

Measuring Soft Power Impact of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Under Muhammad Bin Salman

Hadia Akram¹, Ahmed Osama Tahir²

¹ Mphil International Relations, Bahria University, Islamabad, Pakistan,

Email: hadiaakram104@gmail.com

² PhD Scholar, Department of International Relations, Muslim Youth University, Islamabad, Pakistan and Lecturer at Federal Urdu University (FUUAST), Islamabad Pakistan.

Email: ahmed.osama@myu.edu.pk

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v4i1.1738>

Abstract

This study examines the changing face of Saudi Arabia's soft power under the reign of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, with a focus on the period post-Vision 2030 launch. The transformation of Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030 is anchored on the strategic approach of diversifying the national economy and reshaping the Saudi identity through strategic investments in unconventional industries such as media, entertainment and sports. Such efforts are not merely domestic reforms, but rather they have double purposes – domestic reform and promotion of the Kingdom's visibility and capacity to influence others through soft power measures. The underlying perspective of the research is based on the theory of soft power, especially in emphasizing the aspect of culture and values in attracting nations or individuals. Research explores how such initiatives as the organization of major events, development of domestic media enterprises, and international sporting participation are shaping new perceptions about Saudi Arabia's openness, creativity, and cultural significance. Using a combination of discourse analysis, soft power index data, and public opinion trends, the study assesses the effectiveness and limitations of these initiatives in reshaping public perception. The findings indicate that while Vision 2030 has provided a coherent framework for deploying soft power through cultural platforms, the overall impact remains mixed. Positive shifts in visibility and engagement are often offset by persistent concerns surrounding political freedoms and human rights. This thesis offers a critical perspective on how an authoritarian state utilizes internal reform and cultural spectacle as tools for image-building, contributing to broader discussions on the role of soft power in contemporary statecraft.

Key Words: Soft Power, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Gulf Cooperation Council, Foreign Domestic Index, Vision 2030, Sustainable Development Goals.

Introduction:

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is guiding the Saudi Arabia's changing domestic and foreign policies with a focus on soft power approaches to improve the kingdom's position in the world. Saudi Arabia has always enjoyed a strong global presence on account of its large oil wealth and ownership of the holiest sites in Islam. However, these traditional pillars of strength have been polished, tweaked from time to time by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and methodically integrated into a meaningful evolution to accommodate and manage the dynamic shifts in the realm of soft power. The revolution encouraged Saudi Arabia to embrace diversification of its economy,

encouraging modern societal reforms, and reducing oil dependency all under the Vision 2030 program. Saudi Arabia is famous for its great economic power in the countries of the Arab World and the Middle East. It is a member of the G20 and ranks as the second richest country based on the value of its natural resources, estimated at \$34.4 trillion.¹ New projects, such as East Vision 2030, signify a shift in the Kingdom's strategic priorities, directing attention toward non-coercive influence mechanisms, including cultural diplomacy, global partnerships, and social reforms. These initiatives aim to enhance Saudi Arabia's standing, increase the country's economic participation, and elevate its image as a progressive and modern tool.² Arguably, a crucial aspect of this evolution is the diminishing reliance on religious rhetoric in Saudi foreign policy. While the Kingdom continues to be a significant force within the Muslim world, asserting its guardianship over the Two Holy Mosques, Saudi Arabia under Mohammed bin Salman is reshaping its image to emphasize modernity and progressiveness.³ Key elements of the Kingdom's soft power strategy include sponsorships of global entertainment events, tourism initiatives through projects such as NEOM and Al Ula, and investments in arts, culture, and sports. The primary objective of these efforts is to present Saudi Arabia as a vibrant and modern nation.⁴ On the diplomatic front, the Kingdom has adopted a pragmatic approach aimed at reducing tensions and stabilizing the region. This was exemplified by the peace accord signed in January of this year in Al Ula, a significant area for courage and collaboration with neighboring states. This demonstrates Saudi Arabia's commitment to resolving issues through dialogue and multilateral processes, seeking to establish itself as a stabilizing force in the region.⁵ Furthermore, Saudi Arabia is very close to multilateral organizations, and its leadership is also very active in the fight against such issues as energy security, climate change, and the promotion of the development of the economy worldwide.⁶ Saudi Arabia has turned to sports in order to rebrand their global image, economy or geopolitical influence. The approach is multi layered in accordance with Kingdom's Vision 2030 objectives and entails significant investments in several sports sectors. Being a host country for the FIFA World Cup in 2034 is essential to this plan. The initiative includes plans for the development or refurbishment of 15 stadiums and introduction of alcohol-free format to respect local custom.⁷ Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund also provided for more than 900 global sports investments, acquiring Newcastle United and LIV Golf.⁸ Riyadh's Sports Boulevard and the Qiddiya entertainment city are two of the many infrastructural endeavors that bolster the Kingdom's continuous engagement in sports to become a world hub.⁹ Beyond domestic borders, these efforts unfold Sebastian Vettel's grassroots karting project to encourage women's involvement in sports is a form of this cultural transformation.¹⁰ It also pledged sponsorship of African football leagues, which suggests Saudi Arabia's attempt to use sports diplomacy to

¹ Rory Smith, "Saudi Arabia's Bid to Remake Soccer," *New York Times*, June 6, 2023.

² Kristin Smith Diwan, "Saudi Arabia's Soft Power Play," *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*, February 15, 2023.

³ Jonathan Fulton, "Sports and Soft Power in Saudi Arabia," *The Diplomat*, November 22, 2023.

⁴ Courtney Freer, "Saudi Vision 2030 and the Development of Entertainment," *LSE Middle East Centre Blog*, August 21, 2023.

⁵ "Gulf States Sign Al Ula Declaration to End Crisis," *Al Jazeera*, January 5, 2021.

⁶ Diwan, "Saudi Arabia's Soft Power Play."

⁷ Smith, "Saudi Arabia's Bid to Remake Soccer."

⁸ Emma Graham-Harrison and Stephanie Kirchgaessner, "Saudi Arabia's Big Push into Sports: What's Behind It?" *The Guardian*, July 2, 2023.

⁹ Qiddiya Investment Company, "Qiddiya: The Capital of Entertainment, Sports and the Arts," accessed May 10, 2025, <https://www.qiddiya.com>.

¹⁰ Philippa Stewart, "Sebastian Vettel Supports Women in Saudi Karting Project," *CNN*, February 10, 2023.

strengthen influence on the Global South.¹¹ To determine the use of Mohammed bin Salman's soft power project in cultural, political and economic realms, this thesis assesses the effectiveness of this project. The Kingdom's soft power strategic investments for shaping global perception, as well as navigating the intricate geopolitical dynamics are analyzed using technical and evidence base research methodology. To apply this analysis, soft power as defined by Joseph Nye will be used in addressing how Saudi Arabia combines hard and soft power with other programs within their expanding soft power program. Soft power, an idea by Joseph Nye, lately, has turned into the most important idea of the 'modern international relations', with its peculiar feature being 'to influence another without coercion'.¹² Since the world has evolved and continue to evolve where everything, and everything is become interwoven, one of the soft power of countries is the ability to change how other countries perceive a country through the marketing of cultural, political and economic values that other countries want to associate with. This image acts as a positive one that promotes cooperation, builds trust and a peaceful relationship to minimize conflicts. For example, Nations like South Korea who used its cultural exports like K-pop to establish connections with other countries or Scandinavia by emphasizing human rights and environmental sustainability deserves to be among the nations with successful soft power as it would enhance diplomatic relationship and even secure a nation's global leading role. Second, soft power helps a country achieve its economic goals when visiting tourism, investments, and foreign students come from other nations. Japan's successful offer of its culture, technology and people through its soft power. Also, it complements the traditional use of hard power as a balanced approach, known as 'smart power', that integrates the application of military strength with cultural and diplomatic tools. Soft power enables nations to set global norms and institutions that lead such initiatives as climate change and human rights without the use of force to obtain influence. Due to all of the above, soft power is no longer viable option for achieving a country's sustainable global leadership and international cooperation in this day and age, therefore. It is a good beginning to comprehend the development of Saudi in the world and light its regional stability, economic development and cultural leadership. Secondly, it is an attempt to contribute to academic debate on soft power and provide some enlightenment into how Mohammed bin Salman's strategy of reshaping Saudi Arabia's rebranding on the world stage has been successful.

Research Problem

The leadership of Muhammad bin Salman leads to a new direction in Saudi Arabia's soft power. Saudi Arabia under the direction of Mohammed bin Salman is reshaping its ways of projecting power due to changes in the world. The Kingdom has in the recent past reoriented its power dynamics, transcending what used to be its key support pillars in the form of religious consent, oil income, and armed strength and instead using cultural outreach, economic measures, and major national projects such as Vision 2030 as new soft power instruments. This is an essential shift in power exercise and perception domestically and internationally. Understanding whether the observed transformation is a radical departure from previous methods or just a way to mask the existing power dynamics is important for the analysis of the implications.

Research Questions

- What role has Mohammed bin Salman played in shaping and advancing Saudi Arabia's soft power?

¹¹ Fulton, "Sports and Soft Power in Saudi Arabia."

¹² Nye, *Soft Power*, 9.

- Have Saudi Arabia's media and sports initiatives under Mohammed bin Salman changed its global soft power image?

Main Argument:

Under Mohammed bin Salman's leadership, Saudi Arabia recent initiatives in Sport and Media may enhance its soft power standing.

Literature Review

This examination of Joseph Nye's Soft Power theory explores the theory's fundamentals, its proponents and actors, and its strategies for application in International Relations. Soft power is a nation's ability to make others do things their way by appealing to its values and power without the use of force. Analysis in the 'Changing Nature of Power: The Global Diffusion of Information Technology' chapter indicates that soft power consists of three major pillars: culture, political values, and foreign policies which he uses to exert influence on others and promote international cooperation.¹³ Culture in soft power framework is considered as a base element where culture was classified as noble culture (i.e. sophisticated ideologies) and popular culture (i.e. entertainment and consumer items). These cultural elements can shape people preference and perception towards the world. Thus, political values will also increase the soft power of a nation when they are regarded as legitimate and at the same time, in line with universal ideals such as democracy and freedom.¹⁴ Furthermore, a nation whose foreign policies are moral and inclusive, has an ability of attracting allies and establish cooperation. The soft power uniqueness: its unquantifiability, permissiveness, totality, and accommodability with hard power. While hard power is the kind that relies on coercion and leaves a shorter and a more superficial impact, soft power works through gradual persuasion and makes a deeper and more enduring one. It goes further in that soft power is fluid and changes with social, cultural and political changes, necessitating countries to remain flexible in their approach. As Saudi Arabia became widely recognized by its host country as the heart of the Muslim world, it has defined its identity and values through its host country in cultural diplomacy, which Saudi Arabia relies on. The global harmony is one of its efforts, such as the hosting of interfaith dialogues through an Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) as a center to support global harmony. These include, for example, the Kingdom's efforts to keep studying its cultural heritage and resorting to tourism as one of the means of soft power. This is an indication that Saudi Arabia is about to present a progressive face and will not ignore its traditional ancients. Humanitarian assistance forms a key component of the Kingdom's initiatives to improve its soft power. This approach emphasizes on the generosity of Saudi Arabia on the global platform because the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center provide dietary aid to more than 80 countries. The initiatives were within its broader foreign policy goals of using those initiatives to promote regional stability and offsetting influence, principally that of Iran.¹⁵ However, Vision 2030 is the plan of Saudi Arabia to develop its soft power and transform its economy to sustainability and reduced dependence on oil earnings.¹⁶ NEOM and the global sporting events initiatives are for examples because they are attempting to show the country's interest in modernity and innovation.¹⁷ However, Saudi Arabia continues to struggle to exploit its soft power potential

¹³ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), 84–86.

¹⁴ Nye, *The Future of Power*, 84.

¹⁵ Joseph A. Kéchichian, "Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 13, 2014.

¹⁶ Vision 2030, "Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa>.

¹⁷ David B. Roberts, "Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: Redefining Soft Power," *The Middle East Journal* 73, no. 1 (2019): 1–17.

to its fullest. Human rights and political reforms are the areas that it's going to be criticized in because of its image around the world.¹⁸ However, the Kingdom has continued to give soft power its utmost importance as a crucial pillar to its foreign policy, using cultural, economic and humanitarian tactics to preserve its leadership position in the Arab and Muslim worlds. Cultural diplomacy is the pillar of Saudi Arabia's soft power diplomacy. It has been an agent of promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation based on the Kingdom's cultural and religious relevance as the birthplace of Islam. These efforts are supported by such organizations as the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) and the creation of heritage destinations such as Al-Ula that improves the reputation of Saudi Arabia on the global stage. Another pillar of Saudi Arabia's soft power is aid to the needy. Such attempts are beneficial for Saudi Arabia in the terms of positive image and promotion of the Kingdom's global reputation through KS relief. More attention to humanitarian support serves to strengthen the position of Saudi Arabia in soft power. Humanitarian aid is another pillar of Saudi soft power. These initiatives are a progressive image for Saudi Arabia as well as boost Saudi Arabia's international standing through KS relief, a part of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, the Kingdom assists more than 80 countries in time of needs.¹⁹ In addition, initiatives are also being taken under Vision 2030 to diversify economic activities such as NEOM, which has made Saudi Arabia a center of innovation and sustainability.²⁰

Despite having these achievements, Saudi Arabia's soft power potential was not fully utilized. Issues related to human rights and political reforms are the criticisms on the Kingdom's improved global image, while Saudi Arabia's strong interest in soft power, as it improves its image globally, through the use of cultural diplomacy, humanitarian outreach and economic innovation, demonstrate the Kingdom's strong interest in enhancing its soft power and maintaining leadership in the Arab and Muslim worlds. The leadership of Muhammad bin Salman leads to a new direction in Saudi Arabia's soft power. Saudi Arabia under the direction of Mohammed bin Salman is reshaping its ways of projecting power due to changes in the world. The Kingdom has in the recent past reoriented its power dynamics, transcending what used to be its key support pillars in the form of religious consent, oil income, and armed strength and instead using cultural outreach, economic measures, and major national projects such as Vision 2030 as new soft power instruments. This is an essential shift in power exercise and perception domestically and internationally. Understanding whether the observed transformation is a radical departure from previous methods or just a way to mask the existing power dynamics is important for the analysis of the implications.

Theoretical Framework:

The theory most appropriate for this research is the idea of soft power by Joseph Nye, whose adoption is the primary lens through which the Crown Prince's leadership has been instrumental in the changing face of Saudi Arabia.²¹ But his definition is soft power. This perspective suggests that the first source is in the country's culture, the second in its political values, and a competent and legitimate moral standing makes the country's foreign policies the third source. However, because Saudi Arabia is no longer relying on its traditional hard power, oil wealth, and military strength, such elements should now be considered more carefully in its position. to divert attention to a soft power strategy as indicated in Vision 2030. Hence, we can deduce that Saudi Arabia's

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2024: Saudi Arabia," <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/saudi-arabia>.

¹⁹ King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, "About Us," KSrelief, <https://www.ksrelief.org>.

²⁰ Kristin Smith Diwan, "The Rise of Saudi Cultural Diplomacy," *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*, February 3, 2022, <https://agsiw.org/the-rise-of-saudi-cultural-diplomacy/>.

²¹ Nye, *The Future of Power*, 84.

present days policies are very related to soft power theory. Due to its focus, this examines how Saudi Arabia can utilize the soft power tool to accomplish primary foreign policy goals in the institutions of cultural, economic, and political. To fulfill this goal, Saudi Arabia has to establish consistency of its national culture, values and strategic foreign policies with the course of Vision 2030 and the objective of improving its image to the outside world, strengthening its foreign relations, and its place in the region. For instance, the soft power initiatives of the Country, such as investments in media, sports and public diplomacy (i.e. educational exchange and international broadcasting) represent the efforts, also in this field but not exclusively, to exercise its influence without basing it exclusively on military and economic instruments.²² This approach reflects the jurisdiction of Nye's view, which is that a nation has soft power if it can be seen as a globe appealing and legitimate actor. This research directly takes root in the assumptions embedded in soft power theory and especially on soft power theory assumption that influence is attained through attraction rather than through coercion. Then it assumes that Saudi Arabia's greater presence on the global stage in exchanges, by media, and other cultural activities will lead to increasing influence in the world. Moreover, theory holds that a nation's soft power is reproduced through this international image and perception and legitimacy, cultural values, diplomatic engagement, are crucial to create favorable global relations.²³ It is this assumption which is vital to those who understand how Saudi Arabia is using its soft power strategies under Vision 2030 to enhance the Kingdom's international standing and enhance its global influence. In addition, this research also takes on the new notion of smart power put forward by Suzanne Nossel which is about using soft and hard power together to form a better strategy for international influence.²⁴ Thus, Saudi Arabia's smart power in action involved the usage of both its traditional economic strengths (oil wealth, strategic alliances) and the growing soft power instruments (media, sports, cultural diplomacy). The Kingdom has an edge of hard and soft power to balance geopolitical challenges and to enhance the Kingdom's standing in the global arena by attraction rather than causing. Importantly, the relationship between soft power theory and Saudi Arabia crucially bears on the theory's usefulness in explaining effectiveness in the Kingdom's strategic transformation as well as its soft power efforts (i.e. soft power initiatives linked with Vision 2030). The study investigates the effectiveness of these strategies in making Saudi Arabia more sustainable within the Saudi foreign policy objectives at the global level.²⁵

Research Methodology:

This research investigates Saudi Arabia's soft power pursuits in the context of Vision 2030 by combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis probes the discourses, targets, and delivery of these initiatives such as the ones in AIUla, cultural diplomacy activities and initiatives for regional stability. This research is based on a qualitative study of official documents, government announcements, and strategic policy papers. This secondary material includes academic books, peer reviewed studies, journalistic accounts, research reports by relevant bodies and articles from prominent think tanks, all of which provide relevant observations on Saudi Arabia's soft power initiatives. In the quantitative dimension, researchers look at specific measures that denote the effectiveness of the Kingdom's soft power pursuit. These sources use international rank Soft quantify performance through metrics such as the Soft Power 30 and the Global Soft Power Index, and regional audience feedback. The assessment of such metrics such as cultural exports, tourism rise, extension of media influence, development of the sports infrastructure, and

²² Roberts, "Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: Redefining Soft Power."

²³ Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004), 11–12.

²⁴ Suzanne Nossel, "Smart Power," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 2 (2004): 131–142.

²⁵ Roberts, "Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: Redefining Soft Power."

foreign direct investment provides an idea on their scope and results. By combining expert analysis and quantitative measurements, we get a deeper insight into Saudi Arabia's journey in soft power capability building. Against the principles of soft power, this analysis scrutinizes Saudi Arabia's strategy in reshaping its national image, expanding international reach, and strengthening its non-forcible approaches towards engagement consistent with Vision 2030 goals.

Analysis:

We summarize by synthesizing the crucial insights presented throughout this thesis, examining the impact of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's (MbS) soft power initiatives on regional and global power dynamics. Using Joseph Nye's soft power theory, shedding light on the power of strategic narrative, nation branding, and smart power, this study reveals how Saudi Arabia wants to rebrand itself in the global arena by ditching old styles of hard power and oil diplomacy in favor of more culturally central and reputation-driven modes of influence.

Key Findings

This vision 2030 implementation has set the groundwork for Saudi Arabia transformation and investment in soft power. The vision entails a future oriented as well as diversified and modernizing outlook, aimed at achieving international respect and transforming its identity from that of a conservative petrostate to a progressive, economically dynamic regional actor. Projects such as NEOM, the Red Sea Project and the Green Middle East have left major impacts on how the rest of the world perceives Saudi Arabia. Such efforts are more than mere economic development; they also serve as form of shaping regional narratives and helping increase the country's reputation.²⁶ According to the study, the cultural and sports diplomacy are the central pillars of Saudi Arabia's initiatives to promote soft power. Events such as Red Sea Film Festival, Riyadh Season, and linkages to global entertainment tête-à-tête such as WWE, Formula One and LIV Golf are vital tactics of attracting international viewers and making the Kingdom appealing. With these projects, Saudi Arabia ensures to promote itself as a hub of creativity and international integration attracting tourists and investors that creates a more open approach of the country.²⁷ Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's plans to host the FIFA World Cup in 2034 and purchase of European football clubs testify to the strategic plan to improve its global reputation. They make a lot of difference on the domestic scene, creating a sense of national pride, of togetherness under the leadership of MBS.²⁸ Saudi Arabia's soft power strategy operates within a centralized and state-controlled media environment, which enables consistent messaging and narrative reinforcement. This top-down model differs from liberal democracies where soft power often emerges organically through civil society. The state, through the Public Investment Fund (PIF) and media conglomerates like MBC Group, strategically curates' international content and storytelling aligned with Vision 2030.²⁹ Though this approach has enabled strong message discipline and control over national branding, it also poses challenges to credibility. Persistent concerns regarding press freedom, human rights, and political dissent have limited Saudi Arabia's soft power potential in some Western liberal democracies. However, the Kingdom has found receptive audiences in

²⁶ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, "Vision 2030," <https://vision2030.gov.sa>.

²⁷ Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Salman's Legacy: The Dilemmas of a New Era in Saudi Arabia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

²⁸ Simon Chadwick and Paul Widdop, "The Soft Power of Saudi Arabia's Sports Investments," *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 2023.

²⁹ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *The Changing Politics of the Gulf* (London: Hurst & Co., 2020).

regions like Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, where authoritarian governance is more normalized and economic cooperation outweighs political critiques.³⁰

Moral standing in the Muslims and the developing world has been greatly facilitated by organizations such as KS relief and Saudi Fund for Development. By providing aid in conflict zones and during natural disasters, the Kingdom presents itself as a responsible and benevolent actor. Strategic investments and alliances in Africa and Southeast Asia serve both economic and diplomatic purposes, creating long-term dependency and alignment with Saudi geopolitical objectives.³¹ Saudi Arabia's deployment of soft power does not occur in isolation. Rather, it operates in tandem with its vast economic leverage and traditional security influence in the Gulf region. This hybrid model aligns with the concept of "smart power" as defined by Suzanne Nossel. For example, Saudi Arabia uses financial investments, sovereign wealth diplomacy, and economic aid alongside cultural campaigns to enhance its global clout. The Kingdom's influence in multilateral institutions such as the G20 and OPEC+, and its ability to mediate in regional conflicts (e.g., in Yemen and Sudan), are further examples of this blended approach.

Conclusion:

To this study, it has been believed that the Kingdom, under the leadership of Mohammed bin Salman has experienced a proactive and diverse transformation that was achieved through the strategic use of soft power tools. With the help of the soft power that Joseph Nye helped define, embellished using narratives and nation branding, and executed via smart power strategies, Saudi Arabia has acutely improved its global image. While limitations persist due to political structure and historical baggage, the progress made in cultural diplomacy, media outreach, humanitarian engagement, and regional leadership positions Saudi Arabia as an emerging soft power actor in the 21st-century geopolitical landscape. As the international system becomes more complex and narrative-driven, Saudi Arabia's efforts provide a compelling case study on how authoritarian states can adapt and leverage soft power in a rapidly evolving global order.

Bibliography

- May 31, 2023. " Saudi Soft Power in 2030." - *The Business Year*.
- ”, Qiddiya Investment Company. n.d. "*Qiddiya: The Capital of Entertainment, Sports and the Arts*.". Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://www.qiddiya.com>.
- 2030., Vision. n.d. *Government of Saudi Arabia*. Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa>.
- Diwan, Kristin Smith. "Saudi Arabia's Soft Power Play." Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, February 15, 2023. n.d.
- Dorsey, James. December 2022. " The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer: Saudi Arabia's Sports Diplomacy." *ISPI Commentary*, .
- Freer, Courtney. August 21, 2023. "'Saudi Vision 2030 and the Development of Entertainment.'" *LSE Middle East Centre Blog*.
- Fulton, Jonathan. November 22, 2023." "Sports and Soft Power in Saudi Arabia." *The Diplomat*,.
- Graham-Harrison, Emma, and Stephanie Kirchgaessner. July 2, 2023. "Saudi Arabia's Big Push into Sports: What's Behind It?" . " *The Guardian*,.
- Hubbard, Ben. Publishing, 2020. " MBS :The Rise to Power of Mohammed bin Salman." *New York Crown*.

³⁰ Damien Kingsbury, *Power Politics and the Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2022).

³¹ KSrelief Annual Report, 2023; Saudi Fund for Development Reports.

, 2023. *International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*. . The Military Balance 2023.

Khatib, Lina. 2020. "'Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the Birth of a New Social Contract.'" Chatham House Report, .

n.d. *King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief)*. . Accessed May 10, 2025. . <https://www.ksrelief.org>.

Nye, Joseph. , 2004. " Soft Power:The Means to Success in World Politics." *New York: PublicAffairs*.

Nye, Joseph. n.d. In *Soft Power Foreign Polic*, by Joseph S. Nye, 153–171.

Roberts, David B. 2017. "Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: Redefining the Kingdom's Global Image." " 77-87. *Middle East Policy* 24,, no. 3 .

Smith, Rory. June 6, 2023. "'Saudi Arabia's Bid to Remake Soccer.'" *The New York Times*, .

Sons, Sebastian. February 2017. "'Saudi Arabia's 'Soft Power' Strategy: Islam, Image, and Influence.'" *German Institute for International and Security Affair*.

Stewart, Philippa. February 10, 2023. "'Sebastian Vettel Supports Women in Saudi Karting Project.'" " *CNN*.

2022. "The Dimensions of Saudi Arabia's Soft Power." *The Gulf Research*.