

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen



Abstract:

Sport Diplomacy and Soft Power through Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022: A Case of Generation Amazing (Kristian Coates Ulrichsen; Marc Owen Jones; Davies Banda)

Sport mega events (SMEs) such as the upcoming FIFA men's World Cup 2022 to be hosted by the State of Qatar have huge significance in how a hosting nation can use the status to influence or (re)build its influence as part of its diplomatic activities. Today, sport has become part of the plethora of tools at the disposal of governments to engage in international relations today demonstrates the democratisation of the diplomatic space (Murray, 2012). Murray posits that "institutes of sport and diplomacy are universal in scope and nature. Working in tandem can spread positive sporting values such as mutual respect, discipline, tolerance and compassion among acrimonious political relationships" (ibid, 2012, p.12).

This roundtable aims to discuss the conceptualisation of soft power accrued through hosting of SMEs and role that legacy programmes can play as part of the new actors in a democratised public diplomacy space. The participants will critically appraise Qatar's foreign policy in relation to that of its Persian Gulf neighbours. The panellists will discuss Qatar's precarious placement between two large regional powers, Iran and Saudi Arabia, and two other countries with different strategies of international governance, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, to assess how Qatar has positioned itself within the region and demonstrated its soft power (Nye, 2004).

The roundtable will also discuss the evidenced practical application of sport as part of the tools for diplomatic endeavours within the Persian Gulf. The panellists will focus on Qatar's approach to soft power as multifaceted as it draws upon various forms of diplomacy. One of such forms of diplomacy being sport diplomacy where the involvement of new actors other than the state have been associated with diplomatic activities at home and abroad. A specific case of Generation Amazing, a human and social legacy programme under the auspices of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy is used to elaborate on how the State of Qatar is delivering its legacy at home and abroad using sport diplomacy.

Generation Amazing is positioned to make a significant contribution to shaping the legacy of the tournament and more importantly, the legacy associated to the hosting of the first ever mega football tournament in the Middle East region. This positions the State of Qatar in a very unique position which is not easily imitable and is a rarity to the region. As the global gaze in sports, specifically football, focuses on Qatar this year, the roundtable will debate the current narratives that have been prevalent in media, more specifically western media. The panellists will highlight the rare opportunity presented to Qatar and the region to put themselves on the global map, shape a new narrative, and paint its own modern and progressive ideas on a new canvas to build the nation's brand image, that of the Arab region and also foster new global relationships.

The roundtable will allow for questions from the conference audience based on the discussion that would have been presented.

Bio:

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, Ph.D., is a fellow for the Middle East at the Baker Institute. His research examines the changing position of Persian Gulf states in the global order, as well as the emergence of longer-term, nonmilitary challenges to regional security. Previously, he worked as senior Gulf analyst at the Gulf Center for Strategic Studies and as co-director of the Kuwait Program on Development, Governance and Globalization in the Gulf States at the London School of Economics.

Coates Ulrichsen has published extensively on the Gulf. His books include “The Gulf States in International Political Economy” (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), “The United Arab Emirates: Power, Politics, and Policymaking” (Routledge, 2016), and “Qatar and the Gulf Crisis” (Oxford University Press, 2020). Coates Ulrichsen’s articles have appeared in numerous academic journals, including *Global Policy* and the *Journal of Arabian Studies*, and he consults regularly on Gulf issues for government and private sector agencies around the world. Coates Ulrichsen holds a doctorate in history from the University of Cambridge.