

Influencing Police and Community Relations in Abu Dhabi with a Soft Power Approach during COVID-19

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Abstract Soft power policing is emerging as the policing catch phrase in 2021 in part arising from multiple police–community relations challenges gaining an increasing public focus globally. This article presents the soft power approach to policing engaged by Abu Dhabi police pre- and during the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the underpinning strategies and initiatives deployed to sustain community trust and confidence levels in Abu Dhabi Police. A review of global indexes promotes Abu Dhabi Police as a world leader in police–community relations, an achievement sustained throughout the COVID-19 global crisis. This research explores the ways in which achievements are impacted by a sustained and an all-encompassing policing approach that places soft power at the centre of police and community relations.

Introduction

To place into context the discussion in this article is to consider four key elements. First, the current global recognition of the UAE and in particular Abu Dhabi and Abu Dhabi Police. In 2020, the UAE was named the Middle East’s highest ranked soft power nation in Brand Finances Global Soft Power Index (Haigh, 2021). As a unique index, the Brand Global Soft Power Index undertakes a survey of 75,000 residents in 102 countries plus the views of 778 experts in a further 48 countries and territories (business leaders, market analysts, politicians, academics, think-tanks, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and journalists). The

Global Soft Power Index incorporates a broad range of measures, which in combination provide a balanced and holistic assessment of nations’ presence, reputation, and impact on the world stage. These include:

- awareness and familiarity: nation brands which people know, and have mental availability of, have greater soft power;
- overall influence: the degree to which a nation is seen to have influence in the respondent’s country as well as on the world’s stage;
- overall reputation: is this country deemed to have a strong and positive reputation globally?

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- performance on the core seven soft power pillars (Business and Trade, Governance, International Relations, Culture and Heritage, Media and Communication, Education and Science, People and Values); and
- performance in tackling the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic (on three pillars: Economy, Health and Well-being, International Aid and Cooperation) with this category and measures included for the first time in 2021 (Haigh, 2021, p. 35).

The global Gallup Index (Gallup, 2020) ranked the UAE in the top 10 safest countries in the world which aligns with Abu Dhabi ranking, for the fifth year in a row on the Numbeo index (Numbeo, 2021) as the safest city in the world. Of note, the Numbeo safety ranking is calculated on the results of surveys completed by the public on the Numbeo website and also takes into account the level of crime reported in the respective city.

In 2021, Abu Dhabi Police were awarded the European Forum Quality Management (EFQM) six-star rank for community partnership (EFQM.org, 2021). The EFQM award is the first amongst police agencies globally to achieve an award at this level. The second element is the concept of soft power for which Innes (2005) suggests soft power policing is where ‘police power is based less upon the direct enactment of coercion and rests instead upon a persuasive mode of social control’ (p. 157). Further discussion of the application of soft power as an inwards facing concept towards citizen/police relationship building is offered in the following section. The third element is the concept of legitimacy as it applies to policing. Tyler (2014) explains legitimacy is reflected in three areas: public trust and confidence in the police; willingness of residents to defer to the law and to police authority; and support for police actions as morally justified and appropriate to the circumstances (p. 4). The fourth element is the environment, including population demographics in

which Abu Dhabi Police operate. Specifically, the rapid development of Abu Dhabi as a modern city coupled with the rapid increase in a diverse population. A brief description of the environment in which Abu Dhabi Police operates is valuable in contextualizing the domain in which police/community relations are developed and in which the soft power approach by Abu Dhabi Police was applied during the COVID-19 pandemic. A key consideration here is the diversity of the population and the size of the expatriate population who have experience of policing concepts and approaches from their native countries. The population of the UAE as of April 2021 is almost 10 million. As indicated in Table 1 the population rate of growth has remained consistent in the period associated with the period under discussion in this article, that is 2019–21.

Similarly, the population in Abu Dhabi has realized a steady growth: the metro area population of Abu Dhabi in 2021 is 1,512,000, a 1.96% increase from 2020. The metro area population of Abu Dhabi in 2020 was 1,483,000, a 2.13% increase from 2019. The metro area population of Abu Dhabi in 2019 was 1,452,000, a 2.25% increase from 2018 (Worldpopulationreview.com, 2021). The UAE government fact sheet advises there are more than 200 nationalities living and working in the UAE with the expatriate community outnumbering the population of UAE nationals with a range of resources indicating the Emirate population as approximately 10% of the total population. Indians form the largest foreign community in the UAE, followed by Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, other Asians, Europeans, and Africans. An important characteristic of the UAE is the level of

Table 1: UAE population statistics

Year	Population	Growth rate	Density (per km ²)
2021	9,991,089	1.31	119.51
2020	9,890,402	1.23	118.31
2019	9,770,529	1.45	116.87

approximately 95% of the population is literate (u.ae/en/about-the-uae/factsheet 2021).

Literature review

The UAE has adopted a strategy which includes a focused commitment to use soft power to extend its influence and impact internally and globally.

The UAE Soft Power Council released the government's soft power strategy in 2017 with the aim 'to increase the country's global reputation abroad by highlighting its identity, heritage, culture and contributions of the UAE to the world' (u.ae.2021). The strategy is founded on six pillars of diplomacy reaching across and embracing all areas of society to form the framework for the UAE's public diplomacy: humanitarian diplomacy, scientific and academic diplomacy, national representatives diplomacy, people diplomacy, cultural and media diplomacy, and economic diplomacy (U.ae/en/2017).

The strategy reflects the key concept of soft power as a diplomacy strategy as proffered by Joseph Nye in 1990. Nye's (1990) conceptual work is generally accepted in the literature as the foundation of the soft power approach, initially in foreign relations. As outlined by Nye (2017) soft power is the ability to affect others to get the outcomes one prefers, and that can be accomplished by attraction and persuasion versus coercion or payment. Furthermore, Nye (2009, p. 160) suggests

...the major elements of a country's soft power include its culture (when it is pleasing to others), its values (when they are attractive and consistently practiced), and its policies (when they are seen as inclusive and legitimate).

The concepts of soft and hard power are more familiar in the literature as applied in foreign relations and military contexts (see Cross, 2011; Ivanov, 2020; Vuković, 2020). The work of Hayden (2012) offers explanation and application of Nye's concept of soft power in the context of foreign relations and refers to soft power as the

ability to get preferred outcomes through the co-optive means of agenda-setting, persuasion, and attraction (p. 30).

Garland (2017) and Woof (2017) offered a perspective on the interpretation of soft power for policing in explaining it is the use of a more diplomatic power approach to policing problems. Innes (2005) suggests soft power policing is where 'police power is based less upon the direct enactment of coercion and rests instead upon a persuasive mode of social control' (p. 157).

Similarly, McCarthy (2014) and McCarthy and O'Neill (2014) discuss that with a shift to applying a soft power approach to policing; there is the opportunity for those hard power requirements to maintain safety and security in the community to work in concert whilst increasing the promotion of a greater balance towards soft power initiatives. Of note in the context of the research presented in this article, the Abu Dhabi Police soft power strategies are inwards facing to the community as opposed to the more traditional approach reflected in the literature of a military or diplomatic (between countries) outward facing application.

Evidence of utilizing a soft power approach to policing is presented and discussed in the work of Skinns *et al.* (2017). The work centres on the soft power approach by police in the UK to the sensitive and often complex police custody environment and procedure and the provision of good custody relying on building good relationships (soft power) with those in custody rather than a reliance on coercive measures, that is hard power.

As explained by Al Hanaee (2018) soft power policing had been heralded as a panacea for a variety of societal problems. These include (1) the increasing distrust by the local communities to the police forces, through the lack of accountability of both high and low-level police officers to the community they serve and (2) the hesitancy of victims and witnesses of crime to assist the police in criminal investigations. It is valuable in the context of

the current case to consider the role of soft power policing in promoting police legitimacy and procedural justice.

The early work of Tyler (2006a) advocates:

Legitimacy is a psychological property of an authority, institution, or social arrangement that leads those connected to it to believe that it is appropriate, proper, and just. Because of legitimacy, people feel that they ought to defer to decisions and rules, following them voluntarily out of obligation rather than out of fear of punishment or anticipation of reward. (p. 375)

Jones (2020) proffers the concept of police legitimacy implies:

... that the police are seen as a legitimate power holder who uphold the law and operate in the community in a procedurally just way, giving a voice to the people they serve. (p. 580)

The work of Jones (2020) further suggests that with police perceived as legitimate power

holders, community members are more likely to comply and cooperate and there is greater satisfaction with the police. (p. 580)

The soft power approach has the potential to both enhance and scaffold on police legitimacy through activities that build positive police–community relations and thereby increasing satisfaction with the police and opportunity for public trust in policing. As Hough *et al.* (2010) argues public trust in policing builds institutional legitimacy and public compliance with the law.

As the study reported here considers the COVID-19 policing response by Abu Dhabi Police, it is valuable to place this in the context of the wider global policing response to COVID-19. Maskaly *et al.* (2021) suggests the COVID-19

pandemic brought changes to police organizations worldwide and their respective areas of focus and activities. The Maskaly *et al.*'s (2021) study indicated a high level of heterogeneity in the degree of change (p. 1). Further the authors suggest the adversarial nature of the encounters between the police and the community in enforcing COVID-19 rules, the number of complaints against police and the direct and vicarious experiences with enforcement strategies will adversely affect public perceptions [of the police] (p. 281).

The case study presented in this article offers insight into the influence of a soft power approach to policing on the level of community satisfaction and compliance during COVID-19.

Methodology

The study was designed to develop an understanding of the impact of a soft power policing approach during the Abu Dhabi Police response to COVID-19. The methodology applied to the research included (1) identification of the Abu Dhabi Police campaigns conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) analysis of the pre- and post-COVID-19 pandemic community satisfaction with Abu Dhabi Police survey; (3) identification of the level of community compliance with Abu Dhabi Police COVID-19 response campaigns. The data associated with (1) and (3) is publicly available through local news and social media outlets and the Abu Dhabi Police website (Table 2). The data for (1) are drawn from Abu Dhabi Government Survey (Community satisfaction survey of the Abu Dhabi Police). The Abu Dhabi Government Community Satisfaction Survey is distributed annually to a randomly selected sample of 1,200 Abu Dhabi residents.

Current case

In 2018, Al Hanaee reported on the evaluation of Abu Police officers' level of knowledge of soft power policing and included explanation of four

Table 2: Data sources

Data description	Data type	Source
(a) Pre and Post Abu Dhabi Government (Community Satisfaction) Survey	Quantitative	Abu Dhabi Police
(b) Abu Dhabi Police COVID-19 pandemic response campaigns and activities	Qualitative	Abu Dhabi Police
(c) Abu Dhabi COVID-19 penalties for violating Government directives	Qualitative	Abu Dhabi Government website
(d) Abu Dhabi COVID-19 directive violations	Quantitative	News outlets (<i>Khaleej Times</i>)

Table 3: Abu Dhabi Police soft power policing initiatives pre-COVID-19

Happiness patrols	Aim: to reward good driving behaviour The Abu Dhabi Police Happiness Patrols are a presence on the roads to support good driver behaviour
Ramadan gatherings	Aim: Communities and authorities to work together in traffic safety and crime reduction— Ramadan traditionally a time of giving and community cohesion
Youth gatherings	Aim: education in relation to behaviour and safety—working with young people to support the communications regarding good behaviour and personal safety
Comprehensive police stations	Aim: to change public perception of police stations from a place of detention to a place of public services—offering services through the police stations develops the customer service perspective of the police vs only seen as a place for managing crime and criminal justice processes

early Abu Dhabi Police soft power initiatives as presented in Table 3. Al Hanaee's work revealed that whilst there were officers who identified as having limited knowledge of the concept of soft power policing, they were in the reality of their work applying soft power approaches.

Further contextualization of the influence of soft power policing initiatives implemented by Abu Dhabi Police during the COVID-19 pandemic requires consideration of the pre-pandemic level of community satisfaction with Abu Dhabi Police.

Pre-COVID-19 results

Research conducted by the Centre of Police Research and Studies in the Department of Innovation and Future Foresight in Abu Dhabi Police, have shown high levels of confidence between Abu Dhabi Police and members of society in key areas impacting the partnership (Abu Dhabi Police, 2020a) as indicated in the following:

Figures 1–4 present the historical data related to key areas of community satisfaction with the work

2019 Feeling of safety and security in Abu Dhabi	97.5%
2019 Public satisfaction with Abu Dhabi Police (ADP) Services	97.7%
2019 Community confidence in ADP	98.7%
2019 Community satisfaction with ADP	98.3%
2019 Community satisfaction with ADP response	96.7%
2019 Community satisfaction with ADP image and reputation	98.3%

of Abu Dhabi Police in a period 2015–19. Abu Dhabi Police have achieved a consistent high level of satisfaction experienced by the community with the policing service.

During the period of the sustained high levels of community satisfaction with the work of Abu Dhabi Police as measured in 2020 a systematic roll out of initiatives designed to target multiple factors impacting daily life of the citizens of Abu Dhabi was initiated.

ADP community-based initiatives applied during COVID-19

Table 3 presents the 19 initiatives conducted by Abu Dhabi Police during 2020 as the COVID-19

THE PUBLIC SATISFACTION WITH ADP SERVICES (%)

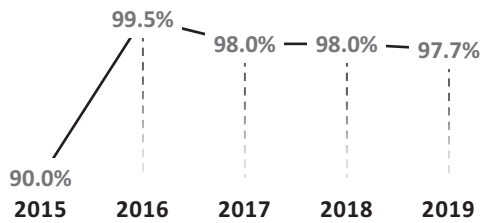


Figure 1: Level of public satisfaction with ADP services (source: Abu Dhabi Police 2020a)

% OF COMMUNITY SATISFACTION IN ADP

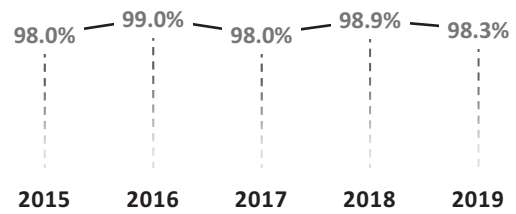


Figure 3: Level of community satisfaction in Abu Dhabi Police (source: Abu Dhabi Police 2020a)

FEELING OF SAFETY AND SECURITY (%)

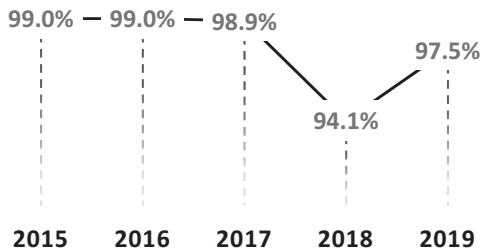


Figure 2: Abu Dhabi community level of safety and security (source: Abu Dhabi Police 2020a)

% OF COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE IN ADP

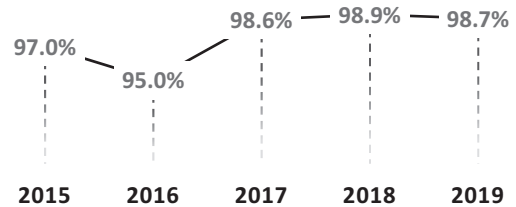


Figure 4: Level of community confidence in Abu Dhabi Police (source: Abu Dhabi Police 2020a)

pandemic spread across Abu Dhabi. A brief description of the respective initiatives offers insight into the diverse nature of the campaigns and in parallel the holistic approach in a strategy to embrace the diverse members of the community. A review of the campaigns listed in Table 4 identifies a consistent theme of personal engagement between the Abu Dhabi Police officers and members of the public, for example, the From Home-to-Home campaign and the initiative for The Sake of your Safety. Such campaigns engage officers from across the service communicating and interacting face to face with the public.

The initiatives as listed in Table 4 are classified under the soft power policy adopted by Abu Dhabi Police in its interaction with members of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic period in an attempt to limit the spread of the virus. As indicated in the

description, the initiatives relate to enhancement of quality of life and health and well-being during COVID-19. The initiatives focus on the attraction of the benefit for community members, particularly associated with safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a strategy to encourage voluntary engagement.

An insight into the Abu Dhabi Police monitoring of compliance with COVID-19 restrictions is offered through review of media announcements. The publication of identification of violations of the COVID-19 regulations in Abu Dhabi has the potential to (1) offer a level of trust by the wider community that their safety is a priority for the police and (2) to highlight/remind the community of the regulations and consequences of non-compliance. An example of such publications is offered as follows:

The Abu Dhabi Police have referred 1,688 gathering violations to the

Table 4: Abu Dhabi Police Community engagement campaigns during COVID-19 (source: Abu Dhabi Police 2020b)

	Name of the initiative	Description
1	National Environment Sterilization Programme (stay at home)	Through this initiative, ADP contributed to spreading awareness of the importance of adhering to the instructions and rules, which enhance the health and safety of society, by issuing awareness messages through electronic message boards and the media across the Emirate. The regular reports of Abu Dhabi Police showed the clear commitment of citizens and residents to the preventive measures
2	The community-based initiative 'we read to become better'	The Literature and Reading Committee in Abu Dhabi Police launched the initiative 'We read at home to become better', with the aim of promoting awareness, developing skills, investing leisure time, spreading knowledge, and spending time with useful things that support the state's endeavours and its precautionary and preventive measures.
3	Social Counselling Service initiative	ADP launched this service for the purpose of communicating with all segments of society and providing electronic consultations to ensure safe and positive outcomes during the difficult circumstances of COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative was a part of the efforts to develop police work and provide alternative creative solutions through an electronic platform and innovative methods which enabled professional provision of necessary support to various segments of society. The initiative has facilitated the design of solutions to problems that do not require legal intervention and enabled the required advice and guidance
4	From Home-to-Home initiative	This initiative comes to enhance ADP voice and photo communication with the community and spread awareness messages and urgent announcements during the COVID-19 crisis that requires timely communication The initiative handled various topics, including traffic safety, warning of the dangers of begging, providing safety instructions about fire, safe shopping, family stability, the need to strengthen the immune system in the face of the virus, the need to be fit through regular exercise, taking adequate sleep, personal hygiene, and other topics
5	Digital Month initiative	This initiative was launched under the supervision of the Supreme Committee for Digital Government in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and the following are its most prominent results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% increase in transactions completion through digital channels; • 25% increase in the number of visits to digital channels; • 94% as the percentage of adopting digital services at the Emirate level; and • participation of more than 45 government entities in the initiative including Abu Dhabi Police
6	The initiative for the sake of your safety	The Cavalry Patrols Department at the Patrol Department, the Criminal Security Sector in Abu Dhabi Police implemented this initiative, which included the distribution of masks and gloves to residents of residential neighbourhoods in the cities of Abu Dhabi and Al Ain. Instructions and advice on precaution were provided to avoid infection with the emerging coronavirus (COVID-19). Cavalry Patrols Department called on the population to follow the instructions and during the implementation of the national environment sterilization programme. Police Bike Teams and Cavalry Patrols conducted awareness patrols for the people in residential neighbourhoods about the benefits of complying with health instructions, staying home, abiding by the preventive, and safety precautionary measures.
7	We are concerned about your health	Promoting awareness among the staff and their families about COVID-19 preventive precautionary measures (masks, gloves, sanitizers)
8	Safety of your children is your responsibility	Following up on the health and safety of employees' children on a weekly basis by filling out a child health form
9	Towards a Healthy and Safe Society Campaign	Educating the elderly citizens and residents, in cooperation with Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre, through providing awareness-raising information materials that are published in all internal channels and social media related to Abu Dhabi Police
10	Commit to Win initiative	Educating the public to adhere to and take preventive measures in order to ensure their safety from the spread of infection, especially at events and home gatherings

Continued

Table 4: Continued

	Name of the initiative	Description
11	A TV interview to raise public awareness about the incidents related to children falling from balconies	A TV interview on Emirates Channel to talk about the problem of children falling from balconies at family gatherings, especially at winter when the weather becomes nice
12	Initiative on the International Day of Happiness	ADP launched an initiative to replace minor traffic fines with warning SMSs to drivers, on the International Day of Happiness, which falls annually on March 20. The goal is to raise the level of happiness while maintaining the security and safety of road users
13	A preventive initiative Safe Shopping	Abu Dhabi Police launched a preventive initiative 'Safe Shopping' to enhance the health and safety of mall visitors and to support the precautionary measures issued to confront COVID-19. ADP distributed protective equipment to the visitors and displayed awareness messages on screens in three languages Arabic, English, and Urdu
14	Emergency Radio Broadcast on 24 radio stations (FM)	ADP launched emergency radio broadcast on 24 radio stations (FM) for the first time in the country The a-round the clock broadcast in four languages: Arabic, English, Urdu, and Malayalam, with the aim of educating drivers of the procedures to be followed before reaching security checkpoints in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi
15	Anti-drug Awareness campaign	A month-long anti-drugs campaign targeting youngsters, their families, and the local community The ADP, General Women's Union and Abu Dhabi Shelter and Humanitarian Care Centre launched the campaign to highlight the consequences of drug abuse on an individual, his/her family, and community
16	Awareness campaign for the safety of children	Abu Dhabi Police launched a campaign focused on increasing public awareness on safety of children in cars, buildings and at the sea. Among the 1,662 children who were injured in 2019, 228 children fell from windows or balconies of buildings, 56 drowned and 19 suffered from suffocation. The remaining 1,359 children were involved in other incidents such as traffic accidents. The campaign aimed to highlight three issues—suffocation within cars, falling off buildings, and drowning
17	Creation of committee for the children protection	A child and family protection committee was launched by the Community Development Department in Abu Dhabi as the nation marked 'Emirati Children's Day' on Monday. Abu Dhabi Police is a member of this committee
18	Traffic Happiness Patrol (extending earlier initiative)	Launching Traffic Happiness Patrol equipped with smart systems and the requirement to support goals of these patrols represented in spreading the culture of happiness and positivity among road users

Emergency, Crisis and Disasters Prosecution, according to a statement on Thursday. These included 47 violations for people hosting the events and 1,641 for those attending gatherings. (Sebugwaawo, 2021, p. 1)

In 2020, the Abu Dhabi Police community survey that is distributed to 1,200 randomly selected citizens reported the following levels of community satisfaction with the work of the ADP. As indicated in Table 6, a consistent high level of community satisfaction is recorded in key areas of ADP and community interaction.

The soft power initiatives adopted by Abu Dhabi Police to confront the COVID-19 pandemic were based on three basic elements in line with the fundamental premise of soft power, namely Attraction, Influence, and Persuasion.

Abu Dhabi police elements of attraction

As indicated in the 2019 survey results (Figure 1) Abu Dhabi Police had achieved a strong community level of trust, confidence and satisfaction. The cumulative influence of a sustained commitment

Table 5: List of COVID-19 violations

List of violations and fines for individuals	Penalty
Not practicing social distancing	3,000
Not wearing a face mask outdoors, at indoor places, in vehicle, or on public transport	3,000
Breach of preventative measures at beaches, hotel pools, during recreational, or sports activities	3,000
List of violations and fines for gatherings	
Organizing private gatherings	10,000
Attend private gatherings	5,000
Offering, organizing, or mediating tutoring services (personal either in public or private places)	30,000
List of violations and fines dedicate to COVID-19 smart application (Al Hosn tracking app)	
Failure to register or download the app, damage, or lose their smart phone	10,000
Failure to report the loss or damage of the smart device containing the Al Hosn app within 24 h	10,000
Hacking or illegally extracting or altering data or the software mechanism	20,000
List of fines and violations of COVID-19 restrictions for businesses	
Not maintaining health standards for employees at shared accommodation and workplaces	1,000
Not adhering to timing restrictions imposed by the relevant authorities	3,000
Failure to implement adequate public health measures at the facility (shops, offices, marketplace)	3,000
Illegally transporting and selling unlicensed products	5,000
Overcrowding public/recreational spaces beyond allowed capacity	5,000
Failure to disinfect and sanitize all means of transportation (transportation companies in particular)	5,000
Food outlets violating the precautionary measures, which includes the disinfection and sanitization of all equipment and cooking utensils used to prepare food	5,000
Not wearing a mask at a workplace	5,000 employer 500/per employee
Violating the capacity restrictions on transport	5,000
Failure to implement preventative measures at the facility	5,000 employer 500/per employee
Failure to implement precautionary measures on shelter and cruise ships	10,000
Not placing thermal scanners where required	20,000
Non-compliance of any COVID-19 preventative measure set by the concerned authorities in each Emirate	50,000

Table 6: Community level of satisfaction with ADP 2020 (source: [Abu Dhabi Police 2020a](#))

Programme	Community level of satisfaction, %
2020 Community trust in the news and statistics provided by ADP	93.3
2020 Community satisfaction with ADP spreading security culture	91
2020 ADP We are all police programme	85
2020 ADP Solving social problems	85
2020 Victims protection and support	85
2020 Awareness of ADP about problems	87.1

to supporting the community with initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in strong levels of satisfaction and crime control. Interestingly, the Abu Dhabi community survey

2020, reported a 93.3% level of trust in the news and statistics announced by Abu Dhabi Police ([Abu Dhabi Police, 2020c](#)) the survey period covering the major time frame of the onset of the

pandemic in Abu Dhabi and the Abu Dhabi Police initiatives presented in Table 3. Similarly, the 2021 Gallup Poll and 2021 Numbeo International Indexes indicate positive levels of community satisfaction and safety in Abu Dhabi.

Abu Dhabi police elements of persuasion

The reality of policing suggests the initiatives launched by Abu Dhabi Police could not fulfil their intended purpose on their own, irrespective of the strength of these initiatives and their widespread presence among members of society. Reflective of the concept of soft power, it is a combination of elements that enable successful outcomes. A key element is the positive image of Abu Dhabi Police that has been established and sustained for both the citizens and residents. As discussed by Nye (2009), the element of persuasion is inextricably connected to the element of attraction and influence. Establishing attraction enables a segue to establishing successful levels of persuasion. The school of thought within the literature that persuasion is both garnered by attraction and often supported by elements of 'hard power' resonates with the demonstrated experience of Abu Dhabi Police in partnering with the community to respond to the pandemic, that is attractive initiatives, supported by policies and penalties for violations. The combination reflective of the notion of soft power created through persuasion in the first instance and in the real world of managing citizen police relations, with elements of hard power.

The trust and confidence between the leadership and the government from one side and members of society on the other side have contributed to a large extent to create a level of trust in the community that the instructions and directives issued by Abu Dhabi Police are primarily in the interest of the citizens and residents.

Abu Dhabi police elements of influence

The success of Abu Dhabi in the above two factors (attraction and persuasion) with the

community members across all sectors including citizens and residents, is similarly intertwined with the acknowledged third element of soft power—influence.

The positive levels of community satisfaction and confidence in the work of Abu Dhabi Police as reported in the international benchmarking indexes is similarly reflected in the positive level of compliance to safety and security COVID-19 measures implemented by the police within the community. Of note is the similar levels of confidence and satisfaction with ADP pre(2019)- and post-implementation of the COVID-19 measures (2021). As with the element of persuasion, there is a level of influence that is drawn from the attraction element that enables influence. Whilst the definitive measure as to which of the three elements is more influential in the application and results of the soft power approach by Abu Dhabi police in their COVID-19 response is not known, the data indicate that the approach has realized positive levels of trust, confidence, and compliance in and with the work of Abu Dhabi police during the pandemic. The model, which includes a sustained focus by Abu Dhabi Police on supportive initiatives during periods of emergency and crisis such as presented in this article and the positive outcomes for the police–community partnership, offers a contribution to deliberations for leadership in the global policing community.

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