AMERICAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN QATAR

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Abstract - Contemporary public diplomacy utensilsaugmented and enlarged in the new millennium. Currently, the range of phenomena that can be used as new tools of public diplomacy has expanded. Consistent with new rhetorical view, a unanimous physical and virtual survey was conducted in Qatar to find out the American public diplomacy across the country. People's inclination towards American cuisine, culture, music, lectures, magazines, TV shows, social media, use of English in daily life, willingness to send children to an American school, desire to be a neighbor of an American family, and some more specific questions were asked to more than a hundred respondents in different cities in Qatar. It showed that the majority of Qatari youth follows an American person or American activities on social media, reads American books, follows and listens to American lectures. The vast majority watch American films and series daily and eat at American fast food chains. Other notable findings are shared and diagnosed in this study, such as the desire for one American family neighbourhood. These results reveal a very one-sided asymmetric relationship in public diplomacy between the United States as the hegemon power of the unipolar international system and Qatar as a small country. Unfortunately, when we survey young Americans in the capital of Qatar, only one fourth of those questioned give the correct answer. Following the survey results, Qatar's capabilities and opportunities in the field of public diplomacy will be discussed, followed by a discussion on the unilateral development of public diplomacy between the two countries. The article concludes with public diplomacy policy options for Qatar as a small power in view of forward-looking projects such as increasing the number of Qatari cultural centres and work areas in Euro-Atlantic countries, developing Qatari study programs in European countries, seminars, student exchange programs, etc. Effective use of television channels, deepening of agency news outlets around the world, volunteer delegates to intergovernmental organizations, development of mutual relations with NGOs, management of the social component of multinational companies and promotion of Qatari cuisine through the establishment of foreign fast-food chains.

Keywords - Public Diplomacy, Qatar, Cultural Diplomacy, American Public Diplomacy, Arabian Gulf Studies, Middle East Studies.

I. INTRODUCTION

America is undoubtedly the hegemonic power in today's unipolar international system. In theory, his mighty power should overwhelm the following major power combinations: For example, its military and economic power should be greater than Russia, China, France, and Britain. This formulation does not fit in today's world, so the United States is still considered a hegemonic power, albeit one that is declining. Its soft powers too such as diplomatic skills, governmental skills, national morale, and culture should overwhelm the following great states' soft powers and those should reach everywhere in the world to be the hegemon power of the international system. American public diplomacy as an intersectional component of diplomacy and culture is also should reach all parts of the world. Surely, American public diplomacy works well by its movie sector, Hollywood, fast food chains, educational programs, conferences, scholarships, seminars, TV channels, children's tools including toys, multinational corporations (MNCs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), infomercials, independent news agencies, social media tools, cultural centres, music, and serials, (Yenigun, Yari and Maani, 2021). During the cold war as a hierarchical leader of one of the pacts, America yielded to the United Kingdom and France to keep their sphere of influence zones and pump their public diplomacy in those regions including the Middle East. However, after the unipolar system started the hegemon power needed to reach everywhere with its public diplomacy tools. New research highlights that public diplomacy has evolved significantly over the past two decades and is no longer a meaningful, isolated activity, but a dynamic and open endeavour. This means that the new public diplomacy will involve not only the direct or indirect provision of information and the use of other appropriate tools by current governments but also the use of information and feedback from target groups to understand the success of government policies. It means that it also focuses on collecting. In this way, over the past thirty years, the United States has attempted to utilize not only hard power but also soft power, including public diplomacy, in the Middle East and the Gulf region. The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of American public diplomacy in Qatar. For the past three decades, the United States has tried to win the hearts and minds of people in the Gulf region, including Qatar. The main questions of this study is finding out if the United States won hearts and minds in Qatar.

II. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

In order to understand the level of US public diplomacy in the Gulf region and Qatar, several studies have been conducted according to the socio-physiological and rhetorical context of the Gulf region and the US public diplomacy tools used intensively in the Gulf region. Some specific survey questions were created. The survey is divided into two main sections. The first group of questions focuses on the tools of American public diplomacy in the Gulf region. The second set of questions focuses on the impact of American public diplomacy on Qatari citizens. First, questions will be asked about cultural diplomacy such as movies, cooking, and music. The survey then delved even deeper into public diplomacy, school tools, and the Qatari public's aspirations for these tools. Then comes the tool of choice; because people often make conscious choices about language use and tools such as social media, their desire to study in America has been challenged. These, as the first group of questions, may be counted as a means of public diplomacy. In the last section, target questions were asked such as "familiarity with American history and culture," "desire to send children to American schools and the United States," and "desire to be neighbours of American families".

The survey was conducted in all Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Qatar. It is being distributed as widely as possible to universities, multinational corporations, NGOs, and other organizations. The number of respondents reached about 1,100. The survey results were categorized according to the country of origin of the respondents and more than 109 respondents were identified from Qatar. This study is based solely on the reactions of the Qatari public.

The survey population distribution reflects the reality of Qatar at -/+2%. In terms of gender distribution, 52% of her Qatari respondents are male and 48% are female. As can be seen in Figure 1, the more than three forth of Qatari respondents (76%) are university graduates. Within it, 23% of it have a master's and/or PhD degree. Only 16% have a high school or secondary school diploma.

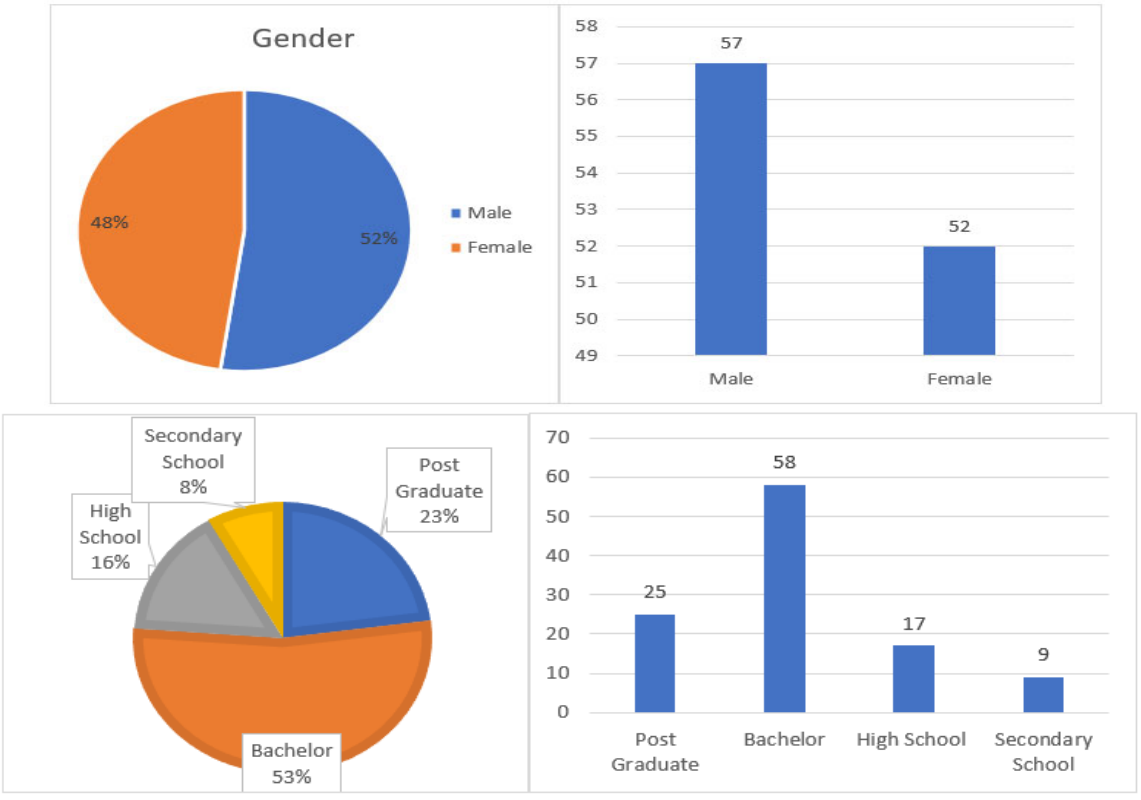

Figure 1: Gender and Education Level Distribution of the Survey.

Regarding age distribution, it is clear that the survey was conducted among the young generations. The youngest age group (ages 18-24) dominated the 27 respondents (36%), with the 25-34 age category accounting for 33% and the 35-44 age category accounting for 36% of the pie occupies as seen in figure 2. The 45+ category only includes 6% of respondents. Therefore, it can be said that the majority of respondents with a ratio of 58% are young people. That is why all governments in the region and the out-of-region focus on those age groups' tendencies, preferences, minds, and ideas because all of the governments do their futuristic projects accordingly.

In some regions, such as the Gulf region and Latin America, the labor sector can also be an important factor. In the Gulf region, the state remains the primary direct or indirect employer, and workers' tendencies and preferences also reflect the sectoral tendencies of their work units. The survey was conducted using a random distribution, which fortunately matched Qatar's sectoral distribution by +/- 2%. According to the distribution of the survey, 42% of the respondents work in the government and 29% work in the private sector. One of the interesting working sector question points is almost one-third of the respondents are unemployed in Qatar. Nevertheless, when we ask what the reason was the answers came as they do not need a job and they have chosen not to work, their income level is high.

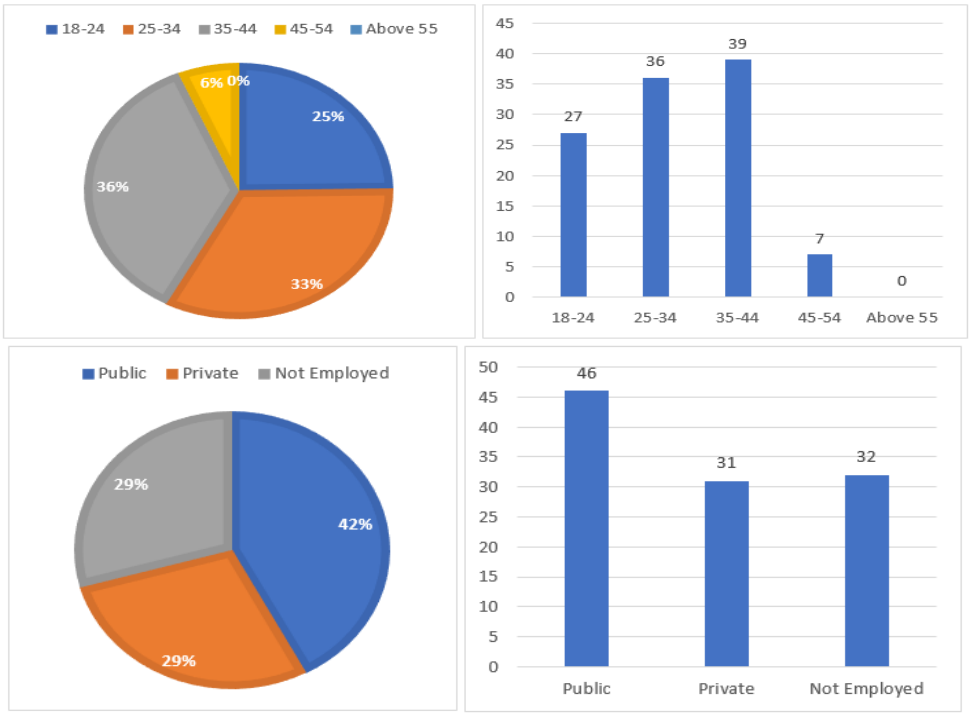

Figure 2: Age and Working Sector Distribution of the Survey.

There are two types of answer styles in the survey. The first type is a direct answer “yes” or “no”. So, the interpretation technique is easy for those kinds of answers. Perhaps the reasons could be deeper exclamation points. The second type of answer is divided into four answers “frequently”, “sometimes”, “rarely” and “never”. The interpretation technique was evaluated by dividing the answers into two sections. “Frequently” means for the respondents' on daily bases 7-10 times a week, and “sometimes” means for the respondents 3-4 times a week. So the calculation of those answers is counted as a positive answer in the interpretations. “Rarely” means once a week and/or 4-10 times a month. "Never" is already a full negative answer. So, the combination of “never” and “rarely” is counted as a negative answer, and interpretations were done in this article accordingly.

III. SURVEY RESULTS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Maybe the most important public diplomacy tools in the new millennium and Gen Z are visual and audience tools. Most of them believe what they see in movies and series instead of reading books. For this reason, the survey asked whether they often or sometimes watch American movies and series in their daily lives.

The majority of Qatari people, especially the younger generation, watch American movies and TV shows in their daily lives. 88% of respondents answered this question affirmatively. Music is also considered one of the most important tools to influence other people and their cultural tendencies. 55% of her Qatari respondents listen to American music more often than Qatari songs. The vast majority of them, 89%, listen to American music on their mobile phones every day, at least 4-5 days a week, in the car, at home, and/or while walking.

The kitchen expresses the taste of food, but at the same time, it is a tool that is influenced by external cultures. When people eat at a restaurant, they also prefer to eat in the authentic atmosphere of the restaurant. The conversational style of the waiters, the music, the smells and tastes of the restaurant reflect the home country’s culture to the host country.

If people in the host country prefer to eat there, it is because people are becoming accustomed to that culture, and automatically and voluntarily host country's people are affected by that culture depending on the frequency of visits to the restaurant.

It is very clear from the survey results that Qatari people, especially city dwellers, and the younger generation, are 89% more likely to visit American fast food than local restaurants. 55% of the respondents frequently, almost daily bases, go to American food-chain restaurants. These numbers are very high, like New York residents, and very effective instruments in the hand of the hegemon power.



Figure 3: Cultural Tendencies: Movies, Music, and Restaurants.

There are no news agencies in most of the Gulf countries, and nearly all countries except Al Jazeera gather all their international information and news from outside news agencies, making it a natural tool for Western news agencies automatically. This is one of the biggest shortcomings of the Arabian Gulf media. Gulf people know that, so when they want to stay up to date on local news, they watch local TV channels, but when they need information about the world, especially among the younger generation, they turn to social media and international media news channels. The purpose of this study was also to examine the tendency of Qatari people of watching American TV channels. Interestingly, Qataris watch American television news channels so frequently that they have one of the highest percentages among Gulf residents at 46% per day. However, assuming that American news channels are watched 3-5 times a week 83% of Qataris are following the American news channels.

A very interesting result emerges regarding the reading of American books by Qataris. More than half of Qatari people, especially young people, read American books instead of watching American news, and the percentage is over half (54%). This result may be because, except for some colleges of literature and law, many of the younger generations are studying in English at universities and reading in English very intensively. When wetake a look at the age distribution of the survey, the majority of the respondents graduated from the American/British education system. Additionally, 76% of respondents are university graduates and their language of instruction was exclusively English. Respondents who chose to "never read American books" were almost down among other readers, at 15% in Qatar. Interestingly, this is very close to the ratio of secondary school and high school graduates combined (24%).

Again, following American scholastic activities such as journal articles, scientific conferences, and magazines gives surprising results. More than half of the respondents (65%) follow American journal articles and international conferences. When we started this survey, we expected the survey to have the lowest proportion of academic questions, as

reading habits are declining globally and this will be mirrored following scholastic resources. However, respondents highly exceeded the survey's expectations. It is seen that America benefits the most from public diplomacy of scholastic resources.

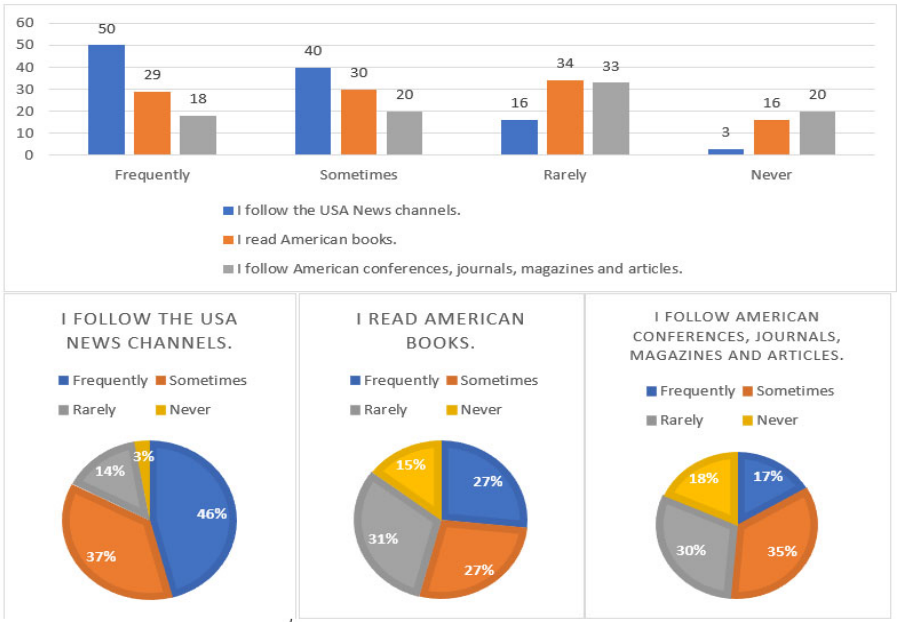

Figure 4: Scholastic Resources and News Impacts on Qatari People.

Religion was at the center of the culture until the 20th century. Nevertheless, with the establishment of nation-states in the world, language replaced religion. Today the language is the most important phenomenon of culture, the core of culture. Using another language in your own country means not just the language, but adopting the culture of that language in the host country. Due to the importance of language use and the impact of the sphere of influence, France gives very big importance to the Francophone International Organization, which was established after the decolonization in 1970. Today it is an institutional mechanism dedicated to promoting the French language and implementing political, educational, economic, and cultural cooperation among 88 countries and governments around the world (IOF, 2022).

The use of English in Qatar takes precedence over Britain, but clearly over the United States, the hegemonic power of the unipolar international system. The high level of English usage in Qatar can be interpreted as direct American public diplomacy in the country. Therefore, one of the questions focused on using English in everyday life. Again, it is very interesting that more than two third of Qataris, 70% use English in their daily life. Of course, this gives America a great advantage in direct public diplomacy in the host country. Despite the winds of globalization, greater states are more nationalist; France, Germany, Turkey, and Italy still have very high rates of native language usage, and English usage is very low in comparison with the Arabian Gulf including Qatar.

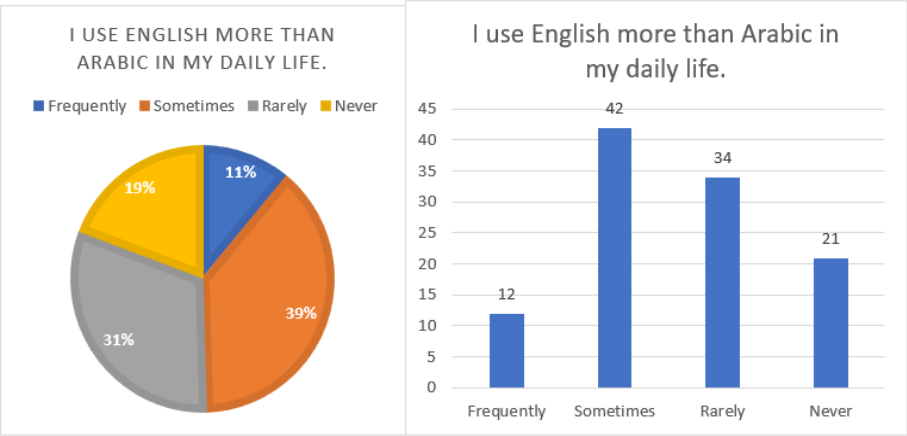

Figure 5: English Usage in Qatar.

If the people of a country feel familiar with another one, it exclusively shows that that country has achieved public diplomacy using different instruments. That is why it is not a reason or a tool;it is the result of its public diplomacy. In the Qatar survey, this question was asked to determine the results of America's public diplomacy with the Qatari people. 63% of Qataris say they are familiar to American culture and they know American history and culture, even if they have never been to America as seen in Figure 6. Although this is a great success of US public diplomacy in Qatar, some other Gulf countries such as Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates have an advanced rate than Qatar.

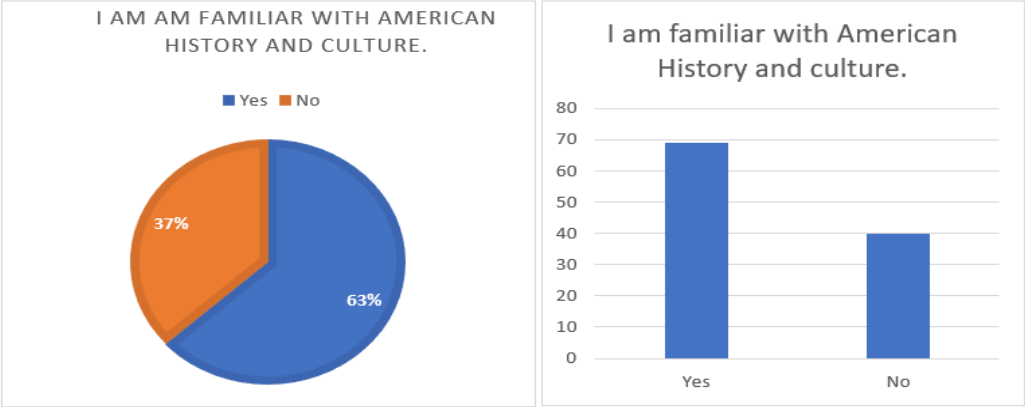

Figure 6: Familiarity with American History and Culture.

It is well known that studying in a country is one of the most important cultural and diplomatic tools. For this reason, many powerful countries voluntarily offer different types of scholarships to countries in their sphere of influence and further. transnational alumni are natural ambassadors in their homeland. This is why great powers or challengers to become great powers, especially in the Western world such as the US, UK, France, Turkey and Germany, try to stay in touch with their former students. to return to their homeland and use it peacefully. They are like bridges and cultural attachés. Besides alumni, the desire to study abroad in a country is seen as love and respect for this country. Two of these questions were combined into one question in this survey: The United States government considers American alumni and/or those interested in studying in the United States to win the hearts and minds of Qataris. Result is low as 27% of respondents, because this ratio includes also 'the desire of studying in the US" as shown in Figure 7.

Notwithstanding, when it comes to the desire for their children to study in American schools, positive reactions are seen in 64% of self-study cases in the US. The reason for this contrast might bebecause they have not found an opportunity to go to America for themselves and want to send their children there. Perhaps the difference between moral, religious and cultural reasons could be the main reasons, but this is definitely a topic that needs further academic research.

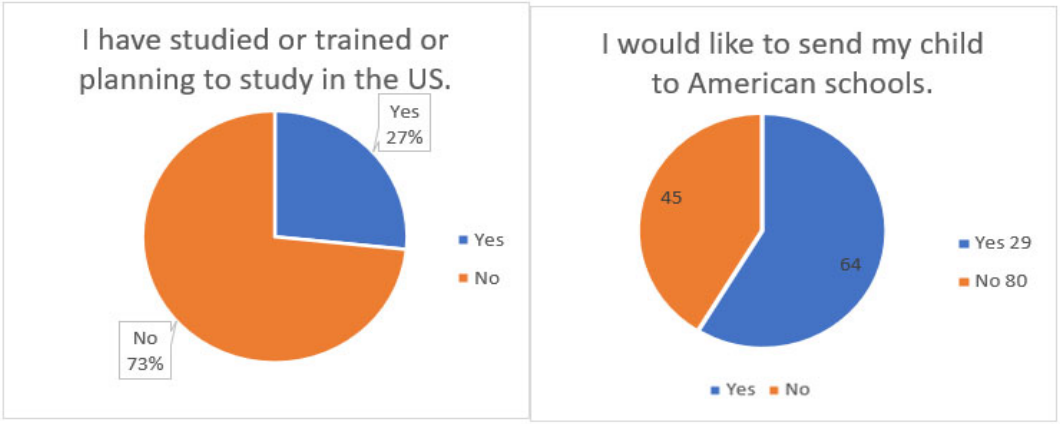

Figure 7: Desire to Study in America (Self and/or Child)

In socio-cultural studies theory, two eventful questions are ultimately asked to understand the harmony and suitability of two cultures/ethnic groups: to be a neighbor to them and to get marry to them. In this survey, marriage was not included due to some natural sensitivities, but being a neighbor or

wanting to be a neighbor was the ultimate target question to determine the culmination of the US public diplomacy in Qatar. Because neighbors mean spouses and children talk, walk, play, and live together more than relatives do, your lifestyles will become closer by time. Both sides will give little, sacrifice their lifestyles, and find a middle ground to live together peacefully with their neighbors. Again, this survey was launchedin six Gulf countries and interestingly, Bahrain broke the record with the highest percentage of about 70% wanting a neighbor with an American family. Although Qatar topped the states of Middle East and North Africa region once again in the Global Peace Index in 2023 according to Institute for Economics and Peace (Qatar News Agency 2023), Qatar has the median level of positive responses among the Arabian Gulf countries. 39% answered "yes" about being the neighbor of an American family, as shown in Figure 8. 61% of the respondents gave a negative answer about being the neighbor of an American family. This is probably due to the very different lifestyles of the two cultures.

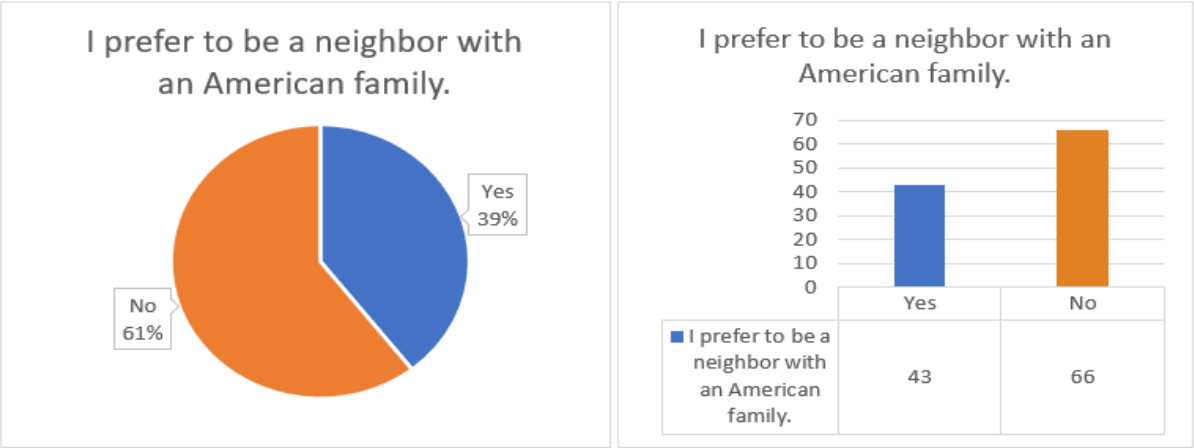

Figure 8: Preference to beaNeighbor to an American Family.

IV. CONCLUSION

America is the hegemonic power of the unipolar world and it is normal that its hard power and soft power elements will dominate world. In theory, hegemon and great powers soft and hard power instruments including public diplomacy must reach any tip in the world, otherwise they will start losing its hegemony or great power level. This is why American governments, whether Democratic or Republican, spend most of their public diplomacy money around the world and in the Arabian Gulf region. This survey was conducted in six Gulf countries and the results from Qatar yielded interesting results to interpret and discuss. It should be recalled that this survey was conducted mainly among young and educated people, of which the age group 18-44 accounted for 94% and the categories of university education (bachelors, masters) and PhD accounted for 76% of respondents.

There are two types of survey questions. The first category involves studying how Qataris use and accept American public diplomacy tools. Then the second type of question is trying to understand what the results of these tools are and to what extent Qataris are affected. In the first category of questions (questions about tools), it is clear that American public diplomacy tools have been widely applied and generally work very effectively in Qatar. For example, the majority of Qataris, 89%, watch American movies and TV series every day and eat at American fast-food chains with the same ratio, 89%. More than two third of Qataris, use English in their lives, more than 80% of Qataris follow American news channels, conferences, magazines, scientific articles and magazines. These are large proportions and it shows that US governmental public diplomacy has a very effective instruments in Qatar but also American people's public diplomacy (people to people) is working well such as think-tanks, non-governmental organizations and even private companies.

The measurement of the impact of these public diplomacy instruments on the Qatari people gives very high positive outcome for the US government and people. It is a fact that during the Qatar embargo American tendency in Qatar went down and those are the lower ratios then 5 years ago. For example, two third of Qatari responders say they know American history and culture and very close ration of those responders want to send their children to the American Schools. This rate is still very high compared to countries that are more nationalist like France, Turkey, Germany and Italy; and high compared to Oman and Saudi Arabia in theregion. The survey's largest and most focused question was "an American family's desire to be a neighbor," is the lowest ratio among the other question at 39%, but higher than Oman and Saudia Arabia. In social psychology, neighbors have more impact than relatives do. Again 39% is an achieve point for the United States and it shows that the US public

diplomacy worked in Qatar. Therefore, in sum it can be said that America's intensive public diplomacy received positive feedback from Qatar, at atwo third level compared to other Gulf countries.

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