Al-Jazeera provides an augmented authority, particularly in the Middle East, as it provides plausible, and a distinctive rationale compared to western media. Consequently, Al-Jazeera functions as a powerful public diplomacy mechanism for Qatar, as it attempts to inform and convince the public, whereby improving Qatar's appeal and soft power²⁰.

Qatar has also been the location of numerous prestigious international conferences, including the WTO Doha series in 2001 and the 2012 United Nations Climate Change Conference. It provides global proximity as a character who operates for multilateral negotiations among states, therefore improving their soft power perception.

Qatar attempts to display the nation as a contemporary, open-minded, and highly modernized state that deviates from the MENA region's conflict-laden locations²¹. The hosting of numerous global tournaments is a critical approach to imprinting the nation as an unrivaled center for global sports tournaments and gaining global perception by accommodating prosperous proceedings in ultramodern sites²². Therefore, presenting sports events efficiently permits them to design and fashion novel connections with other states²³.

Qatar's opportunity to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup has provided an unimaginable possibility of enhancing their standing globally and conducting diplomacy through sports. This allows to produce novel relationships with countries, particularly in the west. The FIFA World Cup is arguably the most

19 - Antwi-Boateng, Osman. "The rise of Qatar as a soft power and the challenges." *European Scientific Journal* 9, no. 31 (2013): pp. 350-368.

20 - Nye, Joseph S. "Soft power." *Foreign policy* 80 (1990): pp. 153-171.

21 - Amara, Mahfoud. "2006 Qatar Asian Games: A 'Modernization' Project from above?" *Sport in Society* 8, no. 3 (2005): pp. 493-514.

22 - Qatar Olympic Committee, op.cit.

23 - "Sports Sector Strategy 2011-2016." Qatar Olympic Committee, July 2011

critical cultural engagement globally. Approximately 3.572 billion spectators, greater than half of the global populace, viewed the FIFA World Cup in Russia in 2018.

Therefore, the FIFA World Cup is a reasonably worldwide phenomenon and an exemplary model of the growing associations, relationships among the national and the international. Staging a triumphant World Cup can improve Qatar's status and appeal in the region and beyond.

It implements Qatar's foreign policy approach of pursuing soft power in the global system. By staging the World Cup, Qatar aspires to portray its financial, legislative, and cultural dynamism.

Qatar's stake in global sport is additionally combined with its branding and soft power strategy. Ginesta and Eugenio (2014) designated Qatar's past sponsorship of F.C. Barcelona as a feature of the nation's branding policy. Moreover, Qatar's acquirement of PSG is a fundamental part of sports diplomacy and soft power policy²⁴.

Linking beside Paris and its ethos allows Qatar to upturn its appearance and impact universally. With significant investments from the Qatari state, PSG is now a leading authority in European football. Based on data from Deloitte, PSG's revenue expanded from €100.8 million in 2008/2009 to €541.7 million in the 2017-2018 season²⁵.

PSG also acquired various football superstars below Qatar's control, counting the world record transfer of Brazilian player Neymar for €222 million and the French player Kylian Mbappe for €180 million. Moreover, the latest free transfer of Lionel Messi from F.C. Barcelona to PSG in August 2021 has been cited to be the most landmark football transfer decision. Messi's arrival to PSG is going to have a significant positive impact on Qatar's soft power apparatus, as many cite that this move would not have been possible without the Qatari leadership at the French club.

Qatar is administering sports diplomacy, as the correlation with such professionals will bring forth a more widespread international allure to the state, thus improving its soft power²⁶. Qatar has realized football's enormous international appeal as an instrument to improve its standing and influence²⁷.

The Aspire Academy is an added origin of soft power attraction in Qatar. It has modern amenities, specialists in sports science, and highly qualified global scouts and coaches. Its extraordinary amenities have drawn many eminent football clubs like Manchester United, Everton FC, F.C. Bayern München, and Liverpool FC; they appropriated the amenities for practice throughout the winter interim (Aspire Academy, 2021)²⁸. Qatar's usage of sporting diplomacy is viewed in its relations to various global football players. Certain professionals have a widespread global charm. Sid Lowe, a renowned football journalist,

24 - Ginesta, Xavier, and Jordi de San Eugenio. "The use of football as a country branding strategy. Case study: Qatar and the Catalan sports press." *Communication & Sport* 2, no. 3 (2014): pp. 225-241.

25 - Ross, Calum, Christopher Winn, Chris Wood, and Tom Hammond. "Bullseye Football Money League." Deloitte Sports. Deloitte Sports Business Group, January 2019.

26 - Murray, Stuart. "The two halves of sports-diplomacy." *Diplomacy & statecraft* 23, no. 3 (2012): pp. 576-592.

27 - Ibid.

28 - "WHO WE ARE." Aspire Academy official website - who we are, July 2021

noticed that Zinedine Zidane's admission as an ambassador for Qatar's World Cup bid provided an "emotional appeal" that were deficient off²⁹.

4. Qatar's Rendezvous with International Sports

Qatar differs considerably from former nations which hosted mega sporting events previously. The majority of the previous nations are sizeable nations; Qatar is a smaller state in the Persian Gulf with a population of only 2.4 million³⁰.

Hence, Qatar's emergence to hosting international sporting events is an exciting development in the arena of international relations, as nations participate significantly in sports to utilize global charm and attractiveness as an instrument of public diplomacy. Qatar's quest for global sporting events becomes more visible as they are investing in sports as a policy tool. However, one may argue it is still a principally overlooked matter in international politics. States in the 21st century utilize sports as a feasible basis of diplomacy as it positively affects their universal character.

While the literature on Qatar's rendezvous with international sports subsists, however, there are select notable pieces that will be mentioned in this review paper. Rolim Silva (2014) studied the founding of the Qatar National Olympic Committee. Sports is understood as an indispensable instrument for Qatar's nation-building procedure and has contributed significantly to creating a national identity. Holding global sporting events, investing in infrastructure and sports amenities were utilized to gain global recognition and was an essential fragment of Qatar's method to upsurge the nation's international silhouette³¹.

Amara's (2005) case study of the 2006 Asian games is arguably the initial scholarship on Qatar's stratagem to transform into a global sports hub. Amara has used document analysis on the political discussion of Qatar's motivations for holding the 2006 Asian games. Initially, it reconnoiters the geopolitical condition of the Gulf, as the nation-state construction procedure in Qatar and its adjacent nations are examined. Subsequently, it guises the "Sportification" of the Persian Gulf and the case study of the 2006 Asian games. Amara contends Qatar's society should be understood via a social contract among the nation and residents as the state provides socio-economic constancy in the interchange for political privileges. Due to Qatar's massive petroleum and gas reserves upheld financial development, permanence, political and social stability³².

While Qatar may survive based on its rentier-based economic system, it will take steps to consider economic diversification in order to avoid resource dependency.

29 - Lowe, Sid. "Sid Lowe: Zidane Energizes Qatar's World Cup Bid." Sports Illustrated. Sports Illustrated, September 2010.

30 - "Qatar." Central intelligence agency. Central Intelligence Agency, January 2021. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/qatar/>.

31 - Silva, Luis Henrique Rolim. "The establishment of the Qatar National Olympic Committee: Building the national sport identity." *International Journal of the History of Sport* 31, no. 3 (2014): pp. 306-319.

32 - Amara, Mahfoud. "2006 Qatar Asian Games: A 'Modernization' Project from above?" *Sport in Society* 8, no. 3 (2005): pp. 493-514.

Therefore, Qatar has begun substantial investment into sports. Qatar's reasons for holding the 2006 Asian games may be understood from this framework. Rendering to Amara, Qatar investing in sports is related to its constant modernization procedure. Holding global sports events will encourage the tourist segment, upturn foreign direct investment, and entice highly skilled migrants³³.

Campbell³⁴, Reiche and Tinaz (2019) examined Qatar's naturalization policy, as sportspersons born in other nations are then naturalized as citizens so that they may compete for Qatar at global sporting events³⁵. This is understood in the framework of globalization, as sport is an international spectacle. Victory at such events is linked to augmented international reputation. The naturalization policy of sportspersons is extensive. Citizenship in Qatar has a patriotic viewpoint where it is assumed to be linked with the tribal identity. These sportspersons are Qatari nationals via naturalization; however, they are not the recipient of the rights as Qatari-born citizens and are conceded citizenship temporarily. Ginesta and Eugenio (2014) observed Qatar's state branding policy via sports. It is understood that sports and, particularly football are a crucial segment for Qatari to uphold the perceptions of the state abroad³⁶.

A qualitative analysis of Qatar's sports branding strategy is completed, and it focuses on Qatar's association with F.C. Barcelona via sponsorship by Qatar Foundation. Association with a gigantic international football club like F.C. Barcelona enables Qatar to acquire transnational notice and pursues to promote its presence on the global stage.

Paul Brannagan and Richard Giulianotti (2014:2018) observed Qatar's rendezvous with global sports and the 2022 FIFA World Cup via the concept of globalization and Nye's concept of soft power. They initiate their notions of "glocal consciousness and "soft disempowerment." The initial suggests how countries perceive oneself vis-à-vis the methods of globalization³⁷. The final identifies a condition where states undergo a reduction of desirability, estrange, transgress, or offend other nations, causing "soft disempowerment". Their investigation was founded on a thematic examination with comprehensive interviews with prominent sporting bureaucrats in Qatar, examination of important documents, and international media articles concerning Qatar's association with global sports. The three predominant themes identified by the authors are as follows. They are displaying Qatar's authority as a micro-state, foretelling concepts of peace, security, integrity, and lastly, challenging Qatar's national health crisis. They contend all the themes will be understood in linking with "glocal consciousness" and the chase of

33 - Ibid.

34 - Campbell, Rook. "Staging globalization for national projects: Global sport markets and elite athletic transnational labour in Qatar." *International review for the sociology of sport* 46, no. 1 (2011): pp. 45-60.

35 - Reiche, Danyel, and Cem Tinaz. "Policies for naturalization of foreign-born athletes: Qatar and Turkey in comparison." *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 11, no. 1 (2019): pp. 153-171.

36 - Ginesta, Xavier, and Jordi de San Eugenio. "The use of football as a country branding strategy. Case study: Qatar and the Catalan sports press." *Communication & Sport* 2, no. 3 (2014): pp. 225-241.

37 - Brannagan, Paul Michael, and Richard Giulianotti. "Qatar, global sport and the 2022 FIFA world cup." In *Leveraging Legacies from Sports Mega-Events: Concepts and Cases*, pp. 154-165. Palgrave Pivot, London, 2014.

soft power. The findings indicate that Qatar will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup as a prospect to platform the nation as a ground-breaking, technological, and contemporary state³⁸.

This may allow the authors to portray the region and themselves differently, often dominated by an orientalist narrative. While the writers contend that the FIFA World Cup 2022 will be a foundation of magnetism and augmented soft power, it may also be the principal to a reduction in the magnetism of the nation, or also known as “soft disempowerment.” The authors initiated a systematic framework for examining the linking of soft power and soft disempowerment. The authors’ motivation to ascertain and theorize the ‘soft power–soft disempowerment nexus’ is due to the nonexistence of specific identification and review of the diversity of results, including unfavorable consequences, which soft power policies maintain³⁹.

The authors pertained this analytical model in varied global settings to examine soft power policies and results. Ensuing, the article progresses the conceptualization of soft disempowerment to comprehend how adverse side effects may emerge and how it can impend and hinders nations’ efforts to exert soft power.

Finally, the work utilizes Qatar as the descriptive case study to progress and authenticate the analytical model and hypothesize that an interpretation of the state’s soft power strategies has empowered and disempowering outcomes. It gives prominence to the all-encompassing negative disposition fortified by the nation’s undertakings in global sport and the acquirement of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The 2022 World Cup is chiefly proposed to place Qatar as an attractive international tourist destination, but consequently, it has attracted global attention to the state’s problematic human rights record.

Danyel Reiche (2015) examined Qatar’s reasons for investing in sports as a local and foreign policy instrument. The methodology comprises thematic analysis of academic literature, newspapers, and semi-structured interviews. Reiche contends Qatar’s national reasons for financing the sports segment result from their impending need to diversify economically⁴⁰.

It is understood that hosting international sports events will stimulate the tourism sector while drawing foreign direct investment and highly skilled workers. It will also lead to the development of the nation’s infrastructure. Reiche positions that investment in sports is a feature of Qatar’s defense and security strategy from the foreign policy perspective. Qatar can acquire global identification and create more significant bilateral ties by turning into a renowned hub for global sporting events and investment in sports.

Reiche assesses how the sport is used as a foreign policy tool to form relationships with numerous

38 - Brannagan, Paul Michael, and Richard Giulianotti. “The soft power–soft disempowerment nexus: the case of Qatar.” *International Affairs* 94, no. 5 (2018): pp. 1139-1157.

39 - Brannagan, Paul Michael, and Richard Giulianotti. “Soft power and soft disempowerment: Qatar, global sport and football’s 2022 World Cup finals.” *Leisure studies* 34, no. 6 (2015): pp. 703-719.

40 - Reiche, Danyel. “Investing in sporting success as a domestic and foreign policy tool: the case of Qatar.” *International journal of sport policy and politics* 7, no. 4 (2015): pp. 489-504.

nations to advance soft power for national security purposes. This article is valuable as it complements the literature on sport in Qatar by specifying a wide-ranging investigation of the country's aspirations to develop into a prosperous sports nation. This research is significant as the world of sport fluctuates, and mega sports events are progressively accommodated in developing countries.

From a parallel disposition, Antwi-Boateng (2013) identifies sports as a method by which Qatar is trailing soft power in the global arena. Boateng positions that Qatar having the privileges to hold the FIFA World Cup in 2022 has caused an augmentation of its image and reputation globally. Qatar investing in international football via sponsorship contracts with prominent European football clubs and the purchase of Paris Saint-Germain. These are a portion of its tactical proposal to proliferate its worldwide authority and impact via the utilization of sports. Nevertheless, Qatar's deficiency of egalitarian improvement and weak humanitarian and labor records leads to damaging reputations. The author believes such issues should be addressed before hosting prestigious events to avoid any possible room for critique. Qatar uses soft power influence through attractions⁴¹.

The source of attraction comprises Qatar's political constancy, resultant of its military coalition with the U.S., and effectual financial policies for its citizens. Qatar provides the ensuing "attractions": the effectiveness of the Aljazeera Network, "carrot diplomacy," and substantial foreign aid. The unmaintainable path of "carrot" diplomacy along with a move to hard power in deciding conflicts is a new facet of its foreign policy.

Osman indicates that Qatar highlights an anomaly as it demonstrates the power that is significantly smaller than its size and thus indicates how a smaller nation may surpass its geographical limitations in exerting soft power.

James Dorsey follows Qatar's rendezvous with global sports and the FIFA World Cup 2022 via a sequence of articles called "The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer." Dorsey also published articles that center on Qatar's disputes, soft power objectives, and sports stratagem. This includes Qatar's debatable migrant labor system, and its limited amendment has caused extensive condemnation from global media and human rights organizations. Dorsey believes that Qatar needs to uphold the modern and progressive image it has created for itself by solving or attempting to address the numerous humanitarian issues. However, as the findings suggest, there is limited action on behalf of the state, and this lack of action is affecting Qatar's credibility in front of the global audience it seeks to impress⁴².

Qatar needs to create an appropriate mechanism by which it can respond to constructive criticism, which will only aid in promoting its international image. Qatar has drawn attention to its questionable human rights records by international trade unions, human rights groups by hosting the tournament. Dorsey believes Qatar should attempt to balance the soft power-dictate to implant it positively at numerous levels in the international community.

Kaifi (2015) provides an exciting insight into Qatar's use of soft power and its humanitarian issues.

41 - Antwi-Boateng, Osman. "The rise of Qatar as a soft power and the challenges." *European Scientific Journal* 9, no. 31 (2013): pp. 350-368.

42 - Dorsey, James M. "The 2022 World Cup: a potential monkey wrench for change." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 31, no. 14 (2014): pp. 1739-1754.

The author believes Qatar demonstrates soft power by attracting diverse global institutions while consecutively trying to improve international recognition and image. Kaifi uses the 2022 FIFA World Cup to demonstrate how Qatar has successfully enhanced its internal and external reputations via these actions. The author assumes Qatar's economy and international character will progress by hosting these significant events. The piece then highlights how such events may attract potential investors and investments⁴³.

Koch (2018) contests the state-centric conventions fabricated into the soft power approach by applying an event ethnography of Qatar's 2016 UCI Road Cycling World Championships. The author examines how geopolitical identity narratives regarding Qatar, and the Gulf region, socialize at different measures and via innumerable contingent occurrences at the event. The article attempts to identify how such narratives are created and confronted, considerably and conversationally, by sportspersons, audiences, and metropolitan residents. Sporting events are critical places of geopolitical meetings: subjects and spaces are not prearranged but dynamically established via the public's interfaces in the host cities. The leadership of the Arabian Peninsula has increasingly pursued to hold globalized sporting events to transmit a multicultural and contemporary perception of the region. Such attempts are characteristically understood as instances of nations implementing soft power⁴⁴.

Krzyzaniak (2018) assessed three cases of small states which lately sought to reach higher arenas on the global stage: Azerbaijan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. The analysis specified states can create soft power by accompanying the world's best club football teams and why several are more effective than others. The author states that nations have established a novel method of augmenting soft power by subsidizing elite football clubs. In terms of methodology, the study used qualitative analysis of the experiences of Azerbaijan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. The results explain how sponsoring the jerseys is appealing to nations and theorizes the circumstances in which sponsorship is effective. Specifically, sponsoring numerous teams and teams with preexisting brands results in more significant soft power benefits⁴⁵.

Rookwood (2019) elaborated the discernments of Qatar's aptness to host a prosperous sports event host. Simultaneously, the author attempts to highlight organizational trials fronting Qatar leading up to the World Cup⁴⁶. This work is bordered nearby insights of state marking and soft power. It appeals to the proficiencies of numerous crucial demographics that may provide valuable insight into Qatar's World Cup. This paper can be deemed vital as it assesses Qatar in the context of the 2022 World Cup and its association to soft power and nation branding⁴⁷.

43 - Kaifi, Maryam M. "Qatar's Use of Soft Power Has Led to a 21st Century Slave State: A Leadership Dilemma." *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (2015): p. 175.

44 - Koch, Natalie. "The geopolitics of sport beyond soft power: event ethnography and the 2016 cycling world championships in Qatar." *Sport in society* 21, no. 12 (2018): pp. 2010-2031.

45 - Krzyzaniak, John S. "The soft power strategy of soccer sponsorships." *Soccer & Society* 19, no. 4 (2018): pp. 498-515.

46 - Brannagan, Paul Michael, and Joel Rookwood. "Sports mega-events, soft power and soft disempowerment: international supporters' perspectives on Qatar's acquisition of the 2022 FIFA World Cup finals." *International journal of sport policy and politics* 8, no. 2 (2016): pp. 173-188.

47 - Rookwood, Joel. "Access, security and diplomacy: Perceptions of soft power, nation branding and the organizational challenges facing

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, by observing Qatar's sports diplomacy via soft power theory, this review paper reviewed how Qatar utilizes sports diplomacy to generate clear perceptions of the nation amongst international audiences while gaining international appeal and soft power. The limitations of soft power and sport diplomacy (which are concepts or frameworks, rather than theories per se) often fall short of comprehending the state and non-state actors' agendas when engaging with sport (for business, political or purely sporting reasons). Soft power (particularly when it comes to analyzing the GCC region) seems to become an all-encompassing term for nation branding, international & public diplomacy, "sport-watching".

By rendering on vital records from Qatar's government, and secondary sources like articles and journals, it is apparent that Qatar views its sports policy as a necessary tool to produce novel relationships with nations globally and improve their standing and rank. The sports policy is additionally a necessary component of their 2030 vision that aims at Qatar transforming into a superior nation by 2030 in order to achieve their national vision. Qatar's sports diplomacy endures and will also be witnessed through a collection of upcoming global sport events. Qatar will hold global sports events like the FIFA World Cup as a decisive approach to label the nation as a modern core for global sports competitions and obtain global identification via hosting triumphant events⁴⁸.

Moreover, Qatar administers sports diplomacy by funding profoundly in international sport. This is highly related to their image branding and soft power strategy, as international football clubs bestow them with unique branding possibilities⁴⁹.

By identification with distinguished football clubs like Paris St. Germain, Qatar earns global recognition and attempts to expand its global status and appeal among international audiences.

Qatar's sports diplomacy attempt is rather grand; there has been increased global attention since it acquired the rights to host the FIFA World Cup. However, it has not entirely been a favorable experience as the new international recognition has also brought an enhanced examination of Qatar's domestic policies. In particular, Qatar's humanitarian issues have been portrayed at a large scale globally, which in turn can provide the right momentum to institute reform that will benefit all involved. Subsequently, it has hindered global attraction and soft power to a certain extent. Joseph Nye regarded that credibility is a crucial factor in a nation's pursuance of soft power⁵⁰.

Upon review, the following possible gaps have been identified in the literature, which may warrant more significant research. There is not enough discussion concerning social scientific discussions of Qatar's engagement with global sport. Upon study, prior work in this area has been particularly scarce, with only a handful of scholars focused on Qatar's objectives vis-à-vis global sport. Moreover, there needs to be more insight into the quantifiable benefits from sports diplomacy gained by Qatar. Lastly, there may exist a possible correlation between leadership and implementation of soft power approaches in the case of Qatar, which has remained largely unexplored.

Qatar's 2022 FIFA World Cup." *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal* (2019).

48 - "Sports Sector Strategy 2011-2016." Qatar Olympic Committee, July 2011

49 - Ginesta, Xavier, and Jordi de San Eugenio. "The use of football as a country branding strategy. Case study: Qatar and the Catalan sports press." *Communication & Sport* 2, no. 3 (2014): pp. 225-241.

50 - Nye, Joseph S. "Soft power." *Foreign policy* 80 (1990): pp. 153-171.

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