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МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ

SOFT POWER AS SMALL STATES' FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY: CASES OF SINGAPORE AND QATAR

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Abstract. Soft power being a concept that has gained more significance throughout the years is used in numerous ways in the foreign policy strategies of countries to promote a positive image in international relations. This article analyses the concept of soft power and its relevance in international relations by explaining how two of the small states, Singapore and Qatar, uses soft power in their foreign policy. Two of the similar fields in which the soft power strategy is used in both Singapore and Qatar which are business and education field will be explained in more detail. This study will also give more clarification on the effectiveness of soft power in small states foreign policy strategy and how the resources available in a country are used as soft power.

Keywords: International Relations, Soft Power, Foreign Policy, Small States, Singapore, Qatar.

Аңдатпа. Қазіргі таңда "жұмсақ күш" тұжырымдамасын іске асыру көп елдердің халықаралық аренада оң имиджін қалыптастыру мақсатында, атап айтқанда халықаралық қатынастар саласында жылдар өткен сайын өзектілігі артып келе жатыр. Бұл мақалада Сингапур мен Катар сияқты екі шағын мемлекеттің мысалында "жұмсақ күш" тұжырымдамасы мен халықаралық қатынастардағы өзектілігі талданады, өйткені осы екі ел өздерінің сыртқы саяси стратегияларында "жұмсақ күшті" белсенді қолданады. Аталған елдерде "жұмсақ күш" стратегиясын қолданатын бағыттар толығырақ зерттелген. Сондай-ақ, зерттелетін мемлекеттердің сыртқы саяси стратегиясындағы "жұмсақ күштің" тиімділігіне және ресурстарды халықаралық қатынастарға интеграциялай отырып, "жұмсақ күш" тұжырымдамасының қолданылуына талдау жүргізілді.

Түйін сөздер: халықаралық қатынастар, жұмсақ күш, сыртқы саясат, шағын мемлекеттер, Сингапур, Катар.

Аннотация. На современном этапе во внешнеполитических стратегиях стран для продвижения положительного имиджа на международной арене широко используется такая концепция, как «мягкая сила», которая с годами становится все более актуальной в международных отношениях. В данной статье анализируется концепция «мягкая сила» и актуальность в международных отношениях на примере двух малых государств, таких как Сингапур и Катар, которые активно применяют «мягкую силу» в своих внешнеполитических стратегиях. Более подробно изучены направления, в которых используется стратегия «мягкой силы» в данных странах. А также, проведен глубокий анализ эффективности «мягкой силы» во внешнеполитической стратегии исследуемых государств и использование ресурсов в качестве «мягкой силы» интегрируя на международные отношения.

Ключевые слова: международные отношения, мягкая сила, внешняя политика, малые государства, Сингапур, Катар.

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Introduction

The increase in the significance of the soft power concept has made it vital to find the ways how countries integrate soft power into their foreign policy strategies. Especially for the small states that are often overlooked in international relations (Leonova, 2014). Qatar and Singapore are countries that have carried out themselves in international relations in a very positive format by promoting their positive image as both countries have relatively good bilateral and multilateral relations in international system. The main ideas behind the successful application of foreign policy has been the soft power concept. Singapore has risen to become one of the leading economic powers in Southeast Asia with its pragmatism and has maintained good bilateral and multilateral relations with countries all over the world (Hong, 2016). Similarly Qatar has not only gained its economic success while being situated in a region with certain conflicts but also has promoted an effective foreign policy strategy by persuading countries to accept it on international platforms (Feiler & Zeev, 2017). Both Singapore and Qatar have made this possible with the use of the available resources and their strengths in their soft power concepts.

This article has significance as it describes the success of Singapore and Qatar in their way of carrying out soft power strategies in foreign policy to promote their country and also to create an important place in international relations. The way how soft power has opened ways to interact and maintain a good relation with other countries in the world marked the success story of soft power in foreign policy. More importantly with the fast-changing geopolitical concept in international relations, soft power has been a strong tool in the foreign policy of small states such as Singapore and Qatar. This article will become an addition to the literature on the soft power efficiency by the states that use it.

Materials and methods

The article uses qualitative methods to collect the data, especially secondary analysis of data. Scientific literature was reviewed, analyzed and classified to get more information about the topic. Secondary sources such as articles, journals, books, book chapters and websites are used to collect data

by also carefully evaluating whether the information has not been outdated. This also helped to get multiple perspectives of reputable academics who have analyzed concepts related to the use of soft power in foreign policy strategies of small states. Moreover, some information has also been obtained from the official websites of governments of both countries and also from international organizations, to verify the notion of the topic.

Discussion

Concept of Power in International Relations

Power being a contestable concept in the study of International Relations can be defined as the ability to affect the outcome or result that someone wants and if necessary to change the behavior of others to make it happen (Gray, 2011). In the realist theory of international relations which basically is the idea that states are main actors in international relations, power is the most fundamental feature of world politics as scholars have defined principles of realism as politics of nations are in terms of power or that power is the ultimate tool to dominate the field of international relations (Bilgin & Elis, 2008). The international relation of the current world is in a rather complex situation. After the drastic changes that occurred in geopolitics with the end of Cold War, the strategies used in foreign policy took a huge turn. The main ideologies behind these changes were also the fact that after the end of World War II, the Cold War stopping at the point of tensions and not escalating into another huge destruction of the world was a significant point in international relations (Chapman, 2018). The world changed in a way that international relations also took a huge diversification while the focus in the global arena changed to other aspects like social and economic changes. These factors not only control the politics of the countries, but also intensifies to develop an interdependence among the countries in the international system.

Power is an extremely wide concept with an uncertain nature that has several elements to it. For centuries it has been a notion that most eminent thinkers and philosophers of the past such as Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, Bertrand Russel, and Karl Marx have been

unable to fully agree (Isakovic, 2019). Earlier in a world where the threats were always rooted in an escalation of a war, power was defined as an instrument that the states use for their self-survival. However, the whole concept has changed in the current global politics with multipolarity, interdependence, and interconnectedness (Isakovic, 2019). At the same time evaluation of power in international relations has also changed as the power is not just evaluated by the size, the number of soldiers, and military equipment, but the quality of diplomacy, control over the communicational process and the possession of information can also be certain ways to evaluate power (Erdil, 2022).

With these changes in the definition and concept of power, come the different variations of power that is used in international relations which are soft power and hard power (Wilson, 2008). With all of these different concepts of power it is significant to understand that in the current international relations, the use of power in different concepts also depends on numerous factors. When the countries are described and distinguished by many factors, the way how they see and interact with others in global affairs is significantly diverse.

Comparison of Soft Power with the concept of Hard Power

Soft power and hard power are conceptualized in international relations as empirically and distinctively dichotomous and almost opposite from each other (Hagstrom & Pan, 2020). Also, despite both of these powers being completely discrete, they are closely interconnected in certain policies adopted by countries in the international system.

Hard power is a strategy used by countries that focuses on military intervention, coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions to enforce its national interests (Nye, 2009). Hard power despite being a very commonly executed strategy in the past, the current international system has discovered there are limits to what hard power can achieve. Also, there are many conflicts that can arise in current geopolitical sphere from the use of hard power to a certain extent (Nye, 2009). Hard power can still be a concept that particular countries use in their foreign policy due to the imbalance of power which creates a dominance in power politics. However, this strategy can cause complications for particular

countries which share different characteristics along with different geopolitical policies. Even though the use of hard power has become challenging to employ in this globalized world due to the increase in growth for the respect and consideration for universal humanitarian values, the ability of hard power to secure and influence some political decisions has not changed in a global context (Gray, 2011).

On the other hand, soft power is the capacity of countries to persuade other countries to do what it wants (Wilson, 2008). It is also the power of attractive ideas and the ability to formulate a political agenda that determines the framework of debate in a certain way that is in accordance with the preferences of others. Or in much simpler terms it is the ability of countries to obtain their preferred and desired outcome through attraction (Nye, 1990). The military force and the conquest that marked the early eras which were based on the use of force have lost their emphasis greatly and other factors such as education, culture, technology, environment and economic growth have become more significant in international relations in the concept of power (Nye, 1990). These changes that the power has undergone, has created a new kind of challenge where power does not lie in resources but in the ability to change the behavior of states with others to softer and more attractive means which basically ends up as soft power in their foreign policy.

Small States in international relations

Small State can be a unit that has relatively small territory and a population. However, according to the benchmark established by the World Bank which asserts that any country with a population of 1.5 million or less are considered a small state (The World Bank, 2022). Nevertheless, this is not a universally accepted and set definition of a small state. Commonwealth which is a political association that focuses on intergovernmental aspects define small state with regard to their population which is similar to World Bank, but also, they define small states according to similar characteristics even if the country has a bigger population (The Commonwealth, n.d.).

After the end of World War II, a revolution took place in the position of small states in the international system, where small states are playing a significant role on the world stage (Vandenbosch, 1964). According

to scholars in the past smaller a country is, the more dependent it is on the outside world in terms of important resources such as food, energy, technology and security and also, they are incapable of affecting the international system (Plagemann, 2022). However, this concept can be debatable to a certain extent as the current world is in a position where economic power is dominating the international system, especially in terms of power distribution. Therefore, due to this increasing economic power, the geopolitical locations of every single country including small states are at very high significance in international relations (Plagemann, 2022).

For small states to operate in international system, they have limited set of material resources and human to assign the task of diplomacy. However, it does not make these small states impotent. In fact, it is much easier for small states to prioritize and execute its foreign policy in international relations when compared to larger states (Suilleabhain, 2014). With regard to the foreign policy adopted by small states world politics state how it stands out in global affairs, which is by their willingness to engage with all relevant powers and the support for multilateral procedures which eventually are the main aspect of global peace (Plagemann, 2022). Therefore, the foreign policy of small states is significant as it allows these countries to have a place in the international system while protecting their sovereignty.

Soft power of Small States

In international relations, Small States do not aim to change the global system, but they have goals to create an economic and political sphere for themselves with the use of existing structures and resources that they have (Hong, 2016). Also, these states are prone to external shocks and perennial vulnerability, and they are not trying to adopt any ideology or gain any sort of power in the global system (Hong, 2016). Therefore, for small states, their options are limited when it comes to foreign policy formulation and implementation. However, this does not mean that these small states are vulnerable actors in international relations. Small states have been adopting certain frameworks and strategies with regard to their foreign policy formulation which is making noticeable impact in the world affairs.

Soft power diplomacy or soft power as a strategy in foreign policy has been increasing its significance, especially with the current diverse and complex politics of the world. With the globalization came the reformat of geopolitical space which led to formation of hierarchical system in international relations. Such conditions made countries to articulate foreign policy that is appropriate to the new realities of the world. With these changes countries began to look for new methods and tools that will serve the national interest of the country in the best format in front of the international arena. For small states which have limited range of resources they were forced to look for ways which will allow them to execute their foreign policy in a way which will help them to create a position in the newly shaped geopolitical space of the world. This is when the soft power was adopted by many small states as a strategy of their foreign policy. Small States use of soft power is mainly fixated on their ability to impact by influence (Leonova, 2014).

Soft Power of Singapore

Singapore is a country located in Southeast Asia with a population over 5 million. Even though it does not fit into the category of a Small State based on the definition of the World Bank, it is known to be a small state due to numerous other characteristics mostly concerned with nature and specific interests. Singapore was also the nation that established the non-ideological and informal grouping of small states in 1992 which is known as the Forum of Small States (FOSS). Moreover, it is also an active member of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, n.d.). Singapore's status as a small state also comes from a quantitative approach of defining small states as states whose territory, population and economy are smaller than the average in its region (Burke & Saramago, 2018)

Singapore promotes itself as a land of opportunity and there are multiple strategies that Singapore uses to enhance and implement its soft power. One of the key aspects of its foreign policy is to show the world its attractiveness and secureness in the form of presenting its ability to appreciate the qualities it represents, strong networking and financial power, democratic and cultural

values, future orientation and being successful in many areas (Hong, 2016). Additionally, its unique geographical position which has made it a key node in the global flow of trade, goods, materials and people has been used to its own advantage by implementing soft power in its foreign policy (Burke & Saramago, 2018)

One of the most perceptible and significant ways in which Singapore inserts soft power in its foreign policy is through its attractive economy. Singapore is well known for its honest and discrete international finance center which brings many investments to the country. Also, the country is famous for its ability to fund and support start-ups with venture capital (Hong, 2016). Moreover, Singapore also puts a great degree of its resources in economic diplomacy activities within the framework of Singapore's foreign economic policy. Not only does it have developments in regional economic multilateralism but also in global economic multilateralism. It is also known as a global maritime hub due to its world-renowned status as a key international shipping hub for maritime trade. Singapore's commercial success also comes from its policy to always separate politics from commercial which make its economic success a tool for its soft power diplomacy to connect with the international arena (Sadasivan, 2007).

Moreover, a huge part of Singapore's foreign policy actively involves the international economic system by using its technocratic resources at different levels of economic diplomacy. As one of the main aspects of foreign policy in the context of using soft power is to utilize the resources and characteristics of a country to its advantage to gain international recognition and to maintain a well-balanced and favorable position in global affairs. Therefore, in this stance, Singapore uses its geopolitical location and resources in the most advantageous way regarding trade and economy to make a position for itself in the global system (Dent, 2001).

Singapore is also known as a provider of world-class education while employing educational programs throughout the region. It uses Joseph Nye's 3 aspects of soft power in the context of a country's attractiveness in political values. These aspects include a country's ability to live up to the established values both at home and abroad, having moral authority and also the ability to have legitimate politics (Burke & Saramago, 2018). Education

is understood and viewed as a universal value, unlike religious and political values which are more likely to be culture specific. One example of how Singapore integrated education as part of its soft power diplomacy is the Singapore Cooperation Program (SCP), established in 1992 under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main objective of this program is to provide training programs mostly focused on capacity building in areas such as judiciary, trade and economy, governance and leadership, public administration and sustainability while sharing Singapore's model of economic and social development. Moreover, SCP also provides scholarship opportunities to third-world countries for postgraduate education in higher education institutes in Singapore. One of the main requirements of this program is that once the recipient finishes their educational program they have to go back to their country and apply the newly gained knowledge and information in the development of national economies and societies (Burke & Saramago, 2018).

Therefore, education acts as a soft power in Singapore's foreign policy as a foreign aid model. It also reflects the success story of Singapore which was based on a properly and well-educated, maintained and trained community that also contributes to the foundation of sustainable socio-economic development (Burke & Saramago, 2018).

Soft Power of Qatar

Qatar is an independent state located in the Middle East and is considered as an important political and economic country in the Gulf region. With a population above 2.7 million, it is an absolute monarchy with the world's third-largest natural gas reserve and is one of the richest countries per capita (World Population Review, 2022). Therefore the foreign policy of this small state is intertwined with its economic success. Qatar as the world's largest gas exporter, also has an attractive business and political community with top contractors, investment bankers and fashion designers. As one of the rapidly expanding business center in Gulf it has also proven resilience in times of economic crises such as falling oil prices. In the economic aspect, especially in enhancing global investments, Qatar's foreign policy is fallen along with other countries from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which is an intergovernmental organization that helps to

maintain unity among Gulf countries in multiple areas including economic sector. With these fast growing economies surrounding Qatar another significant aspect of its foreign policy is the leadership's awareness to the fragility of the wealth accumulated by the country. Hence, Qatar consistently promotes its foreign policy through the soft power of its rich economy (Feiler & Zeev, 2017).

Similarly as Singapore, Qatar also has established and succeeded with its educational policies which plays an important role in its soft power diplomacy. There are several educational opportunities in Qatar which are aimed to provide some best quality education with the Qatar's education reforms. The Qatar foundation established a concept called Education City in 1997 to support the educational opportunities offered by the Qatar University (QU) which is a public funded university. This Education City houses branches of multiple international universities such as Texas A&M University, Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, Weill Cornell Medical College and Georgetown University School of the Arts (Augustine, et al., 2007).

Moreover, Qatar has signed agreements with other countries to establish their branch campus which will further contribute to the education system of Qatar as well as provide educational opportunities for the neighboring countries through their soft power diplomacy (Augustine, et al., 2007). Opening branches of prestigious universities in Qatar, it exercises its soft power diplomacy, especially to the Middle East region by attracting foreigners to study in these university branches in Qatar which will further enhance recognition of Qatar in global affairs. Apart from these educational

opportunities, Qatar also hires Western faculty members to provide education in these internationally recognized university branches. Qatar is also shaping its foreign policy with the use of soft power by organizing conferences that focus on priority areas in Qatar's foreign policy and by inviting academics and scholars to these conferences (Antwi-Boateng, 2013).

Conclusion

The remarkable changes witnessed in international relations every year have created an interplay competition between countries in which each of them ensures that they apply successful and significant strategies and policies to increase their influence to reach their foreign policy agendas. In such a period, soft power has become an effective tool in the foreign policy strategy especially in small states. By using soft power both Singapore and Qatar have been thriving in international relations. The close cooperation both of these countries have with the international community as well as successful separate bilateral relations mark the success of its foreign policy. As both Qatar and Singapore had the advantage of promoting themselves as vibrant business partners or business hub with their rich resources and ideas, it was carefully put into the foreign policy strategies. Moreover, with the thriving economies of both countries, Singapore and Qatar have created a system focused on education which not only brings people of different countries together, but also is a way to promote their cultural values and ideologies to the world which lifts its position in international relations.

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ЖҰМСАҚ КҮШ КІШІ МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕРДІҢ СЫРТҚЫ САЯСИ СТРАТЕГИЯСЫ РЕТІНДЕ: КАТАР МЕН СИНГАПУР МЫСАЛЫНДА

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МЯГКАЯ СИЛА КАК ВНЕШНЕПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ СТРАТЕГИЯ МАЛЫХ ГОСУДАРСТВ: НА ПРИМЕРЕ КАТАРА И СИНГАПУРА

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