"Strategies and Sources of Soft Power in Saudi Arabia"

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Abstract

when asked what makes Saudi Arabia so powerful, wouldn't think of the country's abundance of oil and gas? Saudi Arabia's clout extends far beyond the country's oil assets. Rather than its oil revenues, Saudi Arabia has historically relied on its cultural power as the capital of the Muslim and Arab nations to maintain its domestic, regional, and global influence. Saudi Arabia's soft power has been more influential than its crude exports. Because of this fortitude, Saudi Arabia was able to weather the storm of the Arab Spring. The Saudi Kingdom's soft power is largely responsible for its widespread sway in the Middle East and beyond. This paper examines the sources of Saudi Arabia's soft power, identifies its main components, and assesses their relative importance.

Keywords: soft power, strategies, Cultural diplomacy, sources of soft power, Cultural exchange and national identity.

الملخص

عندما يُسأل ما الذي يمنح المملكة العربية السعودية قوتها، ألا تفكر على الفور في احتياطاتها من الغاز والنفط ؟ لا يمكنك تقليص نفوذ المملكة العربية السعودية إلى احتياطاتها من الطاقة وحدها. تاريخياً، كانت القوة الثقافية للمملكة العربية السعودية كعاصمة للدول الإسلامية والعربية بدلاً من عائداتها النفطية مصدرًا أساسيًا وثابتًا للقوة على المستويات المحلية والإقليمية والعالمية. أكثر من النفط، الهيمنة السعودية ترجع إلى القوة الناعمة للبلاد. هذه القوة مسؤولة إلى حد كبير عن مرونة المملكة العربية السعودية في مواجهة اضطرابات الربيع العربي. يعود تأثير المملكة العربية السعودية في الشرق الأوسط وما وراءه في جزء كبير منه إلى قوتها الناعمة. تقيّم هذه الورقة العوامل الرئيسية التي تساهم في القوة الناعمة للمملكة العربية السعودية، وتستكشف استراتيجيات القوة الناعمة ثم توضح مصادر استراتيجية القوة الناعمة في المملكة العربية السعودية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القوة الناعمة، الاستراتيجيات، الدبلوماسية الثقافية، مصادر القوة الناعمة، التبادل الثقافي، الهوية الوطنية.

Introduction

The relative military and economic strength of different nations is a common subject of discussion in the field of international relations. Many times, states have used instruments of hard force to coerce others into changing their position to match their own (Soy, 2016). However, new forms of power have emerged and proven to be quite effective in foreign relations. The idea of "Soft Power" Invented by Joseph Nye (1990) has emerged as a helpful lens through which to examine the development of authority in this setting. To get what you want without having to resort to coercion is the essence of soft power (Nye, 2004, p.5).

Following WWII, Saudi Arabia assumed the role of a prospective regional and global leader. (Al-Qarni, 2007). When it comes to oil production, the nation tops the entire Middle Eastern region and is among the top oil producers worldwide. Saudi Arabia's leadership qualities come from the country's illustrious history as well as its wealth and strategic position. (Asiri, 2016). Arab countries' contemporary cultures are the result of the fusion of numerous indigenous traditions and practices. (Sinkaya & Mabon, 2015). Saudi Arabia is the primary conduit for the dissemination of this ancient Arab custom, but all of these countries share a common Arab past that serves as inspiration for their own cultures. The religious significance of Saudi Arabia, as the center of Islam, is a major contributor to the country's soft power both at home and abroad. (Alanazi, 2015).

The term "soft power" was coined by Joseph Nye at the conclusion of the Cold War in his book "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power." (Nye, 1990). As the term gained currency, it came to be used more generally to characterize a nation's expanding role on the global and regional stages. (Yukaruc, 2017). A nation's "soft power," as the term is used, is dependent on the country's appeal to other nations and their willingness to do business with and invest in the country. The "soft power" of a nation is its influence over other countries, particularly in getting them to embrace its culture and policies.

"Soft power," on the other hand, describes a nation's sway over other nations through its ideals and media, scientific and intellectual exchange, and even its foreign policy. (Lacey, 2011). It takes the use of both military and economic "hard power" for a country to accomplish its political goals. Soft power in Saudi Arabia had far-reaching effects, affecting all facets of society and shaping government policy in a variety of areas. The theological challenges presented by Iran should be met in large part by these soft forces. (Kunczick, 2016).

The Saudi government's foreign interactions now place a premium on winning over the hearts and minds of its citizens, thanks to the rise of soft power. (Alsheikh, 2021). Cultural diplomacy and soft power have been the primary means by which the Kingdom has sought to advance its domestic and foreign development agendas over the past three decades, in line with the MDGs. (Gallarotti & Al-Filali, 2012). (Baghdadi, 2017). To promote sustainable growth in Saudi society and realize the Millennium growth Goals (MDGs), Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman (MBS) launched Vision 2030 in 2017. (Sayfayn, 2018).

This is why Saudi Arabia is such a focal point for the region, the Arab and Muslim worlds, and the international energy market as a whole. (Ehteshami, 2018). Therefore, the Saudis have become the de facto leaders of several global and regional groups. As a result of its leadership position in these four

networks, Saudi Arabia has become a major political and economic force in the world. (Alkatheeri & Khan, 2019).

Rapid internal and exterior dynamics change has necessitated increased focus in many fields of study in Saudi Arabia. There is reason to be hopeful and amazed, as Saudi Arabia places second in the Middle East and twenty-fourth in the world on the Global Soft-Power Index 2022 (The National News, 2022). In view of Saudi Arabia's recent diplomatic successes, the kingdom's various policy domains should be brought into line with a common goal. The placement of softpower methods and how they are perceived remain unclear as Saudi Arabia continues to shape its global strategy in accordance with international indices. Therefore, this study provides a theoretical foundation for appreciating Saudi Arabia's soft power.

Saudi Arabia's cultural strength as the center of the Muslim and Arab worlds has always been one of the country's most dependable sources of influence at home, in the region, and around the world. (Al Doussari, 2001). The Soft Power of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Is Critical to Its Success as an Oil Superpower. (Aleidan, 2019). Soft power may be a major factor in the Saudi monarchy's ability to exert sway in the region and beyond. (AlOtaibi, 2019).

The very idea of "soft power" suggests growing influence and importance. To compete in the strategic politics of appeal, credibility, and reputation, more and more countries are turning to the deployment of soft-power tools and resources. This is because the use of force isn't always necessary to achieve a state's goals; sometimes peaceful methods are just as important. (Lee, 2011).

- **Soft Power in Saudi Arabia**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a wealth of excellent resources it can rely on to bolster its soft power. In addition, it employs a broad variety of techniques and tools. (Salhi, 2013). Both the components of power and the factors that contribute to them are referred to as "sources" and "resources" in this context. The availability of resources motivates people to exercise this authority. One of the most crucial aspects of the idea of soft power is the ability to affect the actions of others through the possession of power causes. (Kraidy, 2010). The country's human development programs and humanitarian assistance are examples of its soft power. Companies that produce and sell high-quality products and the media that promote them serve as examples of its methods and resources in action. (Inge, 2017)

Scholars concur that the American Joseph Nye first used the term "soft power." According to Joseph S. Nye's definition in his book Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, a country's soft power comes from the attractiveness of its culture, political principles, and policies. (Nye, 2004, P.5). An example of a state's soft power is its ability to serve as a role model and persuade other countries to embrace its ideals and policies. The "carrot and stick" approach can be replaced with soft power, which is one of its many benefits. Soft power is often defined simplistically as investment and help, but others, such as Joshua Kurlantzick, offer a more nuanced explanation by combining economic power and soft power. (Kurlantzick, 2006). Kurlantzick is especially interested in the rise of China as a global power,

and how this rise can be traced back to the rise of China's soft power over the past decade. Political, fiscal, and military might be the pillars of hard power. (Grix et al., 2015). Effective use of hard power produces substantial soft power via attractive veneration and admiration; however, elements of hard power may tarnish such positive impressions. (Miller & Cardaun, 2020). However, the negative connotations associated with hard power can undermine the positive impressions produced by its effective application. So, while it's true that a combination of soft and strong power can be successful, it can also backfire if not managed properly. (Fatima & Khan, 2018). Culture, domestic policy excellence, and foreign policy success all contribute to a country's soft power. (Nye, 2021). Without using military force, "soft power" is one strategy for advancing international political objectives. The phrase "soft power" has entered the lexicon of Saudi Arabia's ruling elite.

The process of globalization has broken down barriers of isolation and ushered in a new era of interdependence among countries, regions, and, most significantly, the entire world. The Saudi government has long been an enthusiastic backer of international efforts to boost the global economy and lift the living standards of developing countries. Food relief programs, biofuels production and distribution, and financial contributions to UN peacekeeping operations have all been high priorities for successive Saudi administrations. (Nizami et al., 2016). There is no separating any of these aspects of Saudi culture from the country's soft power. The program has been extended since its inception in the 1950s, thanks to the efforts of King Abdullah and, more recently, King Salman. (Abdulilah & Khan, 2019).

Over the past three decades, the Kingdom has come to see its cultural diplomacy and soft power as a crucial tool in achieving development both locally and globally in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). (Varis, 2007). The MDGs were established when the United Nations' 191 member states adopted the Millennium Declaration on September 8, 2000. The MDGs seek to end extreme poverty and hunger, advance gender equity, and eradicate diseases that kill millions of people every year. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Saudi Arabian government's Vision 2030 were both created in 2017 by Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman (MBS). (Sayfayn, 2018). King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz was the pioneer of cultural diplomacy and soft power, but contemporary proponents include King Salman and Royal Prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS). (Abdulilah & Khan, 2019).

- **Soft Power Strategies**

The foundations of a country's soft power are its cultural influence, moral standing, and government initiatives. (Nye, 2008). Cultural diplomacy has been around for a long time, and it is widely considered to be the most successful form of soft power diplomacy. According to Banks, there has always been a topic of conversation between people of various cultural backgrounds. (2011). Through shared cultural events, individuals can gain insight into how to improve their own lives. Cultural exchange is much more effective than cultural diplomacy at bringing people of different cultures together. People are better able to communicate, learn from one another's experiences, appreciate one another, and collaborate after participating in a cultural exchange. This is crucial for developing peaceful ties between nations. Because of the common ground provided by cultural exchanges, people are more apt to band together and work toward common cultural goals.

Understanding and familiarity with other cultures have become increasingly important in modern foreign policy as the world has become a global village through which ideas spread quickly. Due to technological advancements and increased cultural exchanges, particularly among young people, the worldviews of the

general public have shifted. The global image of the United States has shifted thanks in part to the influence of music and film, which has allowed the country to increase its diplomatic presence in areas like Iraq. For example, Banks (2011) emphasizes the challenge posed by culture's infinite influence in formulating foreign policy around the globe. The government should step back from foreign policymaking and let cultural exchanges assume the reins.

Another piece of research takes a different approach, testing the validity of Hofstede's proposed cultural dimensions. (Minkov et al., 2017). To account for cultural shifts and the chance that some nations use distinct vocabularies when discussing cultural differences, this research surveyed 56 countries (both developed and developing). Individualists and collectivists alike can learn from one another if they just take the time to talk and work together. The only significant variation between the work of Minkov et al. (2017) and that of Schneider (2009) is the former group's focus on individualism and collectivism. The road to success is paved with hurdles for countries of all levels of development. In spite of these challenges, individuals from different countries who share their views on individualism and collectivism help to build a robust global culture that strengthens the bonds between nations.

Peaceful cooperation between countries is essential, but the inherent differences among them pose a challenge that inevitably affects the dynamics of any partnership. As the United States becomes more involved in the ongoing crises, it becomes more challenging to execute and supply soft power in international affairs. New insights into the dynamic character of Indian diplomacy are provided by Hall (2012). India's strategy to soft power has changed since 2010. The government has made strengthening its soft-power strategy and fostering productive international alliances through the use of technology version 2.0 a top priority. The MEA's use of soft power has been greatly aided by the Indian Public Diplomacy site. The positive effects of India's foreign policy extend beyond its immediate Asian rivals. India's foreign policy emphasizes cultural exchange as part of its "soft power" approach. Not only in Asia, but also in other parts of the globe, like Africa, it has made significant efforts to improve its reputation. By embracing new technology and encouraging cultural exchange, India can exercise soft power and improve its international political and economic status. These examples show that India uses a soft-power approach in its diplomatic dealings with other countries.

According to Uberoi (2018), it is essential for a country to have a strong sense of identity, which is highlighted from a multicultural viewpoint. He has focused his study on the concept of national identity promotion, which has been advocated for in Britain since the 1970s. Most people didn't know there were lots of ways to help people feel more patriotic. In spite of this, Uberoi concludes that the formation of national identity takes place within the larger context of multiculturalism, which plays a crucial role in enabling the exchange of common views across religious and cultural divides. When people in a country feel like they belong to a singular group despite their differences, that is the beginning of a solid national identity. The use of ethnic diversity as a means to national ends has been shown to be effective. The goal is to help people everywhere appreciate the complexity of modern life. Teaching young people to value and appreciate the differences between people should be a top concern for governments everywhere. It is essential for the people of a country to develop a sense of national identity so that they can work together with people from other countries and make friends all over the world. (Dinnie, 2010). For instance, someone who has been schooled in the importance of variety is more likely to appreciate the positive effects of this concept upon moving from Britain to the United States. Establishing a national identity and encouraging young people to learn about and appreciate diversity are two sides of the same coin.

Although they approach the issue from a slightly different angle, Liu and Turner (2018) support and describe the same strategy as Uberoi to forge a national identity. (2018). They argue that the recent changes in society are due to a combination of cultural variables, and that national identity is at the center of this. More and more Chinese students are studying abroad, which bodes well for the country's ongoing modernization and the development of a stronger sense of national identity at home. When compared to Russia and the United States, China is a relatively new player in the area of doctrinal conflict. China's political leaders had to get creative with their use of soft power because they didn't have access to the international community until the 1970s. When compared to the approaches taken by Russia and the United States, China's plan comes out on top. (Cai et al., 2009; Liu & Turner, 2018). also According to Liu and Turner (2018), the practice of sending Chinese adolescents to the United States and Europe marks a watershed moment and the beginning of a new era in China's cultural history. Many of these graduates have helped advance society by bringing fresh perspectives and perspectives. While studying abroad, students often establish friends with people from other countries and invite them to China. Chinese students who have studied overseas have both helped spread Chinese culture around the world and brought new customs back to China. As chasms opened up between societies, this technique gained prominence. Chinese cultural exports like the "Chinese Wisdom," "Chinese Rules," "Chinese Theories," "Chinese System," and "Chinese Road" are helping China develop its "soft power," as Liu and Turner (2018) put it. China's cultural soft power has contributed to improved international ties.

One tactic used by proponents of soft power is the promotion of a country's cultural practices as a means of influencing target audiences. Given this, academics agree that governments should prioritize cultural export as a means of influencing populations. U.S. cultural policy is being discussed in other countries, and the results have led to the conclusion that the federal government should help promote intercultural communication by employing a number of already-existing strategies and equipping local advocates. (Schneider, 2009). To sum up, a country's cultural elites are its cultural diplomats, spreading the country's guiding principles to the locals wherever it has a presence abroad. Talking about American society in Russia requires emphasizing values like openness, honesty, and fairness. (Schneider, 2009). The goal of employing cultural policies as a tool of soft power is to show that the acquired culture is superior to that of the target nation. (Schneider, 2009). The citizens of the target country are more likely to accept the government's policies because they look up to the more developed society as a role model. The applying nation should aim to become the de facto cultural leader in the country it is attempting to influence in order to get the most out of cultural soft power instruments. (Schneider, 2009). Improving a country's image as a cultural leader overseas can increase its clout in international affairs. The U.S. government's attempts to portray itself as a global defender of democracy are, to some extent, accurate.

The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia changed their approaches to Iran with the help of American pressure as Iran is cut off from the rest of the Middle East due to political tensions with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, unlike in East Asia. According to Beydoun and Zahawi (2016), sanctions have discouraged investment from countries favorable to the United States because of sectarian tensions in Iran. As a result of that change, restrictions were ultimately lifted. The influence the United States has in Iran as an example of its soft power is remarkable. The role Iran has played in helping to end the conflict with other countries has been crucial to the country's economic growth and the realization of its objectives. Now that the other GCC nations have lifted their sanctions against Iran, there is renewed optimism for peace in the region. Interventions in tense relationships, like that between Iran and other nations, were made using a soft-power approach, and peace was gradually restored. The primary objective of a state's soft-power policies is, as was previously stated, to increase the state's sway over the public-sphere processes of the target country. Using economic, political, social, and cultural means can win over the people and local residents. The goal of these policies is to increase local

population and political elite loyalty to the interests of the sponsoring power by investing in the infrastructure of the nations targeted by these policies.

The term "soft power" was coined to describe the approach taken by powerful nations to promote calm development in Asia, east Asian nations' animosity toward one another makes it difficult for soft power to gain traction in the region. As Sun (2013) demonstrates, China has implemented stringent border controls with nations like Japan. The Philippines has had territorial disputes with China before. East Asia's soft power has suffered as a direct consequence of these violent incidents. Rising international tensions and a near-continental focus on the desire to demonstrate may have weakened efforts to keep the soft-power approach, aggression has replaced soft power as the favored mode of international communication in contemporary East Asia; and China's national identity hasn't always been as strong as it is today. (Sun, 2013). Japan's cultural aspirations gave rise to the Cool Japan initiative, and the program's emphasis on encouraging innovation has helped raise the country's image abroad and improve ties with other nations.

Uberoi (2018) describes national identity as a set of characteristics that can be used to characterize the modern citizen's personality or cultural code and how they respond to the outside world. According to Uberoi, a person's sense of national identification develops through exposure to the customs and history of his or her native land. People tend to adopt the traditions of their families and groups as they get older. Since brand management and the successful execution of cultural strategies are inextricably linked, it follows that improving educational programs that might affect the development of an individual's identity is one of the most effective solutions within the framework of a state's cultural strategy and soft-power model. Brand identities are created by companies in a manner similar to that of nations in order to attract customers and keep them as devoted customers. This strategy for corporate identity development is grounded in the legends associated with the company's identities. (Cayla & Arnould, 2008). Every nation requires a universally uplifting tale that can be told with little effort but is grounded in the values of that nation. If that's the case, then success in foreign markets will depend on tailoring strategies to local customs and demands. The cultural policies of a state's soft-power strategy are easily identifiable by their focus on the target country's population as the main agent of change. It is impossible to overstate the importance of explaining national identity to help people comprehend how cultural policy affects a country's population. The main goal of such a strategy would be to help people feel better about themselves, which would have a positive effect on their admiration for and identification with the national culture of the state in question. A state's culture will be more appealing than the state itself if soft power is effectively used.

Cultural policy is a cynical technique based on emotionally influencing the preferences of the local populace to boost the state's national culture's brand image abroad. The goal of employing cultural methods is to have the intended audience form favorable impressions of a foreign culture. (Serazio, 2017). Government organizations are tasked with enacting policies that foster positive public attitudes toward the state and its traditions. Governments should welcome scientists, artists, actors, and other members of the cultural elite to encourage the general public to value the country's cultural heritage. A common tactic in both cultural diplomacy and corporate marketing is to disseminate false information about a product or service in order to attract more potential buyers. (Serazio, 2017). The future success of cultural policies must be considered in the unique setting of each nation. Let's define "sustainable" first: the ability of a government to adopt and incorporate cultural tactics in other states over time while also adjusting to and competing against other players; this is what we mean by "cultural policy efficacy."

(Billard & Moran, 2019). Today's world leaders use their nations as cultural battlegrounds to advance their own agendas. Countries with active cultural diplomacy initiatives compete with one another by visiting other countries. Therefore, for a state to prosper, its government agencies need to keep a watch on the actions of other states and adapt accordingly. Long-term success of cultural policies also depends on their adaptability to the cultural standards of the recipient state. Disseminating a country's culture to

its citizens should be an important objective of cultural strategy. (Kavaratzis & Kalandides, 2015). Disputes are inevitable.

The capacity to influence others without seeking material gain is the essence of "soft power," as defined by Anguelov (2017). After the end of the Cold War, the United States and its allies used a tactic known as "soft power" to further cement their influence. In recent years, the West has lost ground to the East politically, and non-governmental elites' reliance on conventional media to disseminate information to the general public has grown. The media dynamics that can spark political discussion have been strengthened by social media because it provides a platform for everyone's views to be heard and seen. The implementation of a cultural strategy is intricate and time-consuming, so quick results are unrealistic. (Dinnie, 2010). It typically takes decades of communication and collaboration between countries for cultural ties to form. According to scholarly literature, the "significant risks for the sustainability of viable cultural policies can be entailed by the frequent change of political elites in induced by a voting system" in democracies. (Dinnie, 2010). According to the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage, "UNESCO is an international body that operates on the basis of this treaty." (CISH). (Lowe, 2013). The group's mission is to preserve the world's unique cultural heritage so that future generations can enjoy its benefits. The practice can also aid in the creation of "soft power" strategies. States can keep international interest in their area high by showcasing symbols of national culture and historical heritage while UNESCO works to preserve cultural landmarks. The people should be made aware of the state's rich history through the promotion of already existing historical monuments. (Blake, 2008). The state economy would profit from an increase in tourism if people from all over the world were interested in visiting these locations. Governments that adopt these kinds of steps will be viewed as more progressive and forward-thinking by their peers around the world. (Lowe, 2013). The United States is a shining example of the relevance of soft power now that its significance has been established. U.S. soft power, however, is rated fifth in 2019. Leaders who use the media to promote divisive and anti-humanitarian ideas (like the wall along the U.S.-Mexico border), say some political and intellectual elites, can have unintended effects. (Hearn, 2019).

Finally, Changes in the political, economic, and cultural climates within a nation can have an impact on the country's soft power. In recent years, the media has played a crucial role in informing the worldwide public about a wide range of political developments. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has developed and executed policies to enhance the country's reputation in order to realize its ambition of becoming a global power. In order to draw both domestic and international investments, cities like Dubai and Abu Dhabi have set up numerous economic free zones that place an emphasis on different economic strategies and diversification. The majority of Saudi Arabia's GDP comes from oil and gas shipments, but the country is also home to several well-known brands.

▪ **Sources of Saudi Soft Power**

Several factors have contributed to the rise of Saudi Arabia's "soft power." (Hammond, 2017). Material resources are an example of something that can be seen and touched; the effects of other factors are less

apparent. The Kingdom's moral sources of soft power include, among other things, Islamic theology and Islamic principles, the loyalty and unity of its people, international prominence, and regional impact. (Al-Rashed, 2002). Saudi Arabia has a variety of soft power tools at its disposal to counter Iran's goals for increased regional and international influence. The Kingdom has a high moral standing because the

majority of Muslims adhere to Sunni monotheism, and the original monotheistic Sunni doctrine is maintained by the Kingdom. (Hocking, 2004). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not only a world leader in the export of natural gas, oil, and loans to poor states in need of assistance, but it also holds the material soft powers of its two holy mosques, which can be used to host culturally significant conferences. (Gray, 2011). As a global, globalized, and regional powerhouse, Saudi Arabia has a lot of diplomatic influence and serves as an example of national unity and peace. More than eighty nations receive aid from Saudi Arabia, making it clear that they are at the forefront of humanitarian efforts to combat world hunger. The Ministry of Information in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia exerts a strong influence over the media and the country's cordial relationship with the United States government are two examples of its soft power. (Al-Rashed, 2013). Knowledge of Saudi Arabia's history, culture, and teachings are disseminated throughout the Iranian school system, adding to the Kingdom's influence in the country. To counter Iran's impact in the Muslim world and beyond, Saudi Arabia should make use of its many soft powers by spreading its own teachings and funding scientific research that will lead to more efficient applications of those teachings.

Two types of soft power need to be distinguished. The first category is homegrown media, which promotes a country's positive attributes to increase its standing at home and internationally. (Wynbrandt, 2010). Because of this, the state is better able to achieve its foreign policy objectives. National identity also encompasses cultural and governmental structures. (Wang, 2014). Resources on a global scale are the focus of the second group. Hard power, of which economic power is a subset, is absent from Nye's definition of soft power (Ménoret, 2005). Influencing others on a global scale through shared beliefs and values, as well as the interpersonal and political activities that result from those beliefs, is what is known as "soft power." (Gallarotti, 2011). Two distinct types of local and international factors contribute to the development of soft power. A nation's cultural traditions are an important domestic form of soft power that contribute to shaping the nation's identity. Values and ideas at the national level are the source of cultural impact. (Melissen, 2005). Cultural sensitivity is an expression of respect and appreciation. A person's standard of living is an important societal indicator that can evoke either admiration or imitation. (Nye, 2004).

Beyond its cultural norms, a nation's government system is where its soft power truly shines. Democracies are not required to benefit from soft power. Even if they aren't democratic or liberal, non-democratic or illiberal governments have shown they can foster stable political institutions that boost their countries' soft power. (Marsh, 2015). The development of soft power also depends on the cooperation of other nations. (Mabon, 2015). Cooperation in the context of international relations is a major generator of soft power. When international norms and policies are put into place to deal with a variety of issues on the local, national, and global levels, that is the standing and nature of soft power. A nation's trustworthiness and ability to achieve its foreign policy objectives are both enhanced by a positive image in the eyes of other nations. Such dedication and the appearance of legitimacy are the primary sources of soft power on the international scene. (Lippman, 2012).

> **Moral resources that contribute to soft influence include:**

1. **Islam's Doctrinal Dominance**

Saudi Arabia is a major source of soft power for the Muslim world because it is both the birthplace of Islam and the location of Islam's two holiest places. A place that attracts millions of Muslims each year for religious purposes is likely to wield considerable power in the Middle East and beyond. The religious

significance of the Kingdom gives it greater soft power and makes it better equipped to deal with Iran's problems in the Middle East. (Dorian et al., 1999). The vast majority of Muslims belong to the Sunni sect, whose pure monotheism functions as a unifying force within Islam. The majority of Iranians adhere to Shia Islam. Due to the worldwide disparity in Sunni and Shia populations, Saudi Arabia possesses a dormant but highly effective soft power over Iran in the Region. These unique historical enrichments give the Kingdom moral soft power, which helps it exert tremendous influence in the area. (Dinnie, 2007).

2. Peace within the Kingdom's Population

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is incredibly cohesive as a nation. This is due to the fact that the Arab culture, Islam, and the Arabic language are so pervasive in the area. (Arabic). Like the Japanese, the Saudi people share a history and culture that has led to not only widespread harmony but also intense loyalty to the country. (Zayani, 2012). This country is an exception in the Middle East, where diversity tends to undermine societal cohesion. Saudi Arabia's soft power stems in large part from the country's cohesive population. When compared to other societies, where members of the same community often hold vastly different views, Saudi Arabia stands out thanks to the strength of its soft power, which is supported on both the domestic and international levels. (Shoult, 2006).

3. System of Values

Members of a group, society, or organization should behave in accordance with their shared values. This allows it to be used as a standard against which other societal phenomena can be evaluated. (Craze & Huband, 2009). Things we hold precious include ethical principles, social norms, economic principles, cultural norms, political principles, and religious beliefs. The majority of Saudi societal norms are based on Islamic teachings. Because of the influence of Islam and Saudi Arabia's status as the holy land, Islamic principles play an important role in garnering local and international support for government actions. It's fair to say that the public's approval of Saudi Arabia's leadership is a boon to the country's relationship with Iran and to Saudi Arabia's overall influence in the Middle East. The Saudi moral system is a major contributor to the kingdom's soft power. (Bowen, 2008).

4. Global Standards for Measurement and Weight

A cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy is aiding struggling nations, both within and outside of the Middle East. An environment that promotes and facilitates open discussion among citizens from all walks of life and sectors of the economy is the first step toward implementing such a foreign policy. (Blanchard, 2009). The King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) was established by the Saudi government in 2003. (Al-Rashed, 2002). Since its inception, the King Abdul Aziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) has worked to strengthen the role of Saudi civil society in advancing

justice, equality, and open expression within the country's cultural framework. Saudi Arabia advocates for communication between religions and cultures as a means to resolve international conflicts. To further and sustain such initiatives, the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) was established. (KAICIID, 2012). In order to promote mutual respect and harmonious living circumstances for all citizens, KAICIID provides the Saudi government with actionable measures to take. The Center's goal is to use religious fervor and spiritual devotion to persuade individuals and groups to reject violence and extremism. KAICIID's goal is to stop violence and religious strife by creating a community where people are willing to engage in civil dialogue with one another. (KAICIID, 2012).

Conclusion

In the eyes of the world, Saudi Arabia is a mystery. For the last several generations, the Kingdom has been viewed by outsiders through the lens of an international behemoth that relies almost solely on hard power resources stemming from its resource wealth. One of the two mainstays of the Kingdom's sophisticated or globalized dominance has been its oil wealth. But even at the height of its oil earnings in the 1970s, the dream of a country with a single source of power never materialized in reality. Saudi Arabia's hard power was overstated because the country's oil-fueled heyday was short and the Saudi military was never a superpower. However, the Kingdom was still able to successfully navigate internal, regional, and international difficulties despite having limited hard power. Despite being threatened from without, stuck in the middle of international conflicts, and struggling internally with a fractured society, the Kingdom managed to pull through. While the country's energy reserves are undoubtedly important, Saudi Arabia's tenacity is also due in large part to a set of assets that many outsiders have either misunderstood or failed to recognize at all: the country's soft power. Ironically, in today's liberal environment, many would view a monarchy that clings to an idealized version of the past as the very antithesis of effective leadership and influence. In fact, oil wealth gave Saudi Arabia one of its most prodigious weapons in confronting its many international and domestic challenges, but it has been its soft power that has quietly and modestly formed the undercurrents that have guided Saudi Arabia through the treacherous waters in the modern period. One of the most significant implications of this study is Saudi Arabia's relative political stability throughout the Arab Spring. Although oil wealth played a role, Saudi Arabia's internal soft power was more significant.

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