

Hazal Muslu



Abstract:

An Ontological Security Approach to the Sport Diplomacy of Qatar Foreign Policy

George Orwell's famous quote "serious sport is war minus the shooting" explains the sponsorships and marketing strategy of Qatar foreign policy in global sports. Acceleration of the development of the objectives of 2030 Qatar National Vision in accordance with the selection of Qatar for hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2022 has been mostly analyzed through the lenses of the concept of soft power. According to this approach, Qatar aimed at enhancing its global reputation and international image beside its regional standing through hosting the 2022 World Cup and investing in global sports. This process increased the regional and international visibility of Qatar, gave an opportunity to the country to show its capabilities, economically and politically, and positioned Qatar as a key player in multilateral power politics. While soft power approach deserves credits, impossibility to measure the soft power of a country over the other actors limits our analysis to the promotion of positive values of a country to the world. Thus, this article believes the significance of applying an ontological security perspective that enables us to understand how Qatar perform foreign policy actions to protect the physical security and preserve the articulation power of self-identity needs of the state.

Conflictual relations among Qatar and, particularly, Saudi Arabia and the UAE since the 2017 Gulf crisis became a foundation of ontological security perception of Qatar towards its neighbors and Gulf region. The blockade of Qatar provided a new security approach among the Qatari decision-makers and designated new essential features for the survival of the self. At this juncture, ontological security approach helps us to interpret the ways and mechanisms of the states to fulfill the ontological security needs and protect the state identity. Qatar's global campaign of the 2022 World Cup in addition to its sports investments in the West illustrates the Qatar's policy of continuation of security politics by sport diplomacy. Accordingly, this article aims at understanding the impact of the Qatar's sport diplomacy over its regional security narratives as well as the biographical narratives of the state serving for its ontological security needs.

Bio:

Hazal Muslu El Berni received her PhD from Kadir Has University in International Relations. She holds MA both in International Relations and Gulf Studies. Her research focuses on the Gulf security and politics, Saudi foreign policy-making, critical security studies, and migration studies in the Gulf. She is currently working on her book on Saudi decision-making process and regional security perceptions towards Iran. She's based in Paris.